

# PM hits out at CNN for using dirty trick

3 MAY 2002

SEPANG, Fri. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today criticised CNN for not allowing him to explain his views when he was interviewed by the cable television news network yesterday.

He said the questions posed to him on the network's Q&A programme included statements by the interviewer and were asked in such a way to make it appear as if he (Dr Mahathir) agreed with the statements.

"When they ask questions, they include a long statement first, accusing us of this and that, before asking the question. But the question has nothing to do with the statement and, in the end, it looks as if we agree with the statement," he said at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport upon his return

from the United States.

He said this seemed to be a common technique used by other CNN interviewers.

"This is the dirty trick they used so as not to give me a chance to explain even though they are the ones who wanted to interview me."

Dr Mahathir was interviewed by Q&A programme host Zain Verjee towards the end of his three-day visit to Washington.

He was asked about many topics including terrorism, US-Malaysia relations, Malaysia's use of the Internal Security Act and treatment of the Opposition, arms procurement, the Israel-Palestine conflict and his role as a Muslim leader.

Dr Mahathir said throughout the interview, the anchorwoman talked more than he did.

"If you observe carefully, you

will see that the interviewers talk more. They give their views more than we get to give ours.

"If they want to keep on giving their opinions, they should not bother asking me questions."

Asked about the foreign media's continued criticism of the Malaysian Government's treatment of the Opposition, Dr Mahathir said there were other countries which were even less democratic.

"In these countries, they are harsher against their opponents and there is no room for trial. But the foreign media don't look at these countries; they only pick on Malaysia."

Present to welcome Dr Mahathir were several Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers. A large crowd of supporters from Umno Youth was also there.