

Bouquet from PM to Armed Forces

1 JAN 1999

ALOR STAR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today praised the Armed Forces for its professionalism and support of the Government during this trying period.

Dr Mahathir said the Armed Forces had shown

their true professionalism by staying neutral.

"We don't see such disciplined security forces in some other countries," he said, adding that in those countries, the Armed Forces took sides, thereby causing tension.

"If the Armed Forces took sides, they will not be able to discharge their duties, and that would create havoc and weaken the country.

"Consequently, foreign powers will recolonise us and destroy our independence," Dr Mahathir said before breaking fast with the 6th Brigade Royal Malay Regiment personnel at Kem Tok Jalai, about 12km from here.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid.

Dr Mahathir explained how foreign elements tried to recolonise the country by devaluing the ringgit, attacking the economy and interfering in the country's internal affairs.

He said the presence of a foreign leader in Malaysia to show support for the ref-

ormation movement and by calling the demonstrators "brave" was an example of foreign interference.

He said these foreign elements hoped riots would break out and topple the Government, so they could replace it with leaders who

they want to have a puppet Government," he added.

Dr Mahathir also described how certain quarters, who were used by foreign elements, instigated and paid people to demonstrate against the Government and create an impression that the country was in chaos.

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful to the Armed

Forces for their role in protecting the country from these elements. He also praised the Armed Forces for their record on international missions.

"I recently received a letter from Bosnian President Alijah Izetvegovic thanking the Armed Forces for their contribution to his country. He also commends their contribution.

Earlier, at their home in Titi Gajah, Dr Siti Hasmah presented Bakti's financial aid of RM12,000 to orphans and poor students in the Kubang Pasu Parliamentary constituency.

Kubang Pasu district officer Farouk Ibrahim received the aid on behalf of the students.