

25TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF ASIA

WAR IS 'PRIMITIVE THINKING', SAYS PM

Dr M stresses importance of give-and-take approach in resolving conflicts

ARFA YUNUS
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

RESORTING to war to resolve conflicts reflects the primitive thinking of a nation, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Instead of exercising violence, countries should settle their differences through negotiations, arbitration and the rule of law.

Citing the history of conflict between France and Germany, Dr Mahathir said the world should learn from the two countries, which settled their differences peacefully instead of going to the battlefield.

“The confrontation between

China and the United States is not good for the world because when two elephants fight, the grass or whatever creature that is underneath them will get trampled.

“Germany and France no longer talk about their past and focus only on the present and future. Just because we used to be enemies, it doesn’t mean we should resort to war because that is primitive thinking,” he said in his keynote speech at the opening of the 25th International Conference on the Future of Asia in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday.

This year’s theme is “Seeking A New Global Order — Overcoming the Chaos”.

To resolve conflicts between certain countries, Dr Mahathir said a new world order was needed as the old one had failed the world.

He stressed the importance of “give and take” between two nations to achieve a win-win situation.

“Settle differences in a civilised way. In any situation, the solution must involve sacrifices by all parties concerned. If we are going

to have a win-win situation, everyone must give something up, and if we can’t do this, then we must let the court decide.”

He said Malaysia too was involved in conflicts with neighbouring countries, but instead of going to war, it resolved them in a civilised way.

“Malaysia used to have a conflict with Singapore over some islands, and the islands belonged to Malaysia and nobody could dispute that.

“But the court decided they belonged to Singapore and (Malaysia) accepted the decision.

“If we resort to war and keep boosting our capability to kill and destroy, then we can’t call ourselves a civilisation.”

Hosted by Nikkei Inc annually since 1995, the conference gathers government and business leaders to share their visions for the future of Asia.

Dr Mahathir is expected to participate in several interview sessions conducted by Nikkei’s communication media networks.

He is scheduled to meet Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe today for a bilateral meeting.