

04/03/1997

Dr M: Durable peace needed in south-eastern Europe

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia would co-operate with other countries to build a climate of durable peace in south-eastern Europe which would enable countries in the region to develop and progress.

He said peace and stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina would be good for the region, Serbia and Croatia.

He said confidence in the business climate would improve and the uneasy political and security situation would no longer be a source of concern.

The focus of government could shift to economic priorities when regional stability was in place, he said.

In this respect, he said Malaysia welcomed Croatia's foreign policy commitment to play a positive and constructive role in ensuring that durable peace prevailed in the region.

Speaking at a dinner in honour of the Croatian Prime Minister Zlatko Matesa at Sri Perdana tonight, he said Malaysia's multi-racial and multi-ethnic society sympathised with the sufferings of war victims in the region.

The trauma, suffering and untimely death are the same whether they were Muslims, Catholics, Orthodox Christians or others.

Dr Mahathir said there was a need to rebuild the damage of war although the memory of horror of the tragedy lingers on and was not easy to forget.

"Hopefully, this (rebuilding process) will remove some of the scars of the war, mentally and physically. Time, we hope will heal the wounds and a new and more tolerant society will emerge," he said.

On economic ties, Dr Mahathir said there was tremendous opportunities to expand trade and investment co-operation between the two countries.

Malaysia views Croatia as an important conduit for trade and services in the region, he said, adding that Croatia's ability to adapt to fast changing business environment would stimulate the establishment of more business ventures between their countries.

"We are encouraged that Malaysian goods are becoming more visible in Zagreb and hope the trend continues. By the same token, Malaysia hopes to see more Croatian goods in our country," he said.

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