
Mahathir: Why Malaysia can criticise the West

MALAYSIA can afford to criticise the actions of the United States and some European countries because of its strong financial position, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said countries which had to plead for financial help from the West every year would not be able to voice their views so openly.

He said these countries could not afford to adopt the strong stand that Malaysia had taken.

"After my speech in the United Nations recently, many developing countries said they agreed with everything voiced by me but they could not afford to air their views," he said at the close of the Umno general assembly.

He said it was important for Malaysia to maintain a strong economy with a stable political situation.

He, however, said Malaysia could not be too bold without calculating its ability first.

The Government, he assured, would continue to make decisions based on careful consideration.

He said every decision had to be weighed carefully to ensure the country's success.

In an apparent reference to

Iraq, he said a certain country had gone into the Gulf war saying it was the "mother of all battles" but it had lost finally.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had to make certain decisions which were correct but might not be popular with the people.

He said many Latin American countries had taken popular decisions which went down well with the people but these nations had become bankrupt.

"Malaysia can also become bankrupt if we want to be popular all the time," he said.

On Malaysia's strong economy, he said many African leaders were invited to visit Malaysia before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kuala Lumpur in 1989.

"They promised to come but did not show up because they thought Malaysia was just another developing country and there was nothing for them to learn from," he said.

However, when these leaders turned up for the CHOGM meeting, they were surprised by what they saw.

These countries were now sending their people to undergo training programmes in Malaysia.