

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study is a critical discourse analysis of the language of resistance and challenge employed by Mahathir Mohamed in ten of his speeches that speak against the ‘war on terror’ post 9/11. The analysis is broken into three parts. The first part contains an analysis of the ‘Construction of an Alternative Truth’ which examines how Mahathir frames the 9/11 attack and his evaluation of terrorists. The second part entitled ‘Discursive Strategies of Resistance and Challenge’ examines the discursive structure and argumentative moves employed by Mahathir. The third part is an analysis of the ‘Construction of Mahathir as a Political Leader’ which examines the ways in which Mahathir self-presents himself in his speeches amidst the context of the ‘war on terror’. All excerpts from Mahathir’s speeches are quoted in the running text, highlighted in bold characters and underlined where references are being made. The excerpts are also accompanied by page number and speech reference. The fourth section is an overall conclusion of how Mahathir communicates resistance and poses a challenge to Bush as he resists the ‘war on terror’ in all ten of his speeches.

4.2 The Construction of an Alternative Truth

The construction of an alternative truth investigates the ways in which Mahathir’s discourse and his interpretation of 9/11 and ‘war on terror’ are influenced by the existing knowledge he has about wars, history and Islam, and the conflicting relationship between West and East. Based on previous studies on Mahathir’s

background, he is said to generally identify with the oppressed who are the non-whites (Haque and Khan, 2004; Kamila, 2004; Dhillon, 2008). They are, in his view, victims of the superpowers i.e. the white elites from the West. In this section, the analysis investigates the ways that Mahathir reframes the 9/11 event, and constructs the identity of 'terrorists' in his discourse according to such held opinions, norms, evaluation, beliefs and knowledge.

The following section attempts to answer the following questions:-

- 3) How does Mahathir frame the 9/11 issue?
- 4) Are there words used that contain positive and negative evaluation of terrorists and terrorism?

4.2.1 Mahathir's Reframing of 9/11

The 9/11 attack is viewed by the elite nations as one of the most devastating and tragic incidents for many innocent civilians of the United States. Mahathir acknowledges the profound impact it has on the world by linking its effect on the economy and on the people as in this example:

The attacks of September 11 **affects the whole world** and damages not just buildings in a particular country and the people in them but it also **struck at the very foundation of the world's economy and it has resulted in death and destruction for the country and people believed to be the base of the attacks.** It has shattered the confidence of the world and has left an atmosphere of fear. The fallout from that terror attack is not over yet. Others will suffer, will lose their freedom, their rights and will lose their lives too. They will have to flee from their countries and live in misery in subhuman conditions. (Text 4:60)

What is particularly interesting about the excerpt above is how Mahathir manages to express sympathy for the civilians of 9/11, but also how in the same paragraph, he extends sympathy for those innocent civilians who are the prime suspects of the 9/11

attack. Through the use of the modality ‘will’, Mahathir predicts that the suspects, innocent until proven guilty, will suffer such tragic consequences for the acts that they may or may not have committed. To Mahathir, such degree of sufferings endured by them and their countrymen are against human rights and morality as can be seen through his choice of words such as ‘freedom’, ‘rights’, and living in ‘subhuman conditions’.

Another way to draw the audiences’ understanding of the impact of 9/11 is through the **comparison move** as when Mahathir draws a comparison between the 9/11 attack and other attacks in the Middle East that involved the superpower elites. This move functions as a strategy to show how other events in third world countries are as valid and important as the 9/11 attack. Below is an example of how Mahathir exploits the term ‘terror’ to make a comparison:

In Palestine, civilians, including children, are being shot and killed every day by Israelis. And in retaliation the Palestinians kill Israelis with human bombs at times. Every day Palestinians face the possibility of being killed. Can it be said that they do not live in **terror** of being the next victim? Yes, the Israelis too, but they have superior dire power and obviously they instil **more terror** in the hearts of Palestinians than the other way round. (Text 1:32)

The example above can be interpreted as Mahathir seeming to implicitly point out that the Bush administration is only concerned with what is immediate to America, while refusing to acknowledge other ‘terror acts’ in other parts of the world. He also implies that the Third World sufferings are even more devastating as it involved daily (‘every day...’) killings of innocent people and it is not a one-time event like the 9/11 attack.

In the following example, Mahathir employs **statistics** to explicitly suggest that many civilians have died from terrorism in Bosnia long before 9/11 in the United States.

