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Let's avoid blindly swallowing rhetoric of foreigners

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THOSE of us who are still enamoured by the rhetoric of US support for democracy and humanitarianism should also consider the reality on the ground.

Nato began its bombing in the Balkans not for the sake of refugees but for strategic reasons - to get Yugoslavia to sign the Rambouillet accords and stabilise the region.

There was no refugee exodus until the bombings began.

There were 45,000 Kosovars in Albania and Macedonia the week before the bombing - according to UNCHR estimates. Now there are 700,000.

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's planned ethnic cleansing - which Nato declared it wanted to forestall - would have resulted in an outflow of a maximum of 100,000 refugees.

The US just went ahead and did what it wanted.

Newsweek (May 17) reported that the decision to go to war was "careless and in haste", and "a historical blunder".

The US does not want to be sucked into a full-scale war, massive reconstruction and perpetual housekeeping.

We in Malaysia must also, and always, keep in mind what happened in Vietnam.

After four US Presidents had made commitments to the people of South Vietnam, in 1973 Washington abruptly abandoned them to a terrible fate.

We must not blindly swallow the rhetoric of foreigners.

"Malaysia is the responsibility of Malaysians and not foreigners," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reminded the recent Youth Day gathering in Kuala Lumpur.

"If we do not think on our own, we will lose our independence."

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