

28 SEP 1996

Mahathir-Israel

NO DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL, SAYS PM

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

NEW YORK, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not recognise Israel until it has fulfilled all the undertakings it gave when Tel Aviv signed the peace accord with Palestine, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here.

"Until then, we cannot (have diplomatic ties)," he said at a press conference here Friday to comment on the latest flare-up of rioting and killing in Jerusalem.

More than 60 people, mostly Palestinians, have been killed in clashes which have spread from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip following the Israeli authorities' decision to open a tunnel which violates the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Dr Mahathir said the problem in Palestine was caused by the present Israeli government trying to +unmake+ an agreement which had been freely entered into by two parties.

"If a successor government reneges on the promise made by the previous government, there can be no security for anyone," he said.

"Whether you like an agreement or not, you have to work within the framework of that agreement. What is happening today is that the new Israeli government (of Benjamin Netanyahu) refuses to acknowledge what had been agreed to by the previous government."

Asked whether he had been in contact with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to keep up with the latest situation, Dr Mahathir so far there had been no contacts with the Palestinian leadership except at the United Nations here.

Malaysia and other members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) yesterday condemned the Israeli action and called on the United Nations Security Council to act immediately to stop the violence in Palestine.

At the press conference held after he addressed the 51st session of the U.N. General Assembly, Dr Mahathir took questions on subjects such as the arms race, reforms for the U.N. and the Internet.

Replying to a suggestion that buyers were equally to be blamed as sellers for the arms race, Dr Mahathir said that in the modern market people sometimes bought things they did not want because of advertising influence.

"One of the ways to sell arms is to offer to one country by telling it that if you don't buy, I will sell to another country.

"When the other country buys, the first country is then told that it must also have the arms to have a sort of balance. Then we are told that our region is insecure ... Southeast Asia, for example, has the Spratly problem," he said.

When the countries concerned started to arm themselves, they were accused of having an arms race.

"People know marketing ... even when we don't want to buy what they sell we find ourselves willy nilly being forced to buy," the Prime Minister said.

On Malaysia's criticism of the U.N. and what it intended to do about it, Dr Mahathir said it would use the tenure of the country's presidency of the U.N. General Assembly to try to push forward certain proposals.

He said Malaysia was against the veto power vested in the five permanent Security Council members and wanted the general assembly to be

given a bigger role.

He said the U.N. could no longer be tied to the result of the last war as 50 years had passed and some of the victors of that war were no longer that strong.

"Why should we accept that five powers should have permanency of the Security Council and each one of them be able to veto 184 other countries. Where is the democracy that we are being told that we should practise?"

He said if there must be a veto, Malaysia maybe would accept two out of five or two plus one country which is not a permanent member.

Dr Mahathir said many things had also been taken out of the U.N. purview and decided outside such by the Group of Seven which had appropriated for itself the right to manage the world economy.

"As a result of their manipulation, Malaysia's debt went up two-and-a-half times. They never consulted us at all when things like that, which affect everybody, should be considered at the U.N. assembly."

On the spread of pornography on the Internet, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would like the international community to reach some agreement on what can or cannot be put into the Internet system.

"Alternatively we need to fund research into cutting out such filth that is being put on the Internet. In any case I feel it is criminal on the part of these people to put pornography into the Internet which we know will be accessible to children.

"They will pollute the minds of children and destroy other people's cultures. The world must come together and set standards for international communication, especially through the Internet."

The Prime Minister left for London this evening en route home.

-- BERNAMA

SJ JK