

It is about big boys learning a 'little' lesson

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MY THREE SENSE

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SO our metaphorical "little David" met "giant Goliath". In relative terms, this scriptural metaphor captures the true spirit of the meeting between two great representatives, of two great nations; little Malaysia and big US.

The representative of Malaysia is our visionary leader, and spokesman of two-thirds of the world, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He has led Malaysia through five elections with at least a two-third majority — a truly popular leader.

After Sept 11, our PM has been increasingly recognised as a voice of moderation in the war against terrorism; a giant killer of miraculous proportions after his non-traditional handling of the currency crisis, and finally a strident voice of dissent on the US-Israeli approach to the resolution of the Palestinian crisis.

So, our little David met big Goliath. And were they able to transcend the win-lose paradigm of the political imperative, and achieve a win-win situation?

Our PM had said he would stick to his position and principles on issues.

On the American side, Bush Jr who is perceived as a popular President fighting for justice.

His father led a coalition against Iraq seen as a 'bully nation' for invading Kuwait.

The world then did unite as the Allied Forces against Iraq, and won.

But, there were many unfulfilled promises and unintended causalities, especially innocent civilian

Iraqis who were killed.

The reasons for the unfulfilled promises made to the Allies are better known to the American foreign policy experts.

Bush Jr is again repeating the old "battle-cry" (one wonders why the Republicans always need a war when in government?).

This time the cry is against terrorists who are far less visible or definable. In fact, they may even be "virtual" terrorists, recognising how much of the planning and execution was done using information and communication technology.

But who really are these "terrorists"? Terrorists, I suppose, are those who use "terror and fear" to achieve their objectives.

Any war can become "terroristic" if innocents feel the effects of fear and terror.

But, since in this instance the "enemies" are less visible, and not confined to any locality, the need for a clearer definition of such terrorism is even more urgent.

Malaysia, through the recent OIC Conference, attempted to offer one definition. While there is no consensus yet among the OIC (have they had a consensus on any issue?), they have proffered an "al-

most definition”.

What really is needed is for the US to take it from there and seek to evolve a consensus definition of terrorism, given that to date even the UN has not been able to agree on an agreeable definition.

In every other field of endeavour, the US and her G8 allies seem well able to develop such a “moving consensus” on issues of import.

But, why is it that even the US has no political will to resolve this universal issue of a definition for terrorism.

Although the David and Goliath metaphor usually evokes the concept of “a-fight-till-death” battle, that is not the intent here.

What is intended is “a clash of perspectives between giant state machinations and small state perspectives”.

Small states or entities are like small- and medium-scale enterprises in a world dominated by mega mergers and giant corporations

The perspective of the small and the non-mainstream is that of little David in facing the metaphorical Goliath.

Most have to rely less on strength or might but rather on wisdom and smartness of doing the

right things the right way.

While Malaysia is no giant nation, in the last 43 years she saw her economy grow at an average rate of seven per cent and thus was able to ensure national unity and equitable socio-economic distribution of the fruits of the growth.

That is a categorical miracle by any standard or definition. About half of those 43 years was under the stewardship of our current Prime Minister.

Whether he is smarter than Bush Sr or Jr, I do not know but I do know that he has provided visionary leadership to Malaysia, South-east Asia, two-thirds of the South and, now, the Islamic world.

I pray and hope that Bush Jr appreciates and learns from the wisdom of Dr Mahathir’s experience, rather than rely on his “policy advisers” who appear to be trigger happy rather than seek a consensual solution for the problems of the world.

Bush Jr should also look into the definition of terrorism and poverty in the world, and find the missing piece in the Palestinian-Israeli jigsaw puzzle.

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