

Hypocrisy at its worst

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By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The self-righteousness of Western nations with regard to human rights and democracy will become sheer pretence if they do not stop the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the attitude of the powerful nations in the Bosnian affair epitomised hypocrisy at its worst.

He said it was immoral for the world to hide behind the illusion that the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue was a story of a simple civil war.

"It is not. It is nothing less than a war of conquest by the Serbs abetted by others who have their own agendas.

"The Americans are blaming the British and the French for preventing the use of air strikes against the Serbs. However, some very highly placed British and French sources have told me that it is the United States which is against military action.

"I, frankly, do not know who to believe. I suspect that neither the Americans nor the Europeans care enough to act. They do not wish to risk the lives of their boys for something that is not really very important for their own well-being," he said.

In his keynote address at the International Confer-

ence to apply, if we allow the strongest to determine the fate of the weakest, if we allow Bosnia-Herzegovina to be obliterated, then there will be no security for any one of us," he said.

He said the Bosnians were confronted with the choice of either accepting the tattered remnants of Bosnia-Herzegovina or risk being violently wiped off the map of the world.

"They are right in refusing to accept either. They are right in continuing to fight for their country. The cost to them is very high. The killings are real. People are dying. People are being starved, raped and tortured. Unless the civilised world puts a stop to what is going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina, weak nations will know no freedom.

"Might will always be right. Is this the message of Bosnia? Where are the champions of freedom, of human rights, of justice? Where have they gone?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir said Bosnia-Herzegovina was the victim of the evil designs of certain people and powers who were quite happy to see the emergence of Slovenia and Croatia but would do nothing for Bosnia, although Bosnia-Herzegovina had as much right as the other two to nationhood.

He said this kind of double standards was apparently what the new world order was about.

ence of Parliamentarians on Bosnia-Herzegovina, here, Dr Mahathir said that if the Western nations were not prepared to commit their men and weapons to protect the Bosnians, they should at least allow the Bosnians to defend themselves.

"This is the right of any nation or people — the right to self-defence. But they actively and positively prevent the Bosnians from acquiring the means to fight in self-defence. The Western nations could do no worse if they were to hold down the Bosnians so as to enable the Serbs to batter them. It is abetment and no less.

"And yet they claim that they are helping the Bosnians," he said.

He said the fundamental principle of the right of nation States to exist must remain sacred and must be protected and this included small, multi-ethnic and multi-religious states like Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"If we allow the law of the

The Prime Minister stressed that aggression, occupation and the redrawing of territorial boundaries by force was unacceptable in this day and age but, when aggression was accompanied by the abominable practice of ethnic cleansing, it was not just unacceptable but despicable by any standard of international behaviour.

He said yet the Serbs complemented this with rape and murder of young girls and women, even of little children while the so-called civilised world was horrified but was not prepared to stop the Serbs.

"Yet woe betide any little developing country which violates even the most trivial of human rights," he said.

He urged the parliamentarians attending the conference to shock their people and Government out of

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 4, COL 5

PM: UN must use force if necessary

□ FROM PAGE ONE

their self-imposed stupor and do their best to force those in power to act.

He called for pressure on the UN Security Council to implement the various resolutions which had been passed.

The Security Council must be prepared to back its demand by the use of force if necessary — not mere threats but actual use of force, to make the aggressors comply with certain critical requirements, he added.

He said the parliamentarians should also urge the Security Council to take a hard look at the Geneva process and, since there was wide agreement that the Geneva talks cannot go on as before, seize the initiative to convene a new international conference on Bosnia-Herzegovina with perhaps the successful international conference on Cambodia as a model.

"We cannot speak for the Bosnian leadership but we can demand that they be given a chance to save their people and country and secure a fair deal in negotiations.

"Malaysia feels extremely concerned. Not merely because Bosnia-Herzegovina has something to do with Islam and Muslims. We feel strongly whenever and wherever injustice and oppression are perpetrated.

"It would be your duty, as parliamentarians, to cause your respective governments to help change the situation in that unfortunate country, and save the valiant people of Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said.

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