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Mahathir-OIC

HAVE A UNIFIED VOICE AT UN, DR M TELLS MUSLIM COUNTRIES

PETALING JAYA, Jan 30⁹³ (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Muslim countries must have a unified voice at the United Nations to play an influential role in the world body.

He said Muslim countries could not afford to operate outside the UN framework by themselves as they were basically weak or not strong enough.

In the context of the Bosnian issue, Muslim countries could not act by themselves to deal with it as they were very dependent on the West for arms especially, he said.

"Can we send our armies there. We don't have the weapons. We have to buy them from others. So, until such time when we can, I think it is better that we work within the framework of the UN," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a dialogue session with participants of the seventh international conference of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) here.

The three-day conference ended today.

By being in the world body, he said they could at least influence other countries to do what was right for the world, Dr Mahathir said. -- more

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The Prime Minister said by being in the UN they could also break the conscience of other members of the world body.

However, he said, this could only be done if the Muslim countries have a unified voice.

"We must have a strong single stand or at least a majority of the Muslim countries speak in one voice," he said.

By themselves, the Muslim countries could not do anything that would have any real consequence in international fora, he said.

He said the divided voice of the Muslim countries was exemplified by their stand on the question of whether the UN should mount a military operation to liberate the Bosnians.

"Would there be any difference of opinion between us. Are we not willing to send our troops there alongside with the other forces of the UN. And yet even on that issue we cannot reach an agreement. That is the cause of our weakness," he said. -- more

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On the effectiveness of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in dealing with international issues, Dr Mahathir said OIC member countries were most of the time not in full agreement with each other.

He said the OIC members were sometimes too inward-looking and concentrated more on their own problem and did not look at the international scene from the same viewpoint.

"As a result, we cannot formulate an approach to international problems which will have the force of all OIC together," he said.

He said differing views among the member countries had also made it easy for others to play them against each other and neutralised whatever stand they have.

According to the Prime Minister, there were many OIC meetings which spent long hours debating something that did not need much debating as quick decision could be made. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said Muslim countries could also use together the wealth given them by God to add weight to their arguments at the UN.

For example, he said, the oil wealth of Muslim countries could be used for that purpose but they had not been able to make the most of it.

"If we were to itemise the assets that we have and put them together then we can exert tremendous influence on the UN and we can at least obtain some of our objectives," he said. -- Bernama

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