He also exploits the term ‘attacks’ as in the following example to show that Muslims have been victims as well:

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, more than a **hundred thousand Muslims** were massacred in full view of television viewers and for a **long** time nothing was done. The Muslims were actually prevented from acquiring weapons to defend themselves because this might result in more killings. i.e. the death of their enemies might affect the **number** of casualties. If only Muslims were killed and the Serbs saved then obviously the casualties would be less.... elsewhere Muslims countries are subjected to **attacks** and economic sanctions resulting in **many** deaths from deprivations of **all** kinds. (Text 4:67)

By comparing 9/11 to the Palestinian and Bosnian plight, Mahathir attempts to put the 9/11 event into context: that sufferings and deaths of civilians have occurred long before 9/11 but that the powerful elites have done nothing to ease the sufferings of war victims.

He uses the comparison move and refers to history to imply that the U.S. has now got a taste of what other countries have long endured.

Another line of argument Mahathir takes is to justify the terrorist’s attack on the U.S. — to Mahathir, the terrorists are acting out against acts of terror by the U.S. government who had either ignored their sufferings or caused such sufferings, such as the U.S. support for the formation of the Israel State and the terrorist acts Israel committed on the Palestinians—an issue that is largely ignored by the U.S. government. Mahathir explicitly points out that the Muslims are angry and seeking retribution because of it:

It is reasonable to believe that **if** the Palestinians are not being oppressed and children being killed, the **anger of Arabs and Muslims would not be there or would be much less**. (Text 1:37)

Many Muslims are involved in acts of terror simply because presently Muslims and the Islamic countries are being oppressed the most. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Iran, India and Chechnya, it is the Muslims who are the injured parties. In fact, their terrorism is their reaction to what is to them acts of terror against them. (Text 1:43)

This blatant double-standards is what infuriates Muslims, infuriates them to the extent of launching their own terror attack. (Text 10:114)

And the last straw which caused them to resort to futile and destructive terror attacks is the blatant support for state terrorism as practised by Israel and others. (Text 10:117)

The examples Mahathir gives to redefine the terrorist act of 9/11 can be interpreted as Mahathir's way of implying that the superpowers have caused injustice to the people who, in an act of defiance, resort to terrorism. Therefore, according to Mahathir, the U.S. is responsible for causing the 9/11 attack.

4.2.2 Mahathir's Construction of Terrorists and Terrorism

The analysis in this section examines Mahathir's attempts at providing a counter-definition to terrorists and terrorism and how he reveals the politicised word 'terrorists'. Like van Dijk (1998b) who shows how the word terrorist is politicised, (to some, they are called freedom fighters), Mahathir uses the personal pronoun 'we' to evaluate terrorists (text 4:63) and the adverbial phrase 'of course' (text 2:47):-

We already know that it is entirely possible for freedom fighter struggling against oppression to be mistaken for and to be deliberately labelled as terrorists by their oppressors.

Thus **Jomo Kenyatta, Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela and Sam Nujomo** were all labelled as terrorists, were hunted and faced jail sentences if they were captured. But **we know that today they are accepted as respected leaders of their countries.** (Text 4:63)

And of course terrorists like **Jomo Kenyatta, Mugabe, Nujomo and Mandela** are now acknowledged as legitimate leaders of their countries. (Text 2:47)

The use of ‘we’ in the excerpt above is a form of generalising a presupposed shared knowledge that ‘we’ make mistakes, ‘we’ are politically motivated and ‘we’ are subjected to our own biases. Also mentioning the names of past ‘terrorists’ who are now acknowledged as ‘respected leaders’ makes it easier for the audience to understand that the given definition and mental representation of terrorists are volatile and subject to a biased interpretation, rather than on facts. In the case of Robert Mugabe for example, the Western media labelled him a violent terrorist who killed white citizens in Africa (Toolan, 1988). But after a democratic election where Mugabe won, the Western media like *The Times* cast Mugabe in an entirely different light. As Toolan points out, ‘Now Mugabe appeared reasonable after all, educated and religious: his two western degrees were emphasised, as was his devout Catholicism’ (1988:237). Such virtues of Mugabe are highlighted positively because they conform to Western norms and values, which is to be educated in the West and to be Catholic.

In another speech, Mahathir employs another move which is to highlight the ambiguity of the term ‘terrorists’ to illustrate that the interpretation of the word depends on who is doing the interpreting, at which point in time and the political agenda it serves:

Examples of the **ambivalence** in the definition of terrorists are many. The Jewish Haganah, Irgun Zeva'i Le'umi and Stern Gang were at one time regarded as terrorists and were hunted by the British. But later they became respected leaders of Israel. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is a terrorist organisation in the eyes of the British but are regarded as freedom fighters worthy of financial support. (Text 1:30)

Mahathir's line of argument is that the word itself causes confusion and is subject to the ideology constructed by the dominant force. Because of such misleading interpretations, Mahathir views it as the cause for labelling and stereotyping as the following excerpt illustrates:

The terrorists of today **are not wild-eyed, illiterate fanatics** who merely obey the orders of their evil leaders. (Text 4:65)

