

Lasting global peace still elusive, says PM

By Balbeer S. Jessy

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Lasting peace and security after the end of the Cold War is still a mere hope in view of worrisome developments that have taken place in the world since then, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said initially the end of the Cold War had been greeted with jubilation.

"After decades of disruptive superpower rivalry, the international community was afforded the best chance to work for an equitable and just world order.

"However, the exultation was shortlived. Recent developments have called into question the fundamentals upon which this new world order rests.

"Today, developing countries are still vulnerable to the changes in the global political and economic scene.

"Instead of seeing the evolution of fair play and a scrupulous respect for the principles of international relations, there are some countries that have resorted to arbitrary and unilateral actions to impose their values and will on other states."

Speaking at the official dinner hosted in honour of Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma, Dr Mahathir said that because of such actions, weaker countries were now increasingly finding themselves in a difficult situation.

"They have not only to submit themselves to this version of the new world order, but also to an economic and trade system that is advocated and practised by certain leaders of the West.

"For example, in the economic field, the various forms of non-tariff barriers that have been erected in the way of free trade and the introduction of new elements such as intellectual property, local content and discriminatory taxes have seriously impeded world trade.

"This can result in the slowing down of the world economy which in turn will seriously affect our economies, which are both open and very much dependent on external trade."

Dr Mahathir said the recent Non-Aligned Movement summit in Jakarta provided an opportunity for the leaders to discuss a wide range of issues of immediate concern to NAM.

"We share the views on the necessity for NAM to redefine its role in a unipolar world. We need to ensure

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that NAM will be a united and vibrant organisation in order to contribute to a just world order.

"NAM must strive to forge a new global consensus and commitment to strengthen international economic co-operation."

Dr Mahathir said Namibia and Malaysia shared similar views on many international issues, particularly with regard to the struggle of the majority of South Africans for freedom.

"Our initial optimism, raised by reforms introduced by F.W. de Klerk and the initial progress made at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), has now given way to serious concern about the prospects for peaceful transition to majority rule.

"We urge the Pretoria regime to take immediate steps to revive the negotiating process under Codesa

and work within a specified time frame towards the establishment of an interim Government for the eventual realisation of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa."

He said black Africans must also remember that they had all suffered together and must not allow themselves to become instruments of white rule.

"Those who do must be regarded as traitors to the cause of democracy."

Dr Mahathir praised Dr Nujoma for his Government's efforts in bringing about economic and social development in Namibia.

"Because of your colonial legacy, you have to face up to the need to redress the stark inequities and inequalities in income, educational and economic opportunities, ownership of land and access to basic amenities and services among your people."