

31 JUL 1996

Austria-Bosnia

AUSTRIA SEES FIRM UN ROLE IN BOSNIA WITH MALAYSIAN LEADERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, July 31 (Bernama) -- Austria has expressed confidence the upcoming United Nations General Assembly under Malaysia's expected chairmanship will successfully deal with the Bosnian issue.

Visiting Austrian Chancellor Dr Franz Vranitzky said Malaysia has been supporting the peace process in Bosnia to a considerable extent.

"Malaysia will chair the 51st General Assembly of the United Nations which will come up in October this year," he said at a news conference here.

Austria, he said, would cooperate in the Bosnian peace process -- a subject which came up during his discussion with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday. Dr Vranitzky arrived yesterday for a four-day visit.

Austria's approach to the problem is three-fold, including contributing troops to the Nato-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia, although not as many as the number provided by Malaysia, he said.

The second step taken by Austria is to contribute financially to rebuild Bosnia's infrastructure, especially its traffic system, schools and hospitals, and provide job opportunities.

It will also support the repatriation of Bosnian war refugees who had been unable to return home.

About 18,000 people had sought refuge in Austria in the last three years, he said.

On tourism, he said Austria, whose tourism industry relied on water and spring resources, is ready to show Malaysians who are keen to learn from its experience.

On Asia-Europe relations, he said it is important that both sides approach issues in a non-confrontational manner although they may have differing views on them. -- BERNAMA

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