

Dr M: UN playing games in Bosnia

By Sharanjit Singh

ALOR STAR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the United Nations was not serious in resolving the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation warplane attacks on Serb positions were "merely play-acting" by the world body.

The Prime Minister said he was not convinced that the military strikes over the last two days would continue because the UN feared its soldiers would be cornered by the Serbs and that it would subsequently be dragged into a war.

"I do not believe the UN is serious over this matter.

"They are just play acting ... they will stop the attacks after this and continue howling to the Serbs," he said, adding there was already talk that the UN would withdraw its forces from the war-torn country.

"The French are planning to withdraw their forces and the UN is afraid to get itself entangled in the war.

"They (the UN) say they want to ensure peace but when they fail to achieve it, they just leave. There is no need for them to be around where peace already prevails. They might as well forget about it," he told reporters on his arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport here for a two-day visit to Kedah.

He was asked to comment on Nato warplane attacks on the Pale ammunition dump, southeast of Sarajevo in Bosnia on Thursday and Friday after the forces were requested to do so by the UN.

A Reuter report quoting a Nato statement released in Brussels yesterday said the Nato warplanes pounded the Serb ammunition dump to punish them for attacks on UN safe areas which killed at least 71 people and wounded more than 150.

The report said the attacks were also launched because the Serbs had ignored

a UN ultimatum to hand back four heavy guns taken from two depots earlier this week.

Dr Mahathir was greeted by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, State public utilities and communications committee chairman Datuk Abdul Rahman Ibrahim, State health and social development committee chairman V. Saravanan and other State Assemblymen and Members of Parliament.

The Prime Minister said it was difficult for Malaysia to trust the UN anymore as the body had failed to live up to expectations in the past.

"They offer to help and defend us but it is all ridiculous ... it is all lies," he said, citing as an example the genocide in Rwanda recently.

"The Hutus were killing the Tutsis like nobody's business and they (the UN) did absolutely nothing," he said.

Asked how Malaysia would respond to the situation in Bosnia, Dr Mahathir said: "We are part of the UN and we have to abide by their orders although we do not agree on how matters are being handled."

The Prime Minister said the UN had chosen a commander who was "from amongst them" and it was certain that the commander would not do anything.

"It is the same situation as when Commander Rose was leading the UN troops.

"He was reputed to be from the much-touted Special Air Service (SAS) and

all that ... however, when the enemy came, he fled," he said.

Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose was the former commander of the UN peacekeeping troops in Bosnia until he was replaced by General Rupert Smith on Jan 24.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would continue to voice its opinions to the UN although such opinions might not be taken into consideration by the world body.

"Therefore, I would also ask them not to speak about human rights ... they are all hypocrites.

"They only speak about human rights if it is of economic importance to them, as is the case in China and Malaysia," he said.