

Dr M: China could use US weapons on neighbours

Dr Mahathir

overseas trips

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NASSAU, Sun. — American weapons sold to China someday could be turned on its neighbours, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said at the Commonwealth summit.

"I think the United States should be very careful about supplying arms to China," he said in a wide-ranging interview.

"Anything that might make her (China) 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."

Dr Mahathir also criticised the United States 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."

Terrorism

He said the US "will not sit down and talk to Arab terrorists, but... (will) sit down and talk with Israeli terrorists".

"If you want the Arabs to forswear terrorism, you should also ask the Israelis to do the same.

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

On the Philippines, he said the Communist rebellion there could prove unstoppable unless Presi-

dent Marcos wins greater public support for his Government.

"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," he said.

"If the majority of the population is behind the Government and believes in the fight against terrorism, there is no problem," said Dr Mahathir, claiming such was the case when Malaysia defeated Communist insurgents 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 saviours," he said. "Then I don't think it is possible for the Government to quash such an uprising." — AP.