

Khmer conflict: PM sees no quick solution

AST - 1 AUG 1987
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MOSCOW, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not foresee an immediate solution to the Kampuchean conflict even though South-East Asian countries agreed the war required a political settlement.

Speaking after more than two hours of talks with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Mahathir also indicated that the Kampuchean conflict remained a source of disagreement between Malaysia and Moscow.

"There are many similarities of views on many international issues, although there are of course differences (between the Soviet Union and Malaysia)," Mahathir told a news conference.

Asked if he and Gorbachev had discussed ways to solve the Kampuchean conflict, he said: "We did not discuss specifically Kampuchea... however, we did discuss generally the need to find a political solution to the problem in Kampuchea."

Malaysia and other non-communist Asian States advocate a solution that would involve the three-party U.N.-recognised coalition Government of Kampuchea and would guarantee free elections.

Asked if Malaysia thought a solution to the Kampuchean conflict might come in the near future, Mahathir said: "Maybe not in the near future."

Noting that Asean (the Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries and Vietnam had put forward proposals for a settlement, he said: "In approach we differ. But it seems we agree that a solution must occur through political discussions, not through military means."

Mahathir's visit to Moscow resulted in Soviet-Malaysian accords on taxation and maritime issues and an agreement on bilateral political consultations, a Malaysian spokesman said.

Mahathir was the most senior Asean leader to have had talks with Gorbachev since the Soviet leader took office in March 1985. He is due to leave Moscow tomorrow to visit Leningrad and the central Asian republic of Uzbekistan.

— Reuter