

# Dr Mahathir to discuss Bosnia troop plan

By Jerry Francis  
and Mimi  
Syed Yusof

PANGKOR, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he would need to discuss with Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar on the proposal to upgrade the status of Malaysian troops from peacekeepers to peace enforcers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The Malaysian troops would not have enough weapons if we were to change our role. Therefore, we need to boost the supply of weapons to suit the change," he said.

"We will try to supply more weapons to our troops but the move is unlikely to get the co-operation of Nato (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and the UN (United Nations).

"We do not even have an aircraft there to get supplies to our troops. To get supplies to our troops is a problem because we would have to get into an area surrounded by Serbs," said Dr Mahathir.

He was speaking at a Press conference at the Telok Dalam Resort here.

He was asked to elaborate on the announcement by Syed Hamid in Ipoh this morning that Malaysian troops would seek a more active role in Bosnia-Herzegovina in light of the decision by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) last week to declare the arms embargo invalid.

Syed Hamid said the Defence Ministry was drawing up a contingency plan where the role of the 1,532 Malaysian troops would be

Government did to the banned Al Arqam movement.

"It is the responsibility of every Umno member to ensure that these people are guided into the right path," he said.

In Ipoh, Syed Hamid said the Malaysian Battalion in Bosnia-Herzegovina would get additional equipment to enhance its firepower, mobility and logistics support to commensurate with its new role as peace enforcers.

"This move is in accordance with the declaration by the Organisation of Islamic Conference last week that the arms embargo is invalid," he said.

He added that the troop strength would also be upgraded to a brigade (about 3,000 men) from the existing 1,532 troops.

"The change in role from peacekeepers and beefing up the force will be part of a contingency plan being drawn up in light of the OIC's decision and the worsening situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina," said Syed Hamid.

He was speaking to newsmen after launching the Territorial Army's 37th anniversary celebration at the Pusat Latihan Askar Wataniah here.

He said Malaysia was no longer obligated to follow the United Nations' ruling as it has committed itself to abide by the OIC decision.

"Since we support the OIC decision, we must make the necessary preparations to change our stand. This would mean a change in the contingency plan and the Malaysian forces will now play a more active role," said Syed Hamid.

upgraded to peace enforcers.

On Pelangi Air's flight from Singapore to Pangkor which has been stopped since May this year, he said it was the right of the Singapore Government to do so.

"If we are given landing rights in Singapore, they, in turn, would ask for landing rights here.

"Maybe Singapore could not get landing rights here. Following this, they have stopped us from flying tourists into Pangkor," said Dr Mahathir.

On anti-*hadith* activities, Dr Mahathir said the Government was correcting what was wrong, which was similar to what the

On whether the UN would regard Malaysia's move to revise the status of its troops as aggression, Syed Hamid said it was a secondary matter.

"Our primary aim is our commitment to the OIC and we will consider all the options to defend the sovereignty and integrity of Bosnia."

Syed Hamid said the move by the Government to consider selling arms to the Bosnians had given them hope in their struggle to free themselves from Serbian aggression.

On Saturday, Dr Mahathir announced that Malaysia was willing to sell arms to Bosnia in the light of the OIC declaration.