

PM: Police and armed forces must be professional

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'Officers with political leaning will endanger national security'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The armed forces and police were today told to maintain professionalism in discharging their duties and refrain from being involved in politics.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this was important to ensure that the country's peace and progress would continue.

Dr Mahathir said recently there had been efforts by certain quarters to involve the police and armed forces in supporting them and that although the Government could also do so, it would not, as this could lead to a split among officers, thereby endangering national security.

"Officers then cannot carry out their duties as they would be influenced and the Government would not function well. So we feel the police and the armed forces must be professional and not be involved in politics," he said at a gathering with 450 members of the Armed Forces at Mindef here.

Dr Mahathir said there were

countries which after achieving independence following World War II, did not progress and faced political, economic and social problems that led to riots and deterioration of conditions.

"There was no progress al-

though these countries thought after independence they would have the power to progress. Although we faced some problems like the communist insurgency the armed forces overcame this.

"In 1969, there were racial riots

but after that we managed to rehabilitate our economy, and the (country) was more peaceful and there was development," he said.

"The fact is Malaysia progressed and there are many reasons for this. For instance we set

up a professional administration in the civil service, the police and the armed forces," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Opposition used all kinds of ways to get power and one way is to instil hatred against the Government, adding that it was very easy to say the Government was cruel.

The Government's task, he said, was not an easy one as it had to make many policies and in doing so may not satisfy everyone.

Dr Mahathir said the Opposition said it wanted to set up an Islamic country but the country was already Islamic as it was a member of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference which viewed Malaysia as a progressive Islamic country.

"We should go back to the old days of not being involved in politics. If we serve with a Government which we hate, we cannot do our duty. How can the country progress then?" he asked.

Also present at the gathering were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his deputy, Datuk Mohd Shafie Afdal.

Dr Mahathir later broke fast with the officers and attended prayers.