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Dr M: Smart partnership against no justice, no fair play, no charity

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REMINDING the developing world that they will continue to see "no justice, no fair play and no charity" as the rich ethnic European countries pursue their aggression policies, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged them to strive to bring the philosophy of prospering their neighbours and of win-win formula into the vocabulary of the globalised world.

At the welcoming dinner of the Global 2003 Smart Partnership International Dialogue, the Prime Minister said the developing countries must also strive to make the inevitable global nation work by reinterpreting it.

"We must bring about smart partnerships, firstly among us of the poor developing nations, so we may have some clout in the determination of the economic regime of the world and after that a smart partnership with the rich, the enlightened rich of whom there are quite a few."

As a result of the interpretation of globalisation by the rich ethnic European countries, Dr Mahathir insisted that the developing world accept globalisation but it must not be the kind of globalisation as interpreted by them.

He cited an International Herald Tribune report about the catfish of Vietnam and how the Catfish Farmers of America launched an anti-Vietnamese catfish campaign which resulted in half a million farmers in Vietnam losing their business and becoming destitute.

Dr Mahathir also took a swipe at Western journalists on the way they criticised Governments.

"The International Herald Tribune is not my favourite newspaper. It has nothing good to say about Malaysia or about any other developing country.

"We are all (seemingly) doing the wrong things. International Herald Tribune journalists and other Western journalists would certainly do a better job of ruling our countries.

"We would become developed in no time if the editors of the International Herald Tribune, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist were made presidents and Prime Ministers of our countries. But once in a while these geniuses would confess to the errors of their ways."

The Prime Minister also spoke of the double standard and double-talk practised by certain developed countries.

"They say they will open their markets to us but they find all kinds of excuses to keep them closed.

"I can tell you many more instances of double-talk. Everything is conditional, even the aid given. You have to support their policies or it will be cut off. And at the slightest misdemeanour, sanctions would be applied."

Now, Dr Mahathir said, they have gone beyond sanctions.

"War, invasion and occupation of countries are justified even for spurious reasons. Accusations of possession of weapons of mass destruction, dictatorial regimes, violation of human rights, etc can all be excuses for invading a country.

"And when these excuses were proven wrong, they would say that even a slight suspicion is enough to justify invasion to overthrow a regime."

Dr Mahathir said the history of ideologies and systems coming out of the West is invariably the same.

"They think up of a system to overcome the failure of the current system. They force their countries to accept this system or ideology.

After some time they are forced to admit that this great ideology can not deliver the good life that it promised.

"The system failed. Then they come up with another system which they are absolutely certain would bring the good life. Over a period of time this would fail and then a new one would be formulated and would go through the same cycle."

He said each time they changed, the whole world must change. "If anyone defies them, he will be torn to pieces and thrown to the dogs along with his country. Heretics used to be burnt at the stakes by them, he said.

"The 21st century is the beginning of the third millennium. There is no justice, no fair play, no charity. The civilisation of the stone age, where might was right, is still with us.

"We of the Third World, the so-called developing world, can cry over all these but it is not going to do us any good. The only argument that we can use is our strength, little though it may be. Alone we are puny but together we can garner some strength, wield some clout.

"There are among the rich who have a conscience, some who believe exploitation by the rich of the poor is not right. They are the exceptions of course, but we can form alliances with them.

"But most importantly we must put our houses in order. Life is short. Power and wealth can be enjoyed only for a short while.

"Soon even the most powerful, the most wealthy will die. But if power and wealth are used to build our country, to develop our economy, the results can live long after we are dead and gone."

He said today's terrorism was partly an expression of this disparity in the distribution of wealth. The retaliation by the poor and the ethnically and nationally different could take many other forms. The rich would not be able to enjoy their wealth forever.

"The great junk bond traders of New York unashamedly proclaim that "Greed is Great".

"Greed is not great. It has always been the cause of wars and imperialism, of oppression of the strong over the weak, of revolt and rebellions.

"Charity is great. The great civilisations prospered and survived only when charity characterised their societies. We must strive to bring back charity in the management of our affairs, our national and international affairs. And we can do that if we believe in prospering our neighbours, in smart partnership and in win-win formulae."