

Malaysia will no longer remain silent on major issues

1984 INON JAHMAD

PARIS: The current visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to France and his recent visits to Canada and the United States underscore Malaysia's determination to play its role in international affairs.

Impatient with the lack of will of the various international organisations in implementing resolutions arrived at during conferences, Malaysia has committed itself to the cause of world peace and the new international economic order.

For a small country, the mission may be scoffed at as being quixotic or at best looked upon sympathetically. But Malaysia is determined not to let the general inertia and despondency among Third World

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reiterated that Malaysia's size should not relegate her to being a mere follower of decisions made by others.

He said: "Small though we may be, we intend to actively participate in the political and economic life of the community of nations in an independent manner."

Detente

"We do not expect and have no illusions about exerting a decisive influence on the global equation," he said when addressing members of the Washington Foreign Policy Association.

Many agree there is a basis for comparing the present situation with that in the 1930s. There is the worsening political situation and the aban-

Malaysia is united with other Third World countries as victims of an "unjust and inequitable economic system that seeks to deny us the legitimate rewards of our labour and natural resources."

At the same time, Malaysia is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and fully shares its abhorrence of big power political and economic bullying and manipulation.

This, however, does not prevent it from enjoying long-standing close and cordial relations with the West with which it shares a commitment to democracy and the free enterprise system.

In its efforts to achieve its foreign policy goals, Malaysia is guided by moderation. This is based on the conviction that justice and equality for all nations in conformity with the UN

tion," he told a Press conference before leaving Washington.

Malaysia will continue to urge the US to review its Opposition to the Third World On such issues as the new international economic order, the Law of the Sea Treaty, Antarctica, multilateral trade negotiations and more.

It will continue to persuade the United States that it cannot ignore the PLO in seeking a solution to the Palestinian issue.

As a superpower, the United States must continue to maintain contacts with other superpowers towards the settlement of such question as Kampuchea and Afghanistan.

The desire for the upgrading of bilateral relations through frequent contacts and dialogues underscores the Prime Minister's belief that the United States has a constructive role to play in solving international is-

threat-now, that it has a base in Vietnam.

In fact, Malaysia welcomes other navies, as long as the Soviet Union "is not so free" in the region. But all powers should respect Asean's Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality concept and leave the region alone.

This is one of the issues discussed during the meeting between the Prime Minister and US Secretary of Defence, Mr Caspar Weinberger, at the Pentagon.

On the recent visit of the Seventh Fleet to the region, Malaysia said it hoped to see more such visits.

The United States sees "the creative leadership" of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir as instrumental in developing the US-Asean understanding & tin.

US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Mr Paul Wolfowitz, applauded the skill with which Malay-

countries in this regard. Of the mechanisms for dialogue and decision-making, one after the other, in close succession, the major arms limitation talks have been discontinued amidst much recrimination and accusation. The trend towards the degeneration of international relations has to be arrested. Malaysia is thus seeking a peaceful and stable international environment based on justice and equality for all nations.

Malaysia is convinced that in an era of heightened big power rivalry and confrontation, reminiscent of the 1930s just before World War Two, the Third World countries -- the silent majority as it were -- must no longer be silent. More so when the threat of a nuclear holocaust hangs over the world.

Justice

It is apparent that the United States is the cornerstone of a policy aimed at preserving democracy and the free enterprise system. Malaysia believes that the United States has the capacity, the political will and the influence to strive for world peace.

As an Asian nation, Malaysia is committed to peace in the region and wants a quick settlement of the Kampuchean problem. As a country with a predominantly Muslim population it is naturally sympathetic with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their just and inalienable rights.

As a small developing Third World country,

Charter is a primary and fundamental necessity. On Southeast Asia, Malaysia welcomes the US military presence merely as a move towards peace in Southeast Asia and the Middle East and, at the same time help reduce the tension between the developing and developed nations in the North-South dialogue.

Malaysia has "upgraded" its relationship with the United States through frequent contacts and dialogues. That is all it can do without losing its identity as a non-aligned nation.

In his discussions with President Ronald Reagan and other top officials of the United States, the Prime Minister was free and frank and candid at times.

To him this is the hallmark of the close relationship between the two countries. Through the continued dialogues and contacts, Malaysia will seek to influence the Americans towards achieving its objectives.

"This is better than adopting a confrontational attitude. We don't want to quarrel with the Americans just because we are a non-aligned na-

sia conducts diplomatic affairs.

"So while it is good news, it is news, and I think it is also attributable to the US current policy as regards Southeast and East Asia.

"Whether from the security, economic or political standpoint, the nations of the Pacific Basin are rapidly assuming a position of major importance to the United States, not only regionally but also in a global sense," said Mr Wolfowitz.

Besides economic reasons, it is this quest for peace that took the Prime Minister to Canada where he declared his support for Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's peace initiative involving the need for a dialogue between the big powers on arms reductions.

This is also one of the reasons for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's visit to France. France is this year's president of the EEC and is also playing a key mediatory role in the crisis in the Lebanon.

According to the Prime Minister, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, self-determination and a fair and equitable economic system could be the basis for new Bill of Rights.