

CNS7822

U GE 08-08 00206 EG627

aae the

Mahathir-Bosnia

BE READY FOR ACTIVE ROLE IN BOSNIA, DR M TELLS M'SIAN PEACEKEEPERS

bm

GENTING HIGHLANDS, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised Malaysian peacekeepers in Bosnia-Herzegovina to be prepared to face any eventuality following the latest developments in the Balkan state.

He said the role of the United Nations' peacekeepers in the country might have to switch from a passive to an active one involving action against Bosnian Serb terrorists after Serbia decided to cease aid to them.

President of the Bosnian Serb Parliament Momcilo Krajisnik had said the Bosnian Serb MPs would decide in two or three days whether to mobilise all of the population for war following the Serbian decision.

Serbia had supplied arms and sponsored the Bosnian Serb campaign against the Bosnian (Islamic) government after Sarajevo declared its independence from the former Yugoslavia.

"The Serbs no longer have the assistance of Serbia, and the UN should have no fear that its every action (against the Serb terrorists) would trigger the Third World War," he told reporters after opening a conference of heads of Malaysian missions, here. -- more

ES MGN

▼08/08/17-50MST

CNS7856

U GE 08-08 00148 EG628

aae the

Mahathir-Bosnia 2 Genting Highlands

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a statement by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic that he would continue the war with Bosnia-Herzegovina despite not getting aid from Serbia.

The prime minister said Malaysia had asked United Nations secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali to have Malaysian peacekeepers equipped with adequate arms to face possible attacks from Bosnian Serb terrorists.

"We want them (Malaysian troops) to be prepared but the weapons must come from the UN," he said.

Asked about the feedback from Boutros-Ghali on the Malaysian request, Dr Mahathir said the UN secretary-general said the weapons were not necessary for peacekeeping.

"But if the role switches to peace-enforcing, he (Boutros-Ghali) may reconsider (the Malaysian request)," he said.

"This we will ask from the UN," he added.

Asked about the expressed desire of Palestine President Yasser Arafat for Malaysia to continue to help the people of Palestine, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was prepared to provide as much assistance as it could so that Arafat's initiative to forge peace with Israel would not become a futile effort.

Arafat, when interviewed over the telephone from Jericho by TV on its morning "Malaysia Hari Ini" talk show yesterday, had said that Malaysia was among the nations which were honest in assisting Palestine, and hoped that the effort would continue. -- Bernama

ES MGN

▼08/08/18-13MST