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Be professional, armed forces personnel told

PORT DICKSON, Mon. - The Armed Forces should continue to be professional in serving the nation to ensure that peace and harmony is preserved.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today being the front-liners in maintaining the nation's security, members of the Armed Forces must always uphold discipline and not easily swayed by personal feelings and opinion.

"This is a professional body which demands high level of discipline and commitment.

"Without discipline, it would be impossible to defend the nation because an indisciplined organisation cannot possibly execute its responsibility effectively," Dr Mahathir said.

Speaking before a crowd of almost 5,000 people at the passing out of 1,957 recruits at the army basic training centre here, he advised members of the forces to uphold the right attitude.

He reminded members of the forces to continuously enhance themselves with good values and knowledge as sophisticated weapons alone could not save the nation.

The Prime Minister, who appeared in full army special forces fatigues at the function today, said in the wake of the Sept 11 terrorists attack of the World Trade Center in New York, the world community was living in fear.

"Because of that we should understand new ways of defending ourselves from terrorists, may be there is no formal war and we do not know where the attack would be from ... but there is no justification in applying violence for any struggle no matter how holy the struggle is because innocent lives are at stake," he stressed, adding that the first wave of pre-independence terrorist threats (communists) were successfully neutralised by the Armed Forces.

Dr Mahathir said recently there were groups which tried to use violence to achieve their ambition but the authorities managed to nip them in the bud.

"There is no guarantee that these type of threats would be absent in the future ... we must be alert at all times," Dr Mahathir warned.

He said the Armed Forces were entrusted with the arduous task of defending the nation and as such they should carry out their responsibilities with a clear mind.

"You should avoid mixing personal opinions or feelings with your duty which carries the trust of the people," he said, adding that members of the Armed Forces should abide by the rulings of the Government of the day.

Dr Mahathir said in Malaysia the people should be thankful as the youths were still willing to serve the nation voluntarily, without having the need to compel them.

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