

PM hits out at Time over terrorist report

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir today criticised *Time* magazine for publishing an article that Malaysia was training terrorists here and said it was part of a campaign by the Western media to discredit Malaysia.

The Prime Minister said the Western media's reports, including those that said Malaysia was turning into another Mexico, was part of a strategy to deter people from investing and visiting here, generally aimed at undermining the nation's economy and its development.

"What is their evidence that we are training terrorists here? It is very easy to say this because they are trying to arm-twist us," he

said adding that they are unhappy with Malaysia for being vociferous on international issues.

He said this was proof that some quarters misuse the Press for certain purposes.

"They have classified us together with Iran and Libya. What they want to say about other countries is not our business. But they cannot say this about Malaysia.

"I would like *Time* Magazine to come here and make a report here that we are training terrorists in this country," he said.

In the April 10 issue of the magazine, an article under the heading *A Mad Dream of Global Terror* reports that Abu Sayyaf, a small Muslim separatist group in the southern Philippines was receiving arms, money

and training from the governments of Libya and Islamic groups in the Middle East, Pakistan and Malaysia.

The report said Edwin Angeles, claimed to be the second in command of Abu Sayyef and who surrendered to the Philippines authorities in February under an amnesty programme, had told police that the group used training camps in Malaysia and was expecting an arms shipment arranged by supporters there.

The report from the Philippines added that the group had tried to bomb two United Airlines 747 aeroplanes enroute to Kai Tak airport in Hongkong from Los Angeles and Singapore and attempted to assassinate Pope John Paul II during his visit to Manila in

January.

The report said a plan called for a suicide bomber to crash his small plane filled with explosives into the headquarters of the US Central Intelligence Agency. It added that these plans were allegedly hatched by Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, the accused mastermind of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York city.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, asked to comment on the article, said the West never did like Malaysia's success, always wanting the country to be subservient to them.

"We have survived successfully independently. We do not have to beg the West all the time, like many others. Because of that they feel we are a 'naughty boy', so

they want to whip the 'naughty boy'. It is the kind of selfish attitude of the West," he added.

Some Western media's attempts to portray that there is a rift in relations between Malaysia and the Philippines run contrary to latest trade figures which indicate that Malaysia has emerged as the largest foreign investor in the Philippines in 1994 with RM158 million.

Relations between the two countries have been cordial with Dr Mahathir visiting Manila in February last year and this January while Ramos visited Kuala Lumpur in January, 1993.

Malaysia is also embarking on an ambitious programme to uplift the living standards of the people in Mindanao following a request from the Philippines.