

Marcos must win wider public support: Dr M

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NASSAU, Oct. 20

THE communist rebellion in the Philippines could prove unstoppable unless President Ferdinand Marcos wins greater public support for his administration, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said at the Commonwealth summit.

In a wide-ranging interview, Dr Mahathir said he is concerned that US weapons sold to China could be turned on China's neighbours.

"We would expect the Philippine government would learn from its neighbours that the best way to handle the situation would be to come to terms with the wishes of the people, the needs of the people," said Dr Mahathir.

"If the majority of the

population is behind the government and believes in the fight against terrorism, there is no problem."

Dr Mahathir claimed such was the case when Malaysia defeated communist rebels shortly after it attained independence from Britain in 1957.

"But if the government is not able to get the support of the population ... (they) might in fact turn toward terrorism as their saviors," he said. "Then I don't think it is possible for the government to squash such an uprising."

On China, he said: "I think the United States should be very careful about supplying arms to China. Anything that might make her too

powerful might tempt certain adventurers in the Chinese leadership to take over and move towards expansionism.

"What we are apprehensive about in Malaysia is that China seems to be taking 180 degree turns very frequently. At this moment they are enamoured with the Western free market system, while trying to remain socialist.

"They may become very rich and very powerful. If at that time someone comes along and tries to get them to go the other way again, we can't be sure they won't."

On other issues, Dr Mahathir criticised the US for its reluctance to apply stronger sanctions against South Africa to pressure it to dismantle

its apartheid system of racial separation; and for what he called "having two standards about terrorism."

The US "will not sit down and talk to Arab terrorists, but ... (will) sit down and talk with Israeli terrorists," he said. "If you want the Arabs to foreswear terrorism, you should also ask the Israelis to do the same.

"We cannot agree that you should answer terrorism with terrorism."

Commonwealth bargaining over joint action on South Africa meanwhile gathered pace yesterday as heads of state met in groups to find a way of convincing Britain to accept economic sanctions.

A lunch that was to have grouped all 46
Cont'd Back Page, Col. 4

'Marcos must win more support'

FROM PAGE ONE

delegation heads at Lyford Cay, West of here, failed to materialise when key statesmen decided to work on toward a compromise.

Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda said Commonwealth leaders "know there is an explosion on the horizon" in South Africa.

Mr Kaunda reporters the Commonwealth leaders are seeking a

way "to send a signal to the rascals ... that unless they can do something about that the rest of the world will act in a certain way."

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's iron-clad opposition to sanctions against South Africa looks increasingly likely to break the group's tradition of decision-making by consensus, diplomats say.

They said last night there was a growing belief among Commonwealth leaders that the group's biennial summit here would ultimately draft a final communique calling for sanctions against South Africa — but with Britain dissenting on that single issue.

Such a move would mark a radical departure from the 49-member organisation's consensus

OCT 21 1985

tradition.

Unshaken by both formal and informal pleadings from her fellow leaders, Mrs Thatcher has lived up to a reputation for intransigence, standing fast against any threat of sanctions to force the white-minority South African government to change its apartheid policies of racial separation. — Agencies