

# We are in midst of WWII: Mahathir

SUN 1 1 2000

DAVOS Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad painted a grim picture of current world affairs telling the 33rd World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting yesterday that the planet is in the midst of World War III

The prime minister in his trademark blunt rebuke of the hypocrisy and double standard that characterise the conduct of some of the world's powerful nations told government and business leaders attending the six day meeting that the war was not against terrorists but between terrorists and the peace loving anti terrorist alliance

Without naming the two sides involved in the war he said it was between the axis of evil and Satan

But both sides are convinced that they are right that theirs is the fight against evil Evil and Satan must be destroyed he said in the opening plenary session on *Trust and Governance for a New Era*

Mahathir said that being frightened the world was taking measures to secure and defend at tremendous cost but the main result was not security or freedom from terror attacks

The main result is to disrupt life undermine investments and business and generally to adversely affect economic growth worldwide he said in remarks seen by conference observers as directed against the United States which was preparing to launch a war against Iraq

The impending war on Iraq is casting a dark shadow over the mood of the meeting here with the US sending a powerful delegation led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Attorney General John Ashcroft Also attending is former president Bill Clinton

The prime minister also warned that the war was going to be a long one that would breed anger and bitterness between both sides

~~We both want revenge~~ We both will retaliate You kill our people we kill your people and vice versa And it will go on and on Sanity has deserted both sides he said

In an obvious reference to Iraq he said they the other side fear sanctions starvation shortage of medicines The fear military invasion being bombed and rocketed captured and detained

Mahathir said that even people not involved lived in fear When the Cold War ended we thought that the world would see peace and prosperity After all the people who believe in peace and universal justice won

Referring to the much touted unipolar world following the end of the Cold War he said that the loss of a counterbalance had resulted in the

great exponent of justice and fair play to become unbalanced

While the communists were there the capitalists curbed their greed and avarice and showed a friendly face

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But now there is no more other side The friendly face of capitalism is not needed anymore

On the theme of the plenary session Mahathir said We have not made such a good job managing this global village of ours There's no trust and no good governance

Painting a picture of the outcome of such a war he said The forces against the axis of evil are not going to win because the target is wrong

All that can happen if they are defeated is to create more anger and call for more revenge and retaliation by the people who are incensed by the injustice they believe they are experiencing

The world is big enough and rich for everyone There is no need to take everything for ourselves A win win solution is possible

During the question and answer session that followed the prime minister spoke of the United States and the kind of trust he had for the superpower Initially my trust on the US was absolute But recently this trust is at a very low level he said

A US Republican senator from Ohio Robert Portman who also spoke at the session described Mahathir's remarks as very powerful I'm glad that you have made the statement here he said