

Dr M: We've lost faith in certain UN countries

NST 12 JAN 1993

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Malaysia has lost faith in Western countries which control the United Nations and which claim to champion human rights but have done little to stop the killings and atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said these Western nations were prepared to send fighter jets to West Asia purportedly to protect the Shi'ite Muslims from Iraqi attacks but had done nothing when thousands of Bosnian women had been raped by the Serbs.

"It is obvious that when it is dangerous to fight the Serbs as they may lose some lives, these developed countries are not prepared to uphold the principles of human rights which they proclaim.

"Therefore, we have lost faith in their talk about championing human rights," he said when asked to comment on the assassination of Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic by a Serb gunman last Friday while under UN pro-

tection.

"Responding to reporters' questions after opening the New Klang Valley Expressway, Dr Mahathir said he believed these Western countries only dared to act against countries which were incapable of fighting back.

"It is clear now that these developed countries which always harp on human rights will only do something at a minimal cost, that is, if they believe such act would not destroy them.

"That is why they are prepared to go to war with Iraq and other nations.

"They also want to check whether Nicaragua and Panama practise human rights," he said.

Asked whether Malaysia was prepared to send a military force to Bosnia-Herzegovina following the latest developments there, he said it would do so only if a UN military force was summoned.

He said Malaysia would not send a military force on its own without the UN organising it.

On the possibility of the

warring factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina withdrawing from the Geneva peace talks, Dr Mahathir said: "If I were a Bosnian leader, I would withdraw."

He added that there was no point in attending the peace talks if the Western nations convening the meeting were only prepared to issue the Serbs with warnings without taking any concrete action.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi condemned the assassination of Turajlic, describing it as an act of cowardice by Serbia.

He said the action should be condemned by the rest of the world since it could be construed as an attempt to sabotage the peace negotiation process.

There was a possibility of the existence of an unscrupulous group out to wipe out Bosnia-Herzegovina completely, he said when speaking to reporters after the launch of a book "Professional Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs Management — The Malaysian Experience" at Wisma Putra.