

Mahathir : boycott US products and their currency
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called for a global boycott of the US dollar and US-made products, including Coca-Cola, in protest over Washington's backing of Israel.

Mahathir, who during his two decades in power was a leading voice in the Muslim world, said people had to take action against the United States over its support for Israel, which is conducting a military offensive in Gaza.

"If you stop accepting US currency, the US can't trade and can't make any money, it will become very poor and it will have to stop the production of more and more weapons in order to kill people," he told a press conference.

"People will not die if they don't drink Coca-Cola," said the ex-premier.

"If the people don't want to drink Coca-Cola, governments cannot force the people to drink Coco-Cola," he added.

And since governments are scared to act against the US, Mahathir urged the people instead to take action in boycotting the powerful nation.

Mahathir, who is also the chairperson of the Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, also added that Malaysia should stop purchasing weaponry from the United States.

"We can buy weapons from the Russian's as an alternative, like the MiGs and Sukhoi (fighter jets)," he said.

Asked on the repercussions of boycotting US-based products, Mahathir said that with every action "there is a price that we must pay but if we keep quiet on these things, matters are only going to get worse".

"We hoped that the World War II would have put an end to wars... but today's wars cannot be justified and it is not an option to settle disputes between nations".

These wars regard the whole country as a battlefield and innocent people are being killed as a result, he lamented.

"We must not allow ourselves to be cowed. Even if we do little things, I think we can achieve quite a lot," he said.

"It is strange that this country (US) which is suppose to be fighting against the Nazi to relieve the world of oppression, is now the country that is oppressing the world," he added.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi this morning announced that Malaysia would be extending humanitarian efforts of US\$1 million to aid the Palestinian people.

Abdullah had also called for ceasefire and assured that Malaysia's representative to the UN would raise the issue with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) of developing nations and the

57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

'America is a bankrupt nation'

Keeping up his attacks on the US, Mahathir also said that other nations continued to fear it despite it being a bankrupt nation.

"Don't use the US dollar... the dollar has got nothing to back it and the only reason why it is still being used is because people still accept the dollar as a legal tender.

"If we stop accepting the US currency, the US can't trade and can't make any money... it will become very poor" said Mahathir.

He claimed that the money spent on American goods are spent mainly in the "invention, production and manufacturing of weapons that kill people".

Mahathir criticised the US for blocking a UN resolution calling for an end to the action by Israel, which has launched an air and ground offensive that has left at least 510 Palestinians dead, many of them civilians.

Furthermore, he said the United Nations general assembly should convene to overwrite the decision of the security council and resolve the atrocities of the Israel government.

"I think we can send a hundred million Chinese and two hundred million Indians to Israel and then it would solve the problem," he joked.

Asked whether president-elect Barrack Obama would be able to bring the conflict to an end, Mahathir said: "I don't think there will be much change with regards to the policy on Israel... as you know Obama went to Israel for their support (during elections) as there are many voters in America who are Jews".

"He (Obama) might pull out of Iraq and Afghanistan because it is a wasteful (war) but he will continue to support the Jews in their attack against the Palestinian," said Mahathir, adding that no one can be as bad as Bush but Obama is the "best of the bad choice".

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