

18 SEP 2003

PM SHUDDERS AT ASSASSINATION THREAT OVER ARAFAT

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight described as "scary" the United States veto over a UN Security Council resolution seeking to protect Palestinian President Yasser Arafat from an Israeli threat "to remove" him.

"When there is a veto, it seems like legitimising assassination. This is something scary," the Prime Minister told reporters on the sidelines of a farewell reception for former Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik at Seri Perdana here.

Expressing sadness over the matter, he said this would also mean that assassination was allowed when nations were involved in a conflict.

Asked whether the US move would inflame further hatred towards Washington, Dr Mahathir said: "If anything happens to Arafat, I am quite sure feelings will get worse."

Israel received international condemnation last week for announcing a decision "to remove" Arafat for allegedly being an obstacle to peace.

Arafat has reportedly said that he was unfazed by the US veto.

-- BERNAMA

MAM YBY