Dr M to articulate our strong views in visit to White House

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad calls on yet another White House occupant on Tuesday, the third time he will be meeting an American President at his official residence. HARDEV KAUR says he can expect another warm welcome.

A WARM welcome awaits Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the White House. This is the third time Dr Mahathir will be at the residence of the world's most powerful leader -- the President of the United States of America.

During each visit, the occupant of the White House has been a different individual. In 1984, the first time Dr Mahathir visited, President Ronald Reagan occupied it. In 1996 it was President Bill Clinton. On Tuesday. he will be

calling on President George W. Bush.

Each of the Presidents has been "awed" with Malaysia's achievements and complimented the leadership for its role in maintaining peace, harmony and for contributing to development in developing countries.

Reagan, after meeting Dr Mahathir, said Malaysia's "vibrant economy and flourishing democratic institutions should serve as an inspiration to the developing world".

Speaking to reporters after the two-hour meeting, the then US President had paid tribute to Dr Mahathir and Malaysia for playing a vital role in maintaining peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region.

Reagan had said "Malaysia deserves the world's respect for its continuing efforts on behalf of many refugees who are fleeing communist persecution". Malaysia in the 1980s had provided refuge for Vietnamese boat people who were fleeing their homes as a result of the war.

While there was praise from the President, the media was not as "knowledgeable" about Malaysia. Some wondered whether "Malaysia was once part of China", "Is it close to Siam?", "Why is the flag like ours?", "Does he (Dr Mahathir) speak English?" were some of the questions raised by the White House Press.

During the visit to the Clinton White House in 1996, where the meeting lasted 70 minutes, Dr Mahathir cautioned the US against using strong-arm tactics in getting countries in Asia to accede to its perspectives of what is right or wrong.

President Clinton was told that it was essential to allow the natural forces within societies to evolve towards their desired objectives, whether in regard to human rights or democracy. He was also reminded that the region is culturally very developed and the societies there are very resilient.

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— President Clinton on Dr Mahathir in January 1996

'Malaysia's vibrant economy and flourishing democratic institutions should serve as an inspiration to the developing world.'
— President Reagan on Dr Mahathir in May 1984

'A statesman and close friend of the US.'
— President George Bush Sr on Dr Mahathir in 1989

Clinton, who told Dr Mahathir that he admired the Prime Minister's leadership "very much", sought his advice on several issues. The President, when asked what he thought of Dr Mahathir, said "I admire the incredible accomplishment of his nation under his leadership over the past several years".

Dr Mahathir, true to form, was forthright and direct when asked how the US could conceptualise US "leadership without dominance". The Prime Minister had told the President that it was possible for countries like Malaysia to accept criticisms of what was seen as right or wrong from an American perspective, as much as Malaysia itself as a country had not hesitated from saying what was right and what was wrong to other countries on major issues.

But Dr Mahathir drew the line between what was criticism and what was arm-twisting. "If you go beyond criticism and take actions in order to force us to bow to your demands, then you are twisting our arms and that we will not accept," Tan Sri Razali Ismail, who was then Malaysia's permanent representative to the UN quoted the Prime Minister as telling the President.

Clinton also paid tribute and expressed gratitude to Dr Mahathir for Malaysia's "contributions to the operations in Bosnia and in Somalia and for being a responsible leader in world affairs".

Malaysian forces helped rescue 70 US Rangers trapped at Bakara Market in South Mogadishu in October 1995. During the operation one Malaysian army personnel was killed. But, unfortunately, the movie on this episode — *Black Hawk Down* — ignores this fact and there is no mention of the role played by Malaysian forces.

The meeting with President George W. Bush in Shanghai, according to both Malaysian and US officials, was a "clear warming of relations" and the President had promised to strengthen relations with Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir had also met the senior Bush, when he was President, in Boston in 1989. It was at the height of the US smear campaign against palm oil. Even then Bush Sr had paid tribute to Dr Mahathir "as a statesman and close friend of the US".

Despite the ups and downs in bilateral relations, the reception that the Prime Minister received in Washington has been warm and friendly. The current visit is expected to be no less warm and friendly.

The bilateral relations have been enhanced and stepped up in the wake of the Sept 11 attacks on the US. Malaysia, as a moderate Islamic nation coupled with its strong views and concrete and quick action against terrorists and terrorism, has made its leadership and views highly sought after.

While there are differences in opinions, views and positions on a number of issues between Malaysia and the US, the Prime Minister is expected to state his views and articulate them as he always has directly and bluntly.

