

Dr M: DON'T BE MISLED BY THE DISCONTENTED

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Malaysians not to be taken in by "discontented people who vent their frustrations by complaining to any willing listener."

Dr Mahathir said: "No one should be taken in by them. The best way to judge is to look around and see the obvious achievements which contrast rather glaringly with their claims."

He said Malaysia's system of government was not far different from any other free nation, although "we do have our own peculiarities."

"We make no apologies as we are convinced that the peculiarities are essential in a developing multi-racial country," he said at a diploma presentation ceremony for army officers who graduated from the Armed Forces Staff College here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Defence Minister, said the pace of the country's development had been unusually fast.

"We attribute this to political stability and the general desire of Malaysians to improve their standard of living and to take their legitimate place in the community of nations," he added.

He said although Malaysia is in the midst of the recession, it was not "submitting passively" and added that the nation would "overcome the difficulties in time."

Dr Mahathir also stressed on the importance of an effective defence strategy that could prevent disap-

pointments, suffering and destruction.

"We have witnessed such incidences in South Vietnam and Kampuchea where the defence system's failure has caused suffering, loss of freedom, property and the destruction of industries," he added.

He said Malaysians would suffer the same fate as the thousands of Vietnamese refugees if they are careless or do not have an effective defence strategy.

"We have to draw up an effective defence strategy that could thwart any form

of threat from within or outside the country. This is the only way to ensure the country's continued peace," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the defence strategy should be able to encompass military strength, economic stability, political stability, strength of the administrative machinery, psychological defence and peoples' harmony.

"The strategy is based on the Government's ambition to prevent wars and instead ensure a life of peace, harmony and freedom to Ma-

laysians," he added.

He pointed out that countries could easily be drawn into the "arms race" and said that Malaysia, as a developing nation, could not afford "state of the art" weapons, which were constantly being replaced by more sophisticated systems.

Dr Mahathir also reminded armed forces officers that modern armed forces required leaders who could incorporate "management skills" to their leadership capabilities.