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PM: US move will fuel anger

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the United States' move to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel would destabilise world peace and antagonise Muslims, while fuelling the causes of terrorism.

"It doesn't help, especially at this time. It doesn't help at all. You (the US) are just pouring oil into fire and this increases the anger of people and it doesn't help in the fight against terrorists because we are not treating the cause but increasing the causes of terrorism.

"I don't know if it is deliberate or not, but it is not helping in the fight against terrorism or in the recovery of the economies of the world," the Prime Minister said.

Speaking at a Press conference after opening the People's Progressive Party's 49th annual general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here, Dr Mahathir said businesses worldwide were suffering from the after-effects of terrorism and the US action was no remedy to the present volatile situation.

"People are now spending their money to protect themselves from terrorists, and in so doing they have made life very difficult for a lot of people ... millions of people," he said. Dr Mahathir said that this caused a chain reaction whereby everyone, from small businesses to airlines, suffered losses.

Asked about the increasing instances of US unilateralism in world affairs, Dr Mahathir said: "I think it is unfortunate because obviously the rest of the world don't agree (to US unilateralism) and no nation, no matter how powerful, should disregard the rest of the world."

To another question on whether the UN Security Council should pass any specific resolution to stop US high-handedness, Dr Mahathir said the Security Council was totally paralysed due to the veto power enjoyed by five countries.

"The Security Council has five members with veto power and one of them is the US, another one is Britain. One will pass the veto and the other will follow the veto, so nothing can be done in the SC ... it is totally paralysed."

Asked if the UN should take steps to abolish the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council, Dr Mahathir said that it was about time to forget what happened 50 years ago (the formation of the UN after World War II and the subsequent veto privilege accorded to the five powers which dominated the world then).

"Just because they won the war, they wanted to have veto power but now they are continuing their domination."

US President George W. Bush signed legislation on Monday which required the US administration to identify Jerusalem as Israel's capital. This has caused widespread protest from Muslims around the world.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said yesterday that Muslims worldwide should voice their objection to the US decision that had clearly ignored the views of the community.