

A loud wake-up call

Dr M: Muslim countries should mend ways to survive

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DAMASCUS: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Muslim nations to unite and manage their internal affairs well to fortify themselves against possible invasion and colonisation.

The Prime Minister, who is on a two-day official visit to Syria, said the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq should serve as a loud wake-up call for Muslims countries to mend their ways.

He warned that even now, several more Islamic countries were being threatened or targeted by the West for a "regime change".

"In this unipolar world that we live in today, there exists a trend for the law of the jungle where might is right to be applied in resolving international disputes.

"Weak and least developed nations, many of them Islamic nations, are vulnerable and could become easy preys for invasion and colonisation," he said at a dinner hosted by Syrian President Dr Bashar Hafeez Al-Assad here last night. Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, arrived here from Swaziland early yesterday.

Muslim nations, he warned, could fall one by one unless they remained united and were willing to acquire information, knowledge and technology and keep abreast with the developments in the western world.

"Malaysia strongly believes that with financial wealth and natural resources at our disposal, Muslim countries can become strong provided

we manage our internal affairs well."

On the Palestine-Israel conflict, Dr Mahathir said the issue remained a great concern for all Muslim countries. However, he said, venting anger by killing innocent people would solve nothing. The Muslims, he said must know their own strengths and strategise so that every sacrifice they made could contribute towards their ultimate success.

On the United States-engineered road map, Dr Mahathir said it would

have had a better chance of success had Iraq not been invaded.

Now, he said, with the Iraqi insurgency in addition to the Palestinian problem, it looked like terrorism still threatened the world.

Ties between Malaysia and Syria got a boost following the signing of 12 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between the two countries yesterday.

The agreements and MoUs, which aimed to enhance co-operation be-

tween the two countries, were signed in the presence of Dr Mahathir and Syrian Prime Minister Mustapha Mero.

The agreements are on economic, cultural, scientific and technical co-operation.

The MoUs include one between the Central Bank of Malaysia and the Central Bank of Syria and one on news exchange between the Malaysian national news agency (Bernama) and the Syrian Arab News Agency (Sana).