

Clinton veto illogical

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GURUN, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is disappointed with the decision of President Bill Clinton to veto the US Congress directive to end the arms embargo against Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He said Clinton should help the beleaguered, battered and badly outgunned Bosnians to defend themselves and what is left of their country by allowing them to have access to weapons.

"I do not understand this logic," he told reporters who had asked him for his response to reports that the US President had vetoed Congress' decision directing him to end US participation in the Bosnian arms embargo.

The US Senate and House of Representatives had approved the measure early this month, with many of its supporters comparing the situation in Bosnia to the Nazi holocaust while others said that the Muslims should be allowed to defend themselves against the Serbs.

Dr Mahathir said the Bosnians only wanted to defend themselves from their enemies but they received no assistance from the Unprofor (UN Protection Force) and Nato.

"They want to defend themselves and we do not allow this ... the Unprofor, Nato and everybody do not want to help.

"So what does he (Clinton) want? Does he want the Serbs to slaughter the unarmed Bosnians?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters at the Cinta

Sayang Golf and Country Club in Sungai Petani after officiating the groundbreaking ceremony of Moto-sikal dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas') motorcycle and engine production plant at Ladang Jerai here.

The Prime Minister also said the Bosnians would be at the mercy of their enemies if the UN peacekeepers pulled out before they (Bosnians) were allowed to have access to weapons.

He said by right the Bosnians should be allowed to have access to weapons before the peacekeepers pulled out and left it to the Bosnians to fight their own battles.

"I do not see what is safe (for the Bosnians), it is clear that if they pull out when the Bosnians do not have access to weapons, then the Bosnians will suffer," he said.

The US Congress' measure which Clinton had vetoed directed him to end US participation in the arms embargo if UN forces left Bosnia, or 12 weeks after the Bosnian Government asked them to leave.

Dr Mahathir also expressed regret that evidence compiled by the United States had shown that between 2,000 and 2,700 Bosnian civilians were machine-gunned to death soon after the "safe area" of Srebrenica fell to the Serbs last month.

"If the US says what it did is safe for the Bosnians, does it mean that it is safe for so many people to be killed?"

"The figures are of those detected. What about those killed but were not detected?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir said it would not be effective even if Malaysia were to urge the superpowers to look into the plight of the Bosnians

again.

"We have urged ... who else could we urge? These people are deaf ... even if we speak out again it would not make any difference," he

added.

The Prime Minister also said that he was happy that Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Siladje had withdrawn his resignation.

"We have been in touch

with them. We are also of the opinion that this is not the time for him to resign ... if there are misunderstandings, we should forget them," he added.