

# U.N. ROLE FOR BETTER WORLD

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PM: It's the only body to decide on the New World Order

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**MALAYSIA believes the United Nations is the only legitimate instrument for creating an equitable world, for protecting the weak and the poor from the pressures of the strong.**

With the end of the Cold War, the only hope of the developing nations lies in the democratisation of the UN, especially as the option to defect to the other side is no longer available to them.

These points were stressed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his speech at the UN General Assembly here on Tuesday. It was his fourth speech to the world body since he became Prime Minister.

"We want to remain independent but we also want to conform to international norms as determined not by some non-governmental organisations or the so-called advanced democracies, but by all the nations of the world," he said.

"If we default, then it is the UN and not some Robin Hoods which should chastise us."

Apart from the UN and democracy in the New World Order, Dr Mahathir also touched on the removal of all nuclear weapons, the environment and protectionism.

The Prime Minister questioned the type of democracy which the rich nations were trying to impose on the poor, irrespective of whether such systems were irrelevant or practical.

He said when the UN was formed after the Second World War, the allied victors assumed the right to create a world order in which each of the five major powers could veto anything that did not serve them.

When these five powers fell out, it was followed by the Cold War and the East-West conflict divided the world into two antagonistic camps.

However, the Americans and Europeans, under the New World Order, would not like those living in East Asia to call themselves East Asians.

"We may not have an identity that is not permitted, nor may we work together on the basis of that

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# Dr M: Tropical wood boycott is economic arm-twisting

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identity. Is this a foretaste of the New World Order that we must submit to?" asked Dr Mahathir.

"Democracy and only democracy, is legitimate and permissible now. No one really disputes this.

"In fact, speaking for Malaysia, we can think of no alternative but democracy in the context of our pluralistic society.

"We can also affirm that we have no intention of siding with despots or tyrants and those that deny their people their rights to democratic government. But is there only one form of democracy or only one high priest to interpret it?"

The Prime Minister said differences existed even among those who are preaching democracy to the others.

Dr Mahathir said: "We, the converts, will accept the basics but what is the meaning of democracy if we have no right of choice at all or if democracy means our people are consistently subjected to instability and disruptions and economic weaknesses which make us subject to manipulation by the powerful democracies of the world?"

"More, it should supervise the invention and production of other diabolical weapons."

Dr Mahathir said weapons for defence should be solely for defence and their capabilities to prevent them from being used for aggression except in a limited way.

He said: "Democratic governments should only be brought down by the democratic process. Anything that goes beyond democratic processes should merit UN intervention if a request is made."

On the environment, the Prime Minister said it should be made known whether the Rio de Janeiro meeting was going to be a constructive one or a finger-pointing third world bashing session.

The meeting should be used to discuss and agree on a common course of action on environment and development.

He said the idea that tropical forests could be saved only by boycotting tropical timber smacked more of economic arm-twisting than a real desire to save the forests.

However, he emphasised on the need to have a proper plan for reafforestation which had hardly

been touched in the debate on the environment.

He said in the United Nations, all nations were supposed to be equal but five of them were more equal than the rest of the 166.

Seven countries on their own had laid down the laws which would affect adversely the economies of others.

"A few nations on their own have taken upon themselves to determine the New World Order," he said.

He added that if international democracy as represented by the United Nations was to be meaningful and effective, there must be an infusion of some of the current ideas of realities.

"The world needs policing, as the Gulf War demonstrated to us. But are we to have self-appointed policemen or are we to have a police force that is beholden to this august body, the United Nations?" he asked.

He said the leaders of nuclear nations, the people who would push the nuclear buttons, were not as safe as events in the Soviet Union amply demonstrated.

"We cannot even be sure that someone irrational might not become a leader and gain access to the button. Accordingly, the existence of all nuclear weapons cannot be justified in the present world," he said.

"The UN which is playing the role of inspectors in Iran should extend that role to supervise the destruction of all nuclear weapons everywhere.

been touched in the debate on the environment.

He said to acquire cheap hydro-electric power, the poor countries might have to sacrifice a few thousand hectares of their forests but campaigns had been mounted against such proposals.

On economic growth, Dr Mahathir said poor countries must have either aid or access to foreign markets and it would be near suicidal for them to keep their market to themselves.

For their case to be heard, he said it was necessary for the poor countries to band together not to form impoverished trade blocs but to lend weight to their arguments in forums such as GATT.

"And so the East Asia Economic Group or EAEG was proposed, not as a trade bloc, but as a forum for the nations of East Asia to confer with each other in order to reach agreement on a common stand for a common problem caused by the restrictive trade practices of the rich," he said.

"We are perplexed to find that this objective merely to have a voice in international affairs is being opposed openly and covertly by the very country which preaches free trade.

"It is even more surprising that there should be such opposition when NAFTA (North America Free Trade Area) itself is being formed on the principle of the right of free association of independent countries."