

Dr M: Fear of US exists

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'If you stick your neck out, it will be chopped off'

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad acknowledged last night his fears about standing up to the United States and its allies but added that he is still safe so far.

"Like everybody else, I am scared. If you stick your neck out, it will be chopped off. But so far, it (his neck) is still intact," he said in response to a question on whether he was afraid of the US, which was not in the habit of listening to vocal views.

Asked whether his calls for war to be outlawed in his opening speech on Monday was too idealistic, the Prime Minister said: "It looks idealistic. Big powers always refuse to accede to the UN on disarmament because they believe they are privileged.

"But we think otherwise. If we keep quiet and let them have their way, they will not even feel guilty or uncomfortable if they have (the weapons), or God forbid, use them.

"We must continue to demand that everybody does away with weapons of mass destruction," he told a press conference at the end of the Summit.

Asked whether the US would take notice of NAM's position on war against Iraq, Dr Mahathir said he believed the superpower would do so.

"Our protests add to the consensus on world opinion against war. They



will take note of what NAM decides," he said.

On whether NAM was a "mere talk shop," Dr Mahathir said the best test would be if the movement was abolished completely.

"Without NAM, all of us will be chewed up and swallowed one by one," he said.

He stressed on the need for NAM to have a common stand on issues that affected the movement.

"If we don't speak with one voice, the tendency will be for others to push through their ideas to their advantage," he said.

When a foreign reporter pointed out that he (Dr Mahathir) should remain as NAM chairman after his retirement in October since he had made a miracle of Malaysia, he said: "We don't believe in miracles. We have to work hard for everything."