



**STOP THE KILLING:** Dr Mahathir delivering a speech at the Perdana Global Peace Public Forum while a projector screen shows pictures of the Middle East conflict. — APpic

# 'Stand up against violence'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** People have the responsibility and obligation to stand up to their governments if they are guilty of great violence, said former UN assistant secretary-general Denis Haliday.

He was concerned that Americans had been hijacked by the system, and their "misplaced patriotism" made the United States one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

There was a mad dash, he said, to intrude and provide the so-called freedom and democracy "even if we have to kill you."

By accepting the situation and keeping silent, he said, the people were in fact collaborating with their leader.

"That's a very uncomfortable feeling. We have a duty to stop it," he told the Perdana Global Peace Public Forum.

Haliday's former colleague at the UN Hans Von Sponeck said the "global blood pressure" had gone up.

The reason, he said, was "incredible double standards" that exist in the UN and the Security Council.

Citing an example, Von Sponeck said it was despicable to see how a powerful president of one of the permanent members of the Security Council (the US) could go to New

Delhi to discuss a nuclear deal while at the same time condemn Iran for its uranium enrichment programme.

"They said Iraq could launch weapons of mass destruction in 45 minutes (but there were none) and now they are saying that Iran could be a nuclear threat in three to four months," he said.

He also pointed out that the US contributes 22% of the UN's budget, and this made the organisation vulnerable to its demands.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad described the global arms race as "horrendous," noting that it would cost US\$200mil (RM730.8mil) just to keep one F-18 fighter plane flying.

"We don't need killing machines which are more costly than the earlier ones. It is a waste of huge sums of money to buy an aircraft which we hope not to use," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir admitted that it would be impractical at the moment to try US president George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as war criminals for the lies they told to go to war in Iraq.

He said it was up to the "court of the people" to decide whether to reelect such war-mongers.

In his speech earlier, he voiced his concern over war preparations on Iran, now under way.