Mahathir refers to the negative representation of Muslims in the Middle East and 'exploits' the way an outsider views the Middle East. He uses **imagery** ('wild eyed, illiterate fanatics') and **sarcasm** ('merely obey', 'evil leaders') to point out that the Bush administration seems to regard terrorists as coming from a deficient culture, or as villains caricaturised in movie. Instead Mahathir redefines terrorists as being 'normal' like everybody else. In fact, they conform to the Westerners ideals of a 'civilised' society:

They are **educated, well-off, normal people with wives and families** to love and look after. We cannot know they are terrorists until they have committed their horrible crimes. (Text 4:65)

There is a tendency by the Bush administration to generalise the cause of terrorism by attributing it to jealousy towards the dominant power. Mahathir finds such beliefs to reflect ignorance, but instead of pointing it out openly, he resorts to the **politeness**

strategy of ‘saving face’, as seen below. He implies that beliefs held by the Bush administration lack ‘deep knowledge’ of terrorism:

the belief that these terrorists act in that manner because of poverty or because of jealousy **does not reflect deep knowledge of the terrorist mind.** (Text 1:37)

In a way, Mahathir implies that he has deep, if not some, understanding of the cause of terrorism, unlike the Bush administration. Apart from pointing out ignorance and prejudices that are deeply rooted and practised in Western discourse and ideology, Mahathir also suggests a redefining of the word ‘terrorists’, as in the following example:

I would like to suggest here that armed attacks or other forms of attacks against civilians must be regarded as acts of terror and the perpetrators regarded as terrorists. Whether the attackers are attacking on their own or on the orders of their governments, whether they are regular or irregular, **if the attack is against civilians, then they must be considered as terrorists.** (Text 4:64)

groups or governments which support **attacks on civilians must be regarded as terrorists**...According to this definition of terrorism, the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, the human bomb attacks by Palestinians and the Tamil Tigers, the attacks against civilians by Israeli forces, the killings of Bosnian Muslims and others must be considered as acts of terror and the perpetrators **must be condemned as terrorists**. And anyone supporting them must be considered as terrorists, too. **Where states are behind the acts of terrorism, the whole government must stand condemned.** But no race or religion should be condemned or discriminated against simply because people of the same race or their co-religionists have been involved in terrorist activities. (Text 4:65)

As opposed to the Bush administration who specifically identified Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Muslims as terrorists, Mahathir says the opposite—that the terrorist has no

specific ethnicity, religion or origin. It could be anybody: an individual, group or government who attacks civilians. Noted here is Mahathir's implied suggestion that Bush and his government are terrorists too. His implied argument is that the 'war on terror' is an attack on civilians.

On his evaluation of the 'war on terror', Mahathir presents his views with the use of the personal pronoun 'we' and a proverb 'revenge is sweet'. Below is an example of the use of the personal pronoun where it is used to present a caution to the powerful elites. He says the superpower elites will not be eliminating the root cause of terrorism but instead, will cause more anger.

Revenge is sweet. But if **we** are going to liquidate the culprits almost completely as is likely to happen if **we** simply bomb and rocket Afghanistan then **we won't even achieve the revenge that we're after...there is no revenge...** (Text 1:37)

4.2.3 Discussion of the Construction of an Alternative Truth

The above examples provide evidence of how Mahathir redefines the 9/11 attack by comparing it to past terrorist acts in other countries. He challenges Bush's definition of terrorism by providing a counter-definition to mean that all killings of innocent civilians are acts by terrorists. Mahathir also provides a contrasting view of terrorists by saying that they have no specific ethnicity and belong to no particular religion or region. He therefore challenges the word 'terror' as defined by Bush. Mahathir's construction of an alternative truth reflects Mahathir's ideological stance, political beliefs and political judgements that comprise a pro-human rights ideology and anti-western dominance. His anti-western stance also frames his understanding of the cause of 9/11 leading him to argue that the attack can be attributed to previously organised terrorist acts by the West, especially Israel, who continue to fight for territory. To Mahathir, a

war of any sort by anybody does not solve anything—it is counterproductive. Despite arguing against stereotyping terrorists, Mahathir does acknowledge that the perpetrators of 9/11 come from the Middle East, are Muslims who are angry at the injustice incurred on them. At the same time however, Mahathir does not want the acts by the perpetrators to stereotype the entire Muslim and Middle Eastern population which he finds especially offensive when the stereotype comes from Bush and his allies.

Mahathir therefore empathises with the terrorists in some parts of the discourse yet denounces their acts in other parts—almost like a father ashamed of the acts of his own children but still jumping to their defence when they are publicly condemned. On another note, it is likely that Mahathir wants to claim the right to chastise the terrorists for he understands the terrorists' plight and sufferings, unlike the superpowers, as can be seen here: 'In the Muslim world, there is a great deal of anger which the West cannot understand' (Text 2:36). Perhaps the issue of the sufferings of the oppressed people is close to Mahathir's heart. Dhillon (2008) provides an explanation for Mahathir's sympathy for the oppressed observing that it stems from his background of being a citizen of a formerly colonised country.

