

CNS6123

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MALAYSIA READY TO JOIN ISLAMIC FORCES TO HELP BOSNIA

Mahathir - Bosnia

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15<sup>92</sup> (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia was prepared to join an Islamic military force to help Bosnia-Herzegovina if Islamic countries agreed to send troops under such an arrangement.

+If the Islamic nations agree (to send forces), we will have to go along with them,+ the Prime Minister said when commenting on an Iranian proposal for Islamic countries to provide military assistance to Bosnian Muslims suffering from atrocities by Serbs in the former Yugoslav state.

Iran has proposed that the foreign and defence ministers of all member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meet to discuss the matter.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was willing to look at the proposal to determine whether it could be implemented.

+Usually, we send our troops to other countries as part of the United Nations peacekeeping forces,+ he told reporters after opening the MCA general assembly, here. -- more

♥15/08/13-35MST

CNS6126

U GE 15-08 00125 EA480

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Mahathir - Bosnia 2 Kuala Lumpur

He said he felt that Islamic countries should consider the matter (of sending troops).

+If this can help them (Bosnian Muslims), we must consider it,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir expressed disappointment with the United Nations' Security Council which Thursday approved military force as a last resort to ensure relief aid for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

+By that time, perhaps many Bosnians will have been killed. Maybe, in the end, there will be no more Muslims in Bosnia,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia would consider establishing diplomatic relations with the states which were now independent of the former Yugoslavia, such as Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. -- more

♥15/08/13-54MST

CNS6127

U GE 15-08 00180 EA481

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Mahathir - Bosnia 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia severed diplomatic relations with Belgrade on Wednesday in protest against its role in fuelling the atrocities by Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Yesterday, Parti Semangat 46 President, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said breaking off ties was a mistake because it cut off the channel to send aid to Bosnians.

Asked to comment, on the statement, Dr Mahathir said: +I think Tengku Razaleigh does not know foreign affairs.

+Actually, we do not have anything in Bosnia-Herzegovina which is an independent state. The same goes for Slovenia and Croatia. It is with Serbia with which we have broken off ties.+

Dr Mahathir said there was also no necessity for Malaysia to have an observation post to follow developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina because media coverage was extensive.

Asked about the status of soccer players from the former Yugoslavia in Malaysia, he said the government was studying the matter but added that the diplomatic ties involved the country and government and not individuals. --  
Bernama

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