

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 23/ 4/ 2008

Dr M: Weapon producers are greatest threat to the world

NST- 23/4/ 2008

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the real threat to everyone's security is caused by the people who continually produce new and more efficient weapons.

"The cost of these weapons have escalated greatly and they do not give any returns of investment, nor can they contribute anything to a society at peace.

"This fact drives the countries producing these weapons to seek war. Then these weapons can actually be used," he said in his keynote address at the 1st International Conference by the Centre for Defence Information Studies in Havana, Cuba yesterday.

His speech text titled "Security Problems in Asia and Their Possible Impact on World Stability" was faxed to Bernama here.

Dr Mahathir said in order to get a return on their investments, the producers had aggressively promoted the sale of weapons and the countries that were persuaded to equip their armed forces with these weapons had to incur huge expenditures.

"The people who sell arms are in fact the people who create insecurity," he said.

Dr Mahathir said war was no longer an option in the settlement of conflicts between nations since the capacity of modern weapons to inflict death and destruction was so enormous.

"Additionally, war has become prohibitively costly. Even the United States, rich as it is said to be, is now practically penniless because of the war in Iraq."

Touching on Asia, Dr Mahathir said apart from the fighting in West Asia, the rest of Asia had been a peaceful region.

"What is happening in Asia is a race to give the people of the various countries a good life, and it is interested in economic development.

"One after another, the Asian countries are turning into factories for the world. To prosper, they will not export insecurity through the promotion of their ideologies.

"Asia wishes to see the world prosper because a prosperous world will become a good market for Asian products."

Touching on terrorism, he said it happened because of the creation of the state of Israel.

"Would there have been Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda if there had been no Israel? The West should not go into self-denial. Admit it.

"Until you admit the truth that it was the seizure of Arab Palestinian land and the expropriation of land belonging to Arab owners and the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland, until you admit this truth, the problem of the Middle East will not be resolved," he said. — Bernama