

# Rethink strategy

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## Muslim states have the clout to defeat enemies of Islam, says Dr M

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Muslim world needs to pause and think out new strategies to defeat the enemies of Islam and overcome problems plaguing the ummah instead of persisting with its present destructive and divisive ways.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said pausing to think was not a waste of time but would allow the leaders to assess their strengths and weaknesses calmly so that they would not end up taking irrational actions that would only worsen their situation.

The Malaysian leader spoke out frankly about the failures of Muslim countries and pointed out that there were 1.3 billion Muslims which constituted one-sixth of the world's population.

"We may not be able to unite all the 1.3 billion Muslims. We may not be able to get all the Muslim governments to act in concert. But even if we can get a third of the ummah and a third of the Muslim states to act together, we can already do something.

"Apart from the partial unity that we need, we must take stock of our assets. In today's world, we wield a lot of political, economic and financial clout, enough to make up for our weakness in military terms," Dr Mahathir said at the opening of the 10th Session of the Organisation of Islamic

Conference (OIC) Summit here yesterday. (See full text of his speech on P29 and 32)

The summit, the first to be held in the Asia Pacific region, has drawn the largest number of Muslim leaders - 33 - since the inception of the 57-member OIC in 1969.

Dr Mahathir assumed the grouping's chairmanship yesterday.

Besides leaders of Muslim countries from West Asia, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Philippine President Gloria Arroyo were among those present at the opening ceremony.

Dr Mahathir warned that sacrificing lives unnecessarily while lashing out in anger without any objective other than to hurt the enemy was a pointless exercise that would achieve nothing other than to attract more massive retaliation and humiliation.

Muslim countries had great wealth and the biggest oil reserves in the world, he said, adding that they controlled 57 out of the 180 countries in the world.

"Our votes can make or break international organisations. Yet, we seem more helpless than the small number of jahilliah (ignorant) converts

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## Mahathir: It's winning the struggle that is important

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who accepted the Prophet as their leader," Dr Mahathir said.

Dispensing with rhetoric, he also advised Muslims against antagonising everyone through irresponsible acts as that would only push more people to support the enemies of Islam.

"It is winning the struggle that is important, not angry retaliation, not revenge."

He said efforts to defend the ummah could start immediately as Muslim countries had sufficient assets to stop the carnage caused by the enemies of Islam but leaders must be willing to take the first few critical steps to work out how to use these strengths.

"To do the things that are suggested will not even require all of us to give up our differences with each other. We need only to call a truce so we can act together in tackling only certain problems of common interest, the Palestine problem for example," he added.

Muslims, Dr Mahathir said, must give up their irregular and unco-ordinated actions as it was foolhardy and they should be more open to the idea of negotiation as a step towards resolving any problems.

Admitting that his ideas would not be popular among some Muslim leaders, Dr Mahathir urged them not to dismiss the ideas.

"The enemy will probably welcome these proposals and we will conclude that the promoters are working for the enemy. But think. We are up against a people who think we cannot fight them through brawn alone. We must use our brains also," he said.