

Save Bosnia, parliamentarians told in Malaysia conference

by Laith Shubeilat

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The International Parliamentarians Against Genocide in Bosnia and Hercegovina convened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia over Jan. 22-23, organized jointly by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) and the Malaysian Parliamentarians Committee. Malaysia is one of the few countries of the world where a government is outspoken and clearly critical of the new world order policies of genocide against Bosnia. Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who has acclaimed a respectable international status for his firm policies and stands opposing the prevailing international hegemonic policies being passed through the different organs and instruments of the United Nations, gave the keynote opening address to the conference in the presence of President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia. He called upon the parliamentarians to cause their respective "governments to help change the situation in that unfortunate country and save the valiant people of Bosnia and Hercegovina."

The prime minister indicated that the Serbs, by shelling Sarajevo in May 1992, the same month that the United Nations accepted the new Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina as a member state, "had served notice that they care nothing for world opinion or the norms of human behavior." Dr. Mahathir went on to refute the British argument that a civil war is going on there, saying it was nothing less than a war of conquest by the Serbs abetted by others who have their own hidden agendas. "Bosnians are being killed," he said, "and Bosnia and Hercegovina was about to be dismembered. But neither the European Union or the United Nations Security Council took decisive actions." Moreover, he added, "the Bosnians, with the consent of the U.N., are placed at the mercy of their Serbian oppressors."

'Chamberlain lives'

The Malaysian prime minister criticized the Vance-Owen plan as contradicting the U.N. Charter and the London International Conference and emphasized that "the Geneva process, now presided over by [Lord David] Owen and [Thorvald] Stoltenberg, is bent on forcing the Bosnians to accept Serbian occupation as a basis for settlement." He warned that

history is repeating itself, and that "the spirit of [Neville] Chamberlain lives and the result is another holocaust."

Commenting on the despicable ethnic cleansing, complemented with the rape and murder of young girls, women, and children, he said, "The so-called civilized world is horrified but is not prepared to stop the Serbs. Yet woe betide any little developing country which violates even the most trivial of human rights." He warned that "unless the civilized world puts a stop to what is going on in Bosnia-Hercegovina, weak nations will know no freedom. *Might will always be right.*"

Commenting on the contradictory statements concerning military action against the Serbs coming out of the French, British, and Americans, he noted: "I really do not know whom to believe." Not only do they not act, he said, but they prevent the Bosnians from defending themselves. "The western nations could not have done worse if they were to hold down the Bosnians so as to enable the Serbs to batter them. It is abetment and no less!"

He criticized U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the U.N. Security Council, and western governments, calling on them to take effective action to stop Serbian brutality. He called on the parliamentarians to exert pressure on their governments to pressure the U.N. Security Council to implement the various resolutions which the council has already passed criticizing the U.N.'s refraining from the use of "all necessary means" to ensure delivery of humanitarian aid, adding that the U.N. "safe areas" have been relentlessly turned into areas under siege.

Suit prepared against Britain

The prime minister's address was an excellent start for the deliberation sessions that followed, where the participants almost unanimously touched on the same points with the same fervor. A paper was presented by Prof. Francis Boyle, an expert on international law who has worked closely with the Bosnian government. Boyle's paper explained how he had won two International High Court rulings naming genocide in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and how these rulings were and still are ignored by the Security Council. Boyle called upon any one or a group of sovereign states to sue Great Britain and/or any of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council for complicity in genocide. He stated that his files are ready, the papers are drawn, and he is awaiting to be authorized by any member nation of the U.N. to move. This action could turn the

tables on the protectors of aggression and expose them in the eyes of public opinion, Boyle insisted.

The other papers and discussions from the floor were very valuable. Taher Masri, the speaker of the Jordanian House, thanked Malaysia for taking the lead on this issue and called upon that nation to continue to lead an international movement to save Bosnia, offering Jordan's support for such efforts.

The next conference, which is expected to take place in Europe (Strasbourg or Brussels), should be organized such that a larger number of parliamentarians, especially from Europe and the international community, attend. Many delegates in Kuala Lumpur noticed that there were many countries absent from the conference, and felt that this should be carefully studied, to determine whether it was due to logistical or similar difficulties, or due to political pressures.

Such an assessment is especially warranted because the delegates in attendance could not help but notice that the first draft declarations presented to the conference were very much below the expectations for such a conference. The argument that the declarations should not embarrass the Malaysian government had no credibility in front of the firm, honest, clear positions advanced by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in his official speech; this same observation holds true for the excellent closing speech by the Malaysian foreign minister, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Fortunately, the conference called for a committee to redraft the final declaration, and this was accomplished.

Documentation

The final declaration of the conference, released Jan. 23, included the following points:

- "The conference therefore calls for the termination of the so-called Geneva peace talks and calls for a new international conference to replace the ongoing mediations and talks, and this Conference of Parliamentarians will campaign for such a conference."

- "The conference requests the United Nations to act with urgency to lift the siege of Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, and other cities."

- The conference calls upon "all states to consider ignoring the illegal arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina by providing military weapons, equipment, supplies, and troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina in accordance with United Nations Charter Article 51."

- The conference is concerned and distressed that the mediators have acted against the principles encapsulated in the United Nations Charter and the London Conference; it is also concerned that these mediators are not accountable to either the United Nations General Assembly or to the European Parliament, and that they have arbitrary powers to formulate policies which are contrary to all civilized standards. . . .

- The conference "regrets that Great Britain, France,

and Russia have used their influence in the Security Council to deny Bosnia-Herzegovina adequate means to defend its sovereignty. . . . The conference calls on Great Britain, France, Russia, and other permanent members of the Security Council to take cognizance that the world community will hold them responsible for the Security Council's failure to act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Convention Against Genocide."

- "We call upon all nations committed to justice and the principles of the United Nations Charter to consider suing those permanent members of the Security Council they feel to be responsible, in the World Court, to rectify this situation, and to confirm the right and the obligation of each signatory of the 1948 Convention Against Genocide to 'prevent and punish' genocide."

Statements of participants

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic: "All of us present here today know that an evil resulting in the crude violation of international law and human rights can never be characterized as purely local in nature and presents a challenge to all." Adding that although "some political leaderships" do not share this view, "it is still not too late. It is important that common people of all countries understand the dangers of the fascism and refashioned Bolshevism which once again have raised their head and threaten mankind and our shared values." He added, "There is no example in history where force and violence have been stopped by an appeal."

Francis Boyle, professor of international law, in his working paper "United Nations and the European Community: Responsibility and Failure," called on parliamentarians to ask their governments to sue Britain, France, Russia, and the United States before the International Court of Justice at The Hague for aiding and abetting genocide in Bosnia. "The four countries deserve to be sued for aiding and abetting genocide in Bosnia and for not doing anything to prevent the carve-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina which violates the Racial Discrimination Convention." He warned that if governments did not act now they might be the next on the list to be "eliminated" under the same techniques used by the so-called new world order.

Doris Pack, representing the European Parliament, told Malaysia's *New Straits Times* that the Vance-Owen peace plan had aggravated the war, that in fact, the 22-month war "began" after the Vance-Owen plan agreed to the drawing of the lines within Bosnia to split the state into three regions. "Lord Owen must go," she said.

Abdel Bari Atwan, a Palestinian parliamentarian, suggested that Muslim nations that controlled oil and related resources must impose economic sanctions against the western countries which are blocking action to save Bosnia. "The Palestinians had to wait 45 years for a single United Nations resolution to be passed to alleviate our plight. Under the present circumstances, the Bosnians may have to wait as long or even longer if we rely only on discussions and negotiations."