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Mahathir-weapons

UN ASKED TO GIVE WEAPONS TO M'SIAN SOLDIERS IN EVENT OF WITHDRAWAL

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- The United Nations should hand over its weapons to the Malaysian battalion (Malbatt) in Bosnia-Herzegovina if it decides to withdraw the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) from the war-torn country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"At least we can use the weapons and equipment to defend ourselves and the Bosnians," he told reporters after watching the special stage of the Petronas Rally of Malaysia 1994 at Tasik Perdana here.

The Prime Minister had earlier flagged off the 45 participants in front of the Banqunan Sultan Abdul Samad here for the first stage of the rally.

Dr Mahathir said the weaponry of other contingents in UNPROFOR which was not used should also be given to the Pakistani and Turkish troops who were not getting any UN aid.

He said Malbatt would continue to defend the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina even if the UN and Nato no longer wanted to shoulder this responsibility. -- more

ZAB YBY

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He said the UN and Nato forces had said they would withdraw if the Serb terrorists attacked them. That would also be the case if the arms embargo on Bosnia was lifted and if the Bosnians could get their own supply of weapons.

"If that is their attitude, what is the use of they being there; it is better for them to just go and surrender the task of defending Bosnia to others who wish to discharge their duties and responsibilities," he said.

"But the UN should equip the Bosnians with the same type of weapons possessed by the Serb terrorists which they previously received in large quantities from Serbia... only then will their strength be matched."

Dr Mahathir said, however, if the UN and Nato forces deserted Bosnia before the Bosnians received weapons to defend themselves, the action would be equivalent to tying the hands of the Bosnians to enable the Serb terrorists to slaughter them.

"It's very clear that they are more keen to save their own necks and ensure their safety and not save others because they were of no interest to them."

Dr Mahathir said the same situation prevailed in Rwanda where some 500,000 people had been killed.

"What is the meaning of assistance?" he asked.

On the rally, he said he was happy that Proton's participation proved its high capability in the field of automobile engineering.

EON had a special division for modifying cars for rally purposes and this reflected technological progress in the automobile industry.

He said modifications to EON-built cars had been approved and certified to be suitable and safe for car rallies.

"This is evident in the Proton victories in several rallies in Thailand and also in the Gulf nations," he said. -- Bernama

ZAB AAM LDB

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