

29/09/2003

Dr M: Pursue UN reform at all costs

M.K. Megan; Jason Gerald

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Those wanting to restructure the United Nations must persevere and pursue it at all costs, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said they would continue to face objections from the five permanent veto-powered members of the UN Security Council.

He said the world would be oppressed if the veto power was not diluted as it was undemocratic with two of them willing to sideline the UN.

The restructuring could be difficult as the five permanent members would certainly disagree with any move that would affect their position and influence in the world body, he said at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang upon his arrival from a week-long working visit to London, Sweden, New York and Monaco.

"It is not going to be easy as we have granted veto power to these five countries and any move to restructure the UN must get their approval."

"I have stressed that this is something undemocratic and yet all these countries are talking about democracy.

"They want this world to become democratic to the extent that they use force to make other nations accept the democratic system."

Dr Mahathir said these countries felt that it was their right to ignore democratic principles as and when they liked "but in democracy, such special rights are not acceptable."

"Democracy is a situation when all parties agreed to a decision. It is obvious that the majority of the UN member countries do not agree with the present situation."

Dr Mahathir was elaborating on his address at the 58th UN General Assembly where he suggested that the veto powers of the permanent five be diluted.

On the issue of whether Philippine President Gloria Arroyo would attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference next month as an observer, he said she would be present.

The forum will be used for new peace talks with Filipino Muslim separatists.

Arroyo had met Dr Mahathir on Friday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly conference in New York to discuss ways to prepare for the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Kuala Lumpur has been fostering the peace process between Manila and the MILF.

On whether there would be a power struggle when he stepped down as Prime Minister next month, Dr Mahathir said he was confident that it would not happen.