

Soros agrees with measures Dr M took

■ **From Amy Chew in Jakarta**

BILLIONAIRE financier and philanthropist George Soros stirs both passion and controversy, being a man who survived the Holocaust to carve out an incredible life and who continues to make every moment count.

Back in 1997, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad blamed him for the Asian financial crisis.

Nine years on, Soros says he agrees with the measures Dr Mahathir took to deal with the financial crisis in an exclusive interview with the *New Straits Times* yesterday during a visit to Jakarta to participate in an interfaith dialogue.

"It is ironic that I actually agree with the measures he (Dr Mahathir) took to deal with the financial crisis. He did the right thing.

"Malaysia suffered less than its neighbours," said Soros, adding that he did not control the markets.

"I try to guess what the market is trying to do. If I guess right, I make money. If I guess wrong, I lose money," said Soros.

At 75, Soros has not slipped into retirement to enjoy his wealth but continues to fight and campaign for his many causes.

Chief amongst his causes is opposing another George — President George W. Bush of the United States — for Soros



SOROS: Against war on terror

disagrees with Bush's administration's current war on terror.

According to Soros, the use of military force against ter-

rorism only creates a vicious cycle of death of destruction amongst all parties.

"Terrorism is unacceptable because terrorists kill innocent people for political goals.

"We must avoid doing the same thing, killing innocent people, and war by its very nature claims innocent victims," he said.

"When we want to wage war, you need to hit somebody. And the terrorists are hiding so there is a great danger you kill innocent people and then you set off a vicious circle because people feel the same way about you, the way you feel about the terrorists," he added.

"Promoting 'Islam for Peace' was a far more effective

way of stemming out terrorism than waging a military warfare.

"As you can see, 'Islam for Peace' is a better way to respond to terrorist attacks. That is what happened in Jordan.

"There is a better understanding of the terrorism problem in Indonesia than there is in the Bush administration," he said.

As an American citizen, Soros is deeply concerned and "distressed" with the policies of the Bush administration which he viewed as being dangerous.

Hence, the financier spent millions during 2003 presidential elections to oust Bush.

"Since I am an American cit-

izen, I feel I have every right to interfere in the internal affairs of the United States. In the last elections, I gave whatever I could to work against the re-election of President Bush," he said.

While he agrees with Bush in forging democracy, Soros is against the use of military force.

"We (Bush and Soros) happen to agree on the importance of introducing democracies and open societies. I do not believe it can be done by military force.

"It has to be something which grows in each country and each country has to decide what kind of democracy and what kind of open society it wants to have," he said.