

All for world fund to help arm Bosnians

By G. Danapal

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia should contribute towards the proposed international fund to help arm the Bosnians and also set up its own fund to help them.

However, it was up to the Cabinet to decide whether Malaysia should contribute to the international fund and the amount it should contribute, the Prime Minister added.

He said it was only a proposal and it was up to the Cabinet to decide on it.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked if Malaysia would contribute towards the fund, proposed by the chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms, last week.

Helms had suggested that the US create a US\$50 million (RM123 million) international fund to help arm the Bosnians, saying he planned to introduce legislation to help arm Bosnian Government forces against Serb aggression.

Dr Mahathir, who was speaking to reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang on his return from Los Angeles, said:

"Besides contributing towards the proposed fund, we could also set up a fund for the purpose. If we were the Bosnian people, we too would expect others to help us."

Asked to comment on views that the stand taken by Malaysia and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on the arms embargo on Bosnia might cause an escalation in the situation in the war-torn republic, Dr Mahathir said the Bosnians would continue to suffer at the hands of Serbs if they were deprived of self-defence.

"They do not deprive the Serbian aggressors from acquiring arms while others are not willing to help or defend the Bosnians and are only interested in protecting the peacekeeping forces.

"We can also accuse others of watching the Bosnians being killed mercilessly by the armed Serbs."

He said those who opposed the stand taken by Malaysia and the OIC were only keen to prevent the Bosnians from being able to defend themselves.

He said Malaysia only decided to help arm the Bosnians after the OIC contact

3 AUG 1995

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 1

PM to attend UN General Assembly after all

□ FROM PAGE ONE

group, which met in Geneva recently, declared that the arms embargo on Bosnia was invalid.

Dr Mahathir said those who opposed the arms supply to Bosnia wanted the Bosnians to be unarmed.

"That way only one person will be killed whereas if they (Bosnians) are also armed, they may kill each other (the Bosnians and the Serbs). That is the logic of the UN operations."

Commenting on Japan's contention that while it sympathised with the Bosnians, it felt the lifting of the arms embargo would not solve the problem, the Prime Minister said:

"It is their (Japan) right to express their views but they (the views) will not have any effect," he said, adding

that Japan had neither sent its troops to Bosnia nor participated in Bosnia, except for its UN special envoy, Yasushi Akashi who had since left (Bosnia).

Bernama reported that at a news conference in Wisconsin on Monday, as he wrapped up his two-day visit to the 43rd annual Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Fly-In convention, Dr Mahathir said the Americans whom he had met felt that the US "should do something about Bosnia" but "were worried about being too involved and not being able to extricate themselves once they became involved."

"We do hope that the US will revise its views about being involved in Bosnia."

The Prime Minister said this in the light of the vote

in the US House of Representatives on Monday to lift the Bosnian arms embargo.

Dr Mahathir, who had consistently criticised the UN for its dismal failure to protect the Bosnians from Serb aggression, had said that he would not attend the 50th UN celebration in New York because there was "nothing to celebrate".

But he told the news conference: "I will attend the upcoming United Nations General Assembly."

Dr Mahathir also said he would discuss with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who will be in Malaysia tomorrow, international issues, bilateral relations, bilateral trade, and US policies on imports.

Asked if he would bring up the subject of Malaysia's status as a beneficiary of the

Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), he said that he would "try" to persuade the US to extend Malaysia's benefits.

At the airport on his return, he said there was a lot Malaysians could learn from shows such as the Oshkosh Air Show.

He said the air show had drawn more than 18,000 aircraft of all types, including experimental aircraft.

"Here, we are rigid to the extent that we can't fly experimental aircraft," he said, adding that aviation companies in the US supported experimental aircraft, some of which were made from fabric and aluminium.

He said the interest in experimental aircraft and the aviation sector was so great that there was even the Ex-

perimental Aircraft Association to look after the interests of those involved in such projects.

He said such interest in the aviation sector could be inculcated in Malaysians so that they would also be able to take up flying.

Dr Mahathir said what impressed him most was that the air show was staged without any government help.

"Everything from traffic control to garbage collection was done by volunteers and this is something which we must learn to do. People even bring their own tents and portable toilets. They were very organised."

In comparison to the LIMA show, Dr Mahathir said the Oshkosh show was more recreational while the former was commercial.