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PM: Impose conditions on use of veto power

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - Conditions should be imposed on the use of veto power in the United Nation's Security Council to prevent its abuse, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said two countries should be in agreement to make a rejection valid or to have another nation support two countries which were rejecting a motion before it could become valid.

"We have seen many instances when veto power is being used to actually deny democracy by people who purportedly advocate democracy.

"We cannot understand why there should not be democracy in international relations," he told reporters at his open house for special dignitaries in Seri Perdana.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the latest use of veto by the United States to kill a United Nation's Security Council resolution that sought international monitors for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The vote in the 15-member UN Security Council was 12 to one with two abstentions - Britain and Norway. The other two European Union members, France and Ireland, were among the "yes" votes.

This is the second time this year that the US has wielded its veto power. The draft resolution warned of a dangerous deterioration in the region and called for an immediate halt to violence in the West Bank and Gaza.

Dr Mahathir said he could not understand why the US wanted to reject the resolution.

"I wrote to President George W. Bush requesting that peace troops be sent to West Asia before and repeated the request when I met him in Shanghai (during the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum meeting in October).

"But there is no change on the US' stand," he said, noting that Palestinians would continue to be at the mercy of the Israelis unless a peace mission was sent there.

"The Palestinians will continue to be defenceless, hence it will not be surprising that they are willing to take their own lives by becoming suicide bombers.

"We have always stressed that Palestinians and Israelis should be separated ... it is not possible to ask them to sit down on the discussion table together."

(END)