

Dr M: We'll hold NAM international conference on Bosnia if request

Malaysia willing to be host

By S. Jayakrishnan

SHAH ALAM, Sun. — Malaysia is willing to host an international conference on Bosnia-Herzegovina if it is asked to do so, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the decision by the Non-Aligned Movement to hold the conference was a positive step and that everybody should get involved.

"If we have to be the host, then we are ready to be the host," Dr Mahathir told reporters after attending the 4th Malaysia International Boat Show here which ended today.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the NAM decision agreeing with an earlier proposal from Malaysia that NAM hold an international conference on Bosnia. The proposal was unanimously adopted at NAM's ministerial meeting in Cairo last Friday.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said that this was the first time NAM had formally adopted Malaysia's proposal to promote and initiate the hosting of the international conference.

Malaysia's proposal is that the International Conference on Bosnia must be held under the auspices of the United Nations.

It should be attended by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Unprofor (the UN peace-keeping mission in Bosnia) contributing countries, NAM, the Organisation of Islamic Coun-

tries, the European Union, the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General and the warring parties in Bosnia.

The five objectives of the conference are:

- through UN/Unprofor to ensure cessation of military hostilities;

- to ensure all of Bosnia-Herzegovina is a safe haven;

- to ensure inviolability and territorial integrity and the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina;

- to achieve a just settlement for all parties; and,

- to develop a scheduled programme of action like what the international community did for Cambodia.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia felt the arms sanction on Bosnia should be lifted but that on Serbia should remain as the Serbs were continuing to receive large quantities of arms from Belgrade and elsewhere.

Dr Mahathir added that a group of Malaysian parliamentarians had recently visited their counterparts in Britain and France and found that the MPs in these countries were not in favour of lifting the sanctions.

The Western MPs said they were not in favour of lifting the sanction as they claimed that to do so would mean the Serbs would get most of the arms.

"In reality, it is the Serbs who are now getting the weapons from Belgrade and maybe from others. On the other hand, the Bosnians are not getting any at all," he said.