

# ***PM: Asean should not take part in war***

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PETALING JAYA: Asean should be moderately involved in the United States' war against terrorism and avoid any direct participation if a war broke out, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the United Nations would lose its credibility if powerful nations were allowed to bypass its laws and make decisions that do not really reflect the interest of the world.

He said the best way to deal with this problem was to find out the reason why and then tackle the causes to avoid a repeat of another tragedy.

"An international action should be initiated but we can't just use the military to deal with it," he said, when answering questions on the new monthly talk show *In Conversation* broadcast by TV3 last night.

Dr Mahathir was the first guest of the show hosted by Chamil Wariya, and which featured three invited reporters from the Asean countries.

He said Asean countries should stick together in times of crisis instead of taking advantage of its neighbours.

"Asean should stick together because in times like these big countries want to influ-

ence small countries like us."

Dr Mahathir also said that he did not view the purchase of arms by some Asean countries as something amounting to an arms race.

"I don't consider it as an arms race. That is what the Press likes to talk about ... It is these people who are selling arms who like to see an arms race because then they can sell their arms. We don't need the arms. We are not going to war with Thailand, the Philippines or Indonesia."

On globalisation, Dr Mahathir explained that the term had taken many different forms.

"We are not against globalisation. For them, globalisation means free movement of capital but we are calling for free movement of people. This was what they can't accept."

Apart from war and terrorism, Dr Mahathir also fielded a wide variety of questions including on Asean, the economy, attempts by certain people to establish an Islamic state in Malaysia and globalisation.

Dr Mahathir said the upcoming meeting of Asean heads of government in Brunei Darussalam would likely discuss events in the United States and its repercus-

sions to this region.

He said: "I think whether we like it or not, we will have to discuss what happened in the US simply because Asean is actually a trade bloc and our prosperity depends on trade. When a market is hurt or not doing well, we will suffer."