

Talks going on to end Reds' armed struggle

BY SABRY SHARIF

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia was discussing with the Thai Government and certain individuals close to the leadership of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) on the reported move by the terrorists to end their 41-year-old armed struggle.

However, the Prime Minister said as the talks were on-going no decision had been made to accept some of the terrorists to resettle in Malaysia.

"This is all that I can say for now as we are still discussing the matter with the Thais and some people, who are believed to be close to the communist leadership," he said.

He was responding to a recent report in the **Bangkok Post**, quoting Thai security sources, that after 40 years of fighting to overth-

row the Malaysian Government, the CPM had agreed to leave its jungle strongholds near the Thai-Malaysian border.

According to the report, CPM leader Chin Peng was expected to fly from China to ratify the agreement ending the armed struggle.

The report also said the CPM agreed to end its struggle after Thai Army chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh promised to provide written, official assurances for their safety and rights to Thai citizenship.

Asked if Malaysia was willing to accept some of the terrorists for resettlement, he said: "We cannot say we are ready (to receive them). We have to view it in the context of our security.

"But as the struggle has been going on since 1948, it will not be proper if we do not do anything to put an end to this problem," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had no objections to the Thai plan to resettle the terrorists close to the Thai-Malaysian border.

If this plan materialised, he said Malaysia would just have to keep a close watch along the border.

On whether there had been direct talks with the CPM on the move, he said this did not arise as the Government does not recognise the outlawed party.

Earlier today, Army Chief Jen Tan Sri Yaacob Mohamed Zain told reporters here that over the past two years about 400 of the terrorists from the 8th and 10th regiments of the CPM had surrendered to Malaysian and Thai authorities.

He said communist movements, mostly from the 12th regiment, have been reduced significantly and posed no danger to the country's security.