

PM reaffirms stand to send troops to Somalia

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Malaysia is firm in sending its troops to Somalia because it has given an undertaking to do so, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We have given our word of honour and we will fulfil our obligation," the Prime Minister said when asked to comment on a warning of a bloodbath issued to Malaysia and other nations in the UN peacekeeping force by a new Somali-language radio station broadcast in Mogadishu.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said if attacked, Malaysian troops would re-

turn fire.

He was replying to questions at a Press conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

It was reported today that the "Voice of the Somali Masses", monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation in Nairobi, had urged Malaysia, India and South Korea to stop sending their troops, adding that further messages would be "written in blood".

Malaysia is among the 20 countries serving in the UN Operation in Somalia (UNISOM) II.

Asked about the latest development in Cambodia in which hardliners in the Phnom Penh regime, refusing to recognise their loss of the UN election, have seceded several provinces in eastern Cambodia, Dr Mahathir said that all sides must abide by the results of the election.

"We cannot accept that one side accepts (the results) if it wins, but if it loses, it will not accept."

On the role of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and making it more effective, Dr Mahathir said: "We never give up hope. We will always try. We may fail

again, but this does not prevent us from trying. We can't trust anybody else."

He said as in the case of atrocities in Bosnia, the OIC trusted the West to help end these atrocities but "obviously they have a different value system, one for what they like and one for what they do not like".

It would seem that the West thought it was "proper" for the Serbs to kill the Bosnian Muslims but at the same time was preventing the Muslims from even defending themselves.

"I can't understand these differences in the thinking process, their double stan-

dards," he said.

"On the US proposal for Japan to reduce its trade surplus, Dr Mahathir said the best way was "for America not to buy" which was within its power.

"But it is obvious that if you accept competition and you allow your people to buy and they buy to a point that there is a trade surplus, or deficit, in your own country, then if you subscribe to the free trade system, to competition, then you must accept that there will be a trade surplus.

"Otherwise you go for managed trade. Then you can forget about free trade."