

Dr M: Let Thailand solve its own problem

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The problem in the southern Thai provinces should be left to the Thai Government to solve as it is a domestic affair, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We should leave it to Thailand to solve it. If anything happens in our country, we do not want others to interfere with our affairs," he said after receiving a tribute in the form of 22 scrolls containing 1,000 signatures and messages from staff and clients of property company Sunrise Berhad. They were of various nationalities.

Asked whether sending local religious preachers to Thailand was a good move, Dr Mahathir said it was good only if Thailand agreed to it.

On whether the problem was caused

by a conflict of religions, he said he did not know what actually caused it as his information was based on news reports.'

On the admission of responsibility by top United States leaders over the Iraq, prison abuse scandal, Dr Mahathir said US President George W. Bush and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld should both resign.

"In Japan, they resign ... they commit *harakiri* when they accept responsibility," he said.

He said the solution to the problem in Iraq now lay with the US as the country was the one which had started it even when the world community opposed its invasion.

He said the conflict in Iraq would remain unsolved even if the United Nations took over command.