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Mahathir-Nato

I DON'T BELIEVE NATO WILL STRIKE, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb. 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not believe the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was convinced enough to launch air strikes on Serb military forces surrounding Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Prime Minister said NATO would wait till the end of the 10-day ultimatum given to Serbs to withdraw and then come up with an excuse that air strikes were unnecessary because the aggressors realised their atrocities.

"Eventually (when this is all over), the Serbs will continue with ethnic cleansing," Dr Mahathir told reporters at the Chinese New Year open house of Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding in Damansara here.

Yesterday, NATO, a 16-nation military alliance, threatened the Serbs with air strikes if they did not withdraw from Sarajevo. The ultimatum was issued despite a reluctance by Canada and Greece reluctance to sanction Western military intervention in the war-torn former breakaway republic of Yugoslavia. -- more

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Mahathir-Nato 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The main proposal at the NATO meeting was a US-French plan to issue an ultimatum for Serb forces to withdraw their heavy artillery at least 20km from Sarajevo within 10 days, failing which air strikes would be launched.

"You see, everybody... the Americans and NATO knows that they will not carry out air strike on the Serbs," Dr Mahathir said, adding that meanwhile ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued.

He said it was a clear fact that the Serbs would halt their attacks once a threat or ultimatum was given but they would resume their atrocities when no action was taken against them.

On the proposal by the Russians to engage United Nations forces in Sarajevo, the Prime Minister said: "Tell the Russians to instruct the Serbs to withdraw (from Bosnia-Herzegovina) and then we can discuss."

He said the most important thing to do now was to halt all attacks on the Bosnians.

"But then again, I do not believe that the Russian and NATO proposals will stop the killings (in Bosnia-Herzegovina)," he added. -- Bernama

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