

Blair seeks Dr M's help on Afghan, Palestinian issues

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Britain has sought Malaysia's assistance in dealing with the conflict in Afghanistan and the Palestinian issue.

The request was conveyed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad by British Prime Minister Tony Blair during a telephone conversation late today.

Blair telephoned Dr Mahathir and consulted him on various issues which have arisen following the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States, as well as worldwide negative reactions to the onslaught on Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister's office, in a statement today, said Dr Mahathir reiterated Kuala Lumpur's view that the attack on Afghanistan by foreign forces was going to be a futile exercise.

Dr Mahathir told Blair that the people in Malaysia, who had condemned terrorism, had taken the attacks on Afghanistan badly.

Blair explained that they were not against Islam or Muslims and gave an assurance that they were trying to resolve the conflict.

During the 20-minute conversation about 7pm, Dr Mahathir also commended Blair on his stand that there should be a Palestinian state as it would help to pacify angry Muslims.

According to the statement, the British Prime Minister was also very concerned about public opinion on the conflict in Afghanistan, including opinions in England.

Dr Mahathir had queried how the British Press was reporting the conflict and the possibility of further explaining the feelings of Muslims worldwide.