

# PM feels US won't attack Islamic world

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed confidence that the United States will not go against the Islamic world in its effort to hunt and capture Osama bin Laden.

"The US Government has assured us that it will not be going against all Islamic countries because by doing so will mean that it is waging war against Islam.

"Its leaders has made it very clear that they are not against Islam but only interested in going after the terrorists," he told reporters after

opening the CEO Summit at the Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said he believed that Washington would remain true to its word and would not start waging war against all Islamic countries.

On his telephone conversation with Iranian president Mohammed Khatami, Dr Mahathir said they discussed issues to focus on at the OIC Foreign Ministers meeting in Doha, Qatar, on Oct 21.

"President Khatami called me to make sure that we (Muslim countries) can come

to a common stand on the issue of terrorism. Through our conversation, it is clear that Malaysia's stand on the issue is not that much different to that of Iran," he said.

"Our stand is that on one hand we are all for hunting down terrorists, but at the same time we are against war. We also think that the problem of terrorism can only be solved by attending to the causes of that problem."

Reiterating Malaysia's stand against any decision to attack Afghanistan because the ruling Taliban was accused by the United States

of harbouring Osama, Dr Mahathir said such a move would not be justified.

"Terrorists and their cells exist all over the world, not only in Afghanistan. In fact those people who had been accused of perpetrating the attacks (in New York and Washington) had actually lived in the United States.

"They were also not from Afghanistan but from other Arab countries. But since they had lived in the United States, technically speaking can we define the United States as harbouring terrorists? Certainly not," he added.

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