

Malaysia's policy always consistent, says Mahathir

NEW YORK: Malaysia has consistently followed the same policy despite changes in leadership, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The changes took place without problems or disruptions, the Prime Minister said at a question-answer session after attending a dinner hosted by the US-Asean Business Council here on Thursday.

"I am sure that when my time comes and there should be a change, that change will not disrupt the progress of the country," he added.

Although the leaders change, he said, there will not be changes in the political system.

"We have leaders who will continue to accommodate foreign investments," he said.

Earlier, in his speech at the Council of Foreign Relations' luncheon, Dr Ma-

hathir said the world today calls for strong leadership that looks beyond national boundaries.

It needs leaders who are decisive in world affairs and are willing to do what is right, he said.

Dr Mahathir said some strong nations and world powers seemed unable to handle problems in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nagorno Karabakh and Abkhazia.

"A leaderless world merely stands by to watch without extending a helping hand," he said, adding that the Western democracies were unwilling and incapable of handling even small upstarts such as Serbia and Armenia.

He said all the strong nations could not help because they practised a distorted form of democracy that stressed form rather than substance.

Dr Mahathir said when

the Group of Seven (G-7) industrialised countries met recently in Tokyo, they were led by leaders who had no credible support at home.

They had support-ratings well below a democratic majority, yet they represented the world's most powerful nations.

In the West, where voter turnouts seldom reached 50 per cent, it was possible for a government to be elected when it had the support of only 26 per cent of the electorate.

Weak government would throw up weak leaders, concerned more with placating the electorate than doing the right things.

He said the United Nations cannot function unless strong leaders are able to lend their countries' support to fight political and economic problems besetting the world.