

26/04/2003

Dr M: Sledgehammer policy shows US waging war on Islam

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - The United States' sledgehammer policy in fighting terrorism, and its systematic targeting of Islamic nations in its retaliation against the Sept 11 attacks clearly shows that the superpower is waging war against Islam, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said the notion that the invasion of Iraq was an aggression against Islam was not fictitious, but a fact that had been proven by the US' pattern of action.

"It is a massive sledgehammer kind of blow in order to kill one or two terrorists, that is the strategy being pursued now.

"We still believe that the war is against Islam because the Americans are actually targeting Muslim countries. North Korea is not given any priority.

"In terms of oppressive governments, there are a number of oppressive governments in Africa. For example, in one country alone, five million people have been killed ... nothing has been done to change the regime there.

"But the focus is on Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya and Sudan ... all these are Muslim nations, so we feel the element is there," Dr Mahathir said during his interview with Dubai-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation recently.

The interview was aired by Al-Arabia television channel last night.

Dr Mahathir, who is on two months' leave, said the US was also not interested in finding the root causes of terrorism, but was more keen to out-terrorise the terrorists.

"This is no different from what Ariel Sharon (Israeli Prime Minister) is doing at the moment.

"For Sharon, if an Israeli is killed, then you go and kill not only the killer and his family, but destroy his home and his town," he added.

Dr Mahathir said just because the terrorists who carried out the Sept 11 attacks were Muslims, all Muslim countries would be targeted, attacked and be forced to change their government.

"This happened in Afghanistan, it happened in Iraq and it may happen in other countries including Syria," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir said the invasion of Iraq had not in any way helped in the fight against terrorism but had further fueled the anger of Muslims worldwide.

He also said the Middle East could not possibly achieve peace as long as Sharon led Israel, which he felt was a country that had tremendous influence over American politics.

"If any (US) government took a stand against Israel, that government would lose in the next election."