There is no doubt that he is not about to change his stand and views even if they do not coincide with those of the world's most powerful leader — the US President.

Malaysia may have different views from the US on many issues, but this does not make the country nor its leaders anti-US or anti-Jews. Dr Mahathir will continue to hold to his views. He will not give up his independence nor his views in search of international peace and security.

□ hardev@alumni.KSG.Harvard.edu

Pemuda jalin usaha sama antarabangsa

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Oleh Tuan Nazuri Tuan Ismail

KUALA LUMPUR, Khamis – Pergerakan Pemuda Umno akan mewujudkan rangkaian hubungan kerjasama dengan pemimpin muda di seluruh dunia sebagai satu daripada usaha jangka panjang menangani konflik Palestin.

Ketuanya, Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, berkata pihaknya sedang mengorak langkah untuk membina rangkaian hubungan kerjasama yang kukuh dengan pemimpin muda dari negara Asean serta tiga negara lain iaitu China, Jepun dan Korea Selatan.

"Kemudian baru kita tumpu kerjasama dengan pemimpin muda dari negara Asia Barat dan negara lain," katanya pada sidang akhbar selepas mengerusikan Mesyuarat Exco Pemuda Umno di Menara Datuk Onn, Pusat Dagangan Dunia Putra di sini, hari ini.

Beliau berkata, hubungan itu nanti akan bertumpu kepada bentuk pertukaran pendapat dan maklumat yang berkisar kepada isu sejagat seperti globalisasi, keganasan dan Palestin.

Sehubungan itu, Hishammuddin berkata Pemuda Umno akan mengadakan lawatan ke Timur Tengah bagi mengadakan pertemuan dan perbincangan dengan pemimpin muda di sana berhubung isu Palestin, keganasan dan globalisasi.

Katanya, pergerakan itu juga akan mengambil kesempatan membincangkan konflik di Palestin pada persidangan Pemimpin Muda Asean + 3 (China, Korea Selatan serta Jepun) yang akan diadakan di sini tidak lama lagi.

Beliau berkata, kesempatan itu perlu diambil kerana Pertubuhan Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu (PBB) dan Pertubuhan Persidangan Islam (OIC) kini tidak boleh diharapkan untuk menyelesaikan isu Palestin.

"Mesyuarat Exco Pemuda hari ini bersetuju mengadakan hubungan lebih erat dengan pemimpin negara lain bagi menyedarkan masyarakat antarabangsa bahawa konflik Palestin tidak terhad kepada mana-mana negara, warna kulit dan kaum.

"Keputusan itu bertepatan dengan saranan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, yang mahu semua umat Islam bersatu menyusun strategi bagi mendapatkan sokongan antarabangsa dalam usaha menekan Israel sehingga negara Yahudi itu dipulaukan seluruh dunia," katanya.

Pada Syarahan Perdana Palestin dan Kemanusiaan anjuran Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), malam tadi, Dr Mahathir berkata kerajaan sudah mengutus surat bagi mendapatkan sokongan pemimpin negara Eropah dan semua negara Islam supaya mengambil tindakan menghentikan kezaliman Israel di Palestin.

Perdana Menteri berkata, ini adalah strategi yang dilaksanakan oleh negara yang lemah dan umat Islam harus mengakui hakikat bahawa mereka adalah golongan yang lemah.

Dalam perkembangan lain, Hishammuddin mahu media bertanggungjawab dan bertugas dengan jujur bagi mengelak serangan terhadap Puteri Umno baru-baru ini, terjadi kepada Pergerakan Pemuda.

"Tidak mustahil serangan seumpama itu terjadi kepada kami. Bagaimanapun, Pemuda tidak akan membenarkan perkara itu berlaku dan akan mempertahankannya sama ada serangan dari luar atau dalam," katanya.

Beliau berkata, Pemuda akan menganjurkan perhimpunan pada 31 Mei ini dengan semua pihak yang terbabit dengan misi keamanan di Afghanistan yang dianjurkan pergerakan itu termasuk menjemput Menteri Pertahanan, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak dan Menteri Luar, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar sebagai tetamu kehormat.

Sebelum itu, Hishammuddin mewakili Unit Pengaduan Awam Pemuda Umno menyampaikan sumbangan RM25,000 kepada pesakit jantung, Mohd Danial Ikmal.

Sumbangan pelbagai pihak termasuk korporat bukan Melayu itu bagi membolehkan kanak-kanak berkenaan menjalani pembedahan di Institut Jantung Negara (IJN).