

Dr M: Unite against colonialism

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DURBAN: Developing countries have been warned that their freedom is being eroded and colonialism is making a comeback as their former colonial masters are seeking to reestablish their dominant imperial role.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in a speech read by Foreign Minister Datuk Sri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, said it was therefore imperative that the Non-Aligned Movement be rejuvenated so that third world countries could defend themselves.

He said the new world order of a single superpower had exposed the third world countries "to threats from which we find no where to hide."

"We have to submit or we would be bludgeoned into submission. We have seen ample demonstration of the kind of things that can happen to those who fail to submit.

"An eye for an eye is said to be the basis of Muslim justice, but for the vengeful powers one eye is not sufficient. Two or more eyes can be exacted for the loss of one.

"It does not matter if the eyes belong to the innocent. The important thing is to teach the world a lesson. Submit or be damned," said Dr Mahathir in his speech at the 12th NAM summit here yesterday.

Abdullah is heading the Malaysian delegation to the summit.

Dr Mahathir cited the attack on the Asian financial markets, with the devaluation of their currencies, as an example of the new aggression used to force countries into submission.

He pointed out that

more than 25 million workers had lost their jobs.

The Asian governments were then forced to take loans from international agencies, ensuring that they become "debt slaves to the rich in the world."

Dr Mahathir said the Western bloc, being the only superpower in the world, were now interfering into the political and economic policies of other countries to ensure that every nation "must adopt the so-called free and open market system which will enable the rich and avaricious capitalists of the Western nations to enter and leave any country at will."

The Prime Minister also revealed the shadowy tactics of the speculators and the destruction they had caused to the Asian economies.

He also warned them of the dangers of the globalisation touted by the Western capitalists- which he said was fraught with double standards to the advantage of the richer and more powerful nations.

The tendency of the rich and powerful to interpret everything to their advantage is not confined to countering alleged terrorism and the markets of the world. It extends into ideology and systems of decision-making and governments.

"Those who fail to accept these activities are subject to harassments, sanctions, bad-mouthing by the media and a variety of threats and pressures.

"That such acts are actually undemocratic."

Dr Mahathir also warned NAM leaders not to expect too much hope on reforming the United Nations into a more demo-

cratic organisation.

"The UN is a great concept but it was formed by an exclusive club of nations who presumed they had a monopoly to determine the shape of this world forever because they won World War II.

"Any one of five countries can veto the will of the majority, in fact can do anything they like in the name of the organisation simply because they won a war 50 years ago," he added.

"The fact is that after 50 years of being free, largely on the account of the Eastern and Western blocs confronting each other, our freedom is being eroded and colonialism is coming back.

"The strong and the mighty will quite literally rule us, determine our fate and our roles in the international scheme of things. Poor as we are, we will be exploited even as in the past they exploited us."

Dr Mahathir urged NAM members to unite as it was "our only hope."

"But in unity there is a chance that we will survive and possibly retain our integrity and independence. Divided, we will succumb."

Dr Mahathir said NAM at present was the only way to combat the economic assaults mounted by the rich.

"As with the struggle against colonialism, the time may come when the good elements among the powerful will see the injustices of their ways and throw their weight behind us.

"It may take a long time as indeed colonialism took a long time to be condemned. Until then let us keep NAM alive and let us do what we can for ourselves."