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Mahathir-Veto

THE VETO MUST GO, SAYS MAHATHIR

From Salmy Hashim

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 2 (Bernama) -- "The veto must go," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad declared Friday and he called for a restructuring of the United Nations, especially membership in the Security Council.

"We talk of democracy" and yet, "the most undemocratic aspect of the UN is the veto power of the Permanent Five," he said when addressing the 48th session of the UN General Assembly here.

He added: "We can accept some weightage for them but, for each of them, alone, to be more powerful than the whole membership of the UN is not acceptable; not before, not now and not for the future.

"There can be, for the time being, some permanent members. But the veto must go. A formula must be found for new permanent members of the Security Council."

Dr Mahathir's half-hour long address was received by two long rounds of applause from delegates and the general public. Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, his wife, provided moral support along with wives of other UN officials at the far left of the hall. -- more

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R GE 02-10 00181 EA533

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Mahathir-Veto 2 United Nations

Several delegates, including from Australia, offered their congratulations to the Prime Minister following the address.

Later, at a press conference for Malaysian journalists, Dr Mahathir said a few of the delegates even said "thank you" for expressing their convictions.

He added: "So, they're quite happy if somebody is prepared to say it... they feel threatened... the powerful countries can twist their arms and cause some pain."

"I'm prepared to stick my neck out and get it chopped!."

Dr Mahathir said any country wishing to be a permanent member or were already a member must have an interest in all problems of the world.

"If you're on the Security Council you must be interested in everything... you can't say Bosnia is not my problem... Cambodia is my problem; that is not good enough," he added.

In his speech, the Prime Minister talked about the "debit side" of the peace dividend and the collapse of the "Evil Empire." -- more

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▼02/10/12-03MST

aae tbe

Mahathir-Veto 3 United Nations

He gave a heart-rending account of the cruelties committed by the Serbs which defy imagination - that of a six-year-old Bosnian child who was repeatedly raped in front of her mother who not only had to watch but was prevented from giving any help until the little girl died following two days of exposure.

"The Evil Empire is no more," he said, but the price in human lives and displacement of people was very high as seen in the "bloody chaos" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and many more.

He added that while the Slovenes and the Croats enjoyed the full support of the Europeans, the Bosnian Muslims were prevented from defending themselves by the "champions of freedom and democracy."

"When we add up, the "peace dividends" accruing from the ending of the Cold War have not really been substantial," he said.

But he highlighted the two significant items on the "credit side," -- the recent signing of the peace agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel and that between the blacks and whites in South Africa. -- more

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Mahathir-Veto 4 (last) United Nations

"I would like to congratulate all parties concerned for their good sense and boldness," he said but cautioned about obstacles ahead "before true peace becomes permanent."

"They've overcome the most crucial obstacles but (there is) no guarantee that we'll see peace," he told reporters.

As for those (in Malaysia) who wished to continue fighting with the Israelis, the Prime Minister said: "I'd like to challenge anybody who said that we should continue to fight the Israelis... whether they're prepared to fight for the PLO... talk is easy." -- Bernama

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