

# PM: Only Muslim unity, strength can prevent oppression

17 AUG 2001

From Farush Khan in Sanaa, Yemen

MUSLIMS will not be oppressed if there are strong Muslim countries which can become superpowers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said to become strong, Muslims must be united and work out strategies to strengthen their country.

"This is the interpretation of *jihad* in the *Quran*," he told some 1,000 people of Yemen, comprising members of the country's advisory council (like the Senate), intellectuals and *ulama* at a dialogue at the Police Academy.

He was commenting on the implementation of Islamic laws in Malaysia and what would be the best way to face the enemies of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said even Prophet Muhammad had strategies and this had always been Malaysia's guide.

He said the Prophet used diplomacy to spread religious teachings, acting differently at different stages.

"We are not asked to act unwisely for that will result in our defeat," he said, adding that "this is a bit of the teachings of the *Quran* and *Sunnah* we follow".

He said Malaysia abided by the teachings of Islamic education, in seeking knowledge in other fields.

"We never deviate from the teachings of Islam."

During the one-hour speech and dialogue, Dr Mahathir's explanation on Malaysia's successful measures during the economic crisis and the way it co-operated with its neighbours through the "prosper thy neighbour" po-

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licy impressed the audience who applauded.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on the establishment of the Asean currency, to which he said such an effort might be affected by devaluation.

"Now we are thinking of establishing the gold dinar which has intrinsic value."

This, he said, would be better because "pieces of paper" have no value.

Dr Mahathir said, however, Malaysia would still look East to learn other things.

"Before we look at Japan to learn how to do well, but today Japan is not doing very well, so we will still look at Japan to ensure we do not do (wrong) things they do."

He also spoke of the design of the big powers to colonise small countries through globalisation.

For example, they want to limit the automobile industry to five companies in the world to monopolise the economy.

"Once they control, all cars will come from them and they make money. We will not have our car industry," he said.

He was also asked to share Malaysia's success stories with Yemen, especially the Vision 2020 which could be followed by developing countries.

Dr Mahathir spoke on the need for religious tolerance, peace and co-operation for a country to devel-

op smoothly.

He advised Muslim countries not to miss the "economic revolution" and the Information Age, like how they had missed the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia wanted foreigners to invest in the coun-

try and was prepared to share its experience with others.

"We want to be friendly with others," he said, adding that Malaysia had and would continue to help poor countries. Dr Mahathir also witnessed the signing ceremony of two memoranda of understanding.