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Mahathir-Bosnia

WEST HAS LOST RIGHT TO CRITICISE MALAYSIA, SAYS DR M

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LANGKAWI, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Western superpowers such as the United States have lost the right to criticise Malaysia because they were not willing to act to end the violation of human rights of the Bosnians by the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He said it was useless for them to say Malaysia did not respect the rights of certain quarters in this country when they themselves did not respect the rights of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"As they are unwilling to act in Bosnia, they have lost the right to criticise us," he told reporters here.

The prime minister arrived in Langkawi yesterday for a two-day visit to look at preparations for the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) '93 exhibition scheduled for Dec 7 to 12.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said it was difficult to evaluate how far Malaysia had made an impact with its views expressed at the international level on Bosnia.

However, he said, the Western powers had to defend their policies on human rights and thus far they had difficulty doing this. -- more

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▼10/10/16-30MST

CNS4190

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Mahathir-Bosnia 2 Langkawi

"It is clearly evident that the Serbs are violating human rights in Bosnia. They (the Western powers) are not doing anything about that but they want to criticise us over the ISA (Internal Security Act) ... over this and that," he said.

"This is a small matter compared to what is happening in Bosnia," he said.

Asked whether the military approach used by the United States in Somalia should be attempted in Bosnia, Dr Mahathir said: "We hope that the approach used in Somalia is used in Bosnia.

"They are not willing to fight the Serbs in Bosnia but in Somalia they are quick to act against the Somalis. There seems to be double standards."

He said the United States was prepared to use its military might in Somalia but not so in Bosnia-Herzegovina. -- more

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▼10/10/16-52MST

CNS4202

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Asked to comment on reports that the United States had blamed Malaysian soldiers for inefficiency in Somalia which they said led to many US soldiers getting killed there, Dr Mahathir said:

"They can say what they want to. We can also say they (the US soldiers) are inefficient. How can they get killed and injured fighting the Somalis who are definitely not as efficient as they are?" he said.

"Therefore, we cannot talk about another's efficiency or inefficiency," he said.

On reports in newspapers in England that he chose the occasion of the visit of British Prime Minister John Major to Malaysia recently to criticise Britain's policies on Bosnia, Dr Mahathir said he did what he would do during the visits of any leader because that was the most appropriate time for him to talk of related subjects.

"If we had wanted to make an appeal, we would have done so then," he said. -- more

KHY MGN

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Mahathir-Bosnia 4 Langkawi

Dr Mahathir said he had made a similar speech during the visit of Puan Margaret Thatcher (former British prime minister), which he felt was more critical in nature.

It was the same case during the visit of Malcolm Fraser (former prime minister of Australia), he said.

"I have spoken on related matters during the visit of any leader. If I had wanted to speak just for the sake of giving a speech, it will have been unnecessary for me to speak at all," he said.

On the fate of the widow and children of Koperal Mat Aznan Awang, the Malaysian soldier who was killed while serving with the United Nations' forces in Somalia, Dr Mahathir said:

"We have given his family financial assistance. We will ensure that his children get a good education and we will provide any other necessary help."

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Mahathir-Bosnia 5 (last) Langkawi

Dr Mahathir visited the family in Kampung Parit Panjang, Baling, yesterday to convey his condolences.

He said the government would give particular attention to the Malaysian soldiers serving with the UN forces should they face similar danger because Malaysia appreciated those who served the nation.

"And we will give whatever assistance they require," he added.

He said he hoped that the Malaysian soldiers serving with the UN forces would discharge their duty as expected of them and safeguard the image of Malaysians and the country so that no one could say Malaysian soldiers did not carry out their task well. -- Bernama

KHY MGN

▼10/10/17-12MST