4.3 The Discursive Strategies of Resistance and Challenge

This section explores the overall emerging argumentative moves employed by Mahathir in his discourse against the 'war on terror'. The contents of the analysis are framed within the polarisation of Us-Them moves which according to van Dijk (1998b, 2004), are part of the discourse of argumentation where negative or positive evaluation that follows from facts are used as part of an argumentative move. The analysis attempts to answer the following questions:

- 4) What arguments and argumentation schemes does Mahathir use to counter Bush's ideology?
- 5) What are the issues Mahathir raises to address inequality and injustice?
- 6) How are the social and political actors described or related to the discourse structure?

4.3.1 Being Critical of 'Us'

In his attempts to criticise, challenge and condemn Bush's stance on the 'war on terror' and the superpower elites, albeit indirectly, Mahathir adopts a self-critique of 'us'. In the examples that follows, Mahathir speaks as a member of the powerful elite using the personal pronoun 'we' and 'our' to point out that in the chase for power, money and development, the elites' poor governance has been self-destructive and the cause for war:-

we have not made such a good job managing this Global Village of ours. There is no trust and no good governance. (Text 8:103)

Irony is detected in his evaluation of 'we' in the extract below:

Frankly I do not think that we have progressed much from the Stone Age. (Text 3:57)

Mahathir also uses 'we' to accuse Bush and the Western elite of greed:

But we were not satisfied. We wanted identical political and economic systems, namely, democracy and deregulated free trade with identical laws and uniform practises as well. We wanted globalisation in a standard environment. Everyone must conform or be economically strangled. (Text 9:106)

Mahathir further argues about how hypocritical ‘we’ are for not practising what ‘we’ preach, that is, to oppose death sentences on criminals yet sentencing innocent civilians to death by going to war.

Socially we have not advanced either. We talk a lot about the sanctity of human lives and human rights. We are opposed to death penalties. But actually whole populations have been sentenced to death and in many instances the sentence has been carried out. When war is declared against a country a death sentence is passed on the people and when war is executed the sentence is carried out. And still we talk glibly about the sanctity of life. (Text 8:102-103)

Another strategy of criticising ‘us’ is to mention several presupposed shared beliefs with the dominant elites by saying ‘we may think’ as in the following example:

We may not want to admit it but the terrorists are not terrorising for the fun of it. They have a reason. We may think that their reason does not warrant the kind of actions they are taking. But that kind of thinking on our part is not going to get us anywhere. (Text 3:55)

There also appears to be negative evaluations of the U.S. through the use of the pronoun ‘our’ in what appears to be a move to **share the blame**, as in the following:

The success of the September 11 attacks is due much more to our wrong handling of the situation than the extent of the actual damage done. The billions being lost by the whole world today through economic recession, the billions being spent on security and defence, can build hundreds of World Trade Centre towers. (Text 3:54)

Mahathir does not point out directly that the billions of dollars being spent (to actually mean it is wasted) on self-defence is to be blamed on Bush (note that there is no mention of the doer in ‘the billions being spent’). Perhaps this is a politeness or diplomatic strategy but he uses facts and logic when he says that the money would have

been better spent on rebuilding the world and the economy instead. He also repeats the word ‘billions’ twice in relation to how much money has been wasted (‘lost’ and ‘spent’) on trifle matters. This can be interpreted as a form of polite criticism—to tell the audience that this is everybody’s mistake, and so everybody should work together to address the problem. Alternatively, it can be viewed as a snide remark—that it is so obviously the U.S.’ fault that Mahathir does not need to point this out.

Another strategy used to criticise ‘us’ is to use the hyperbolic phrase ‘the world’ to include not just the superpower elites, but also the dominated groups as a form of illustrating that there is no clear line between good and evil as both sides (‘we’ and ‘them’) are the same; both sides inventing destructive weapons, both sides irrational and both sides seeking revenge:

The world is inventing more and more new weapons for conventional war. (Text 4: 61)

Today, the **whole world** is suffused with hatred and anger. No one is seeking anything else except revenge. **Both sides** are saying “they will pay a heavy price for this. (Text 9:109)

By using ‘us’, ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘the world’, Mahathir manages to criticise but to disguise the criticism so that it is neither too direct nor too offensive. Perhaps Mahathir makes such passing remarks to the general public as an act of diplomacy, and to call for the audience to understand that this is everybody’s problem. Perhaps Mahathir wants his speeches to be viewed as an appeal for justice and human rights. He does not want them to be misinterpreted or misconstrued as accusatory or *adhominem* remarks against Bush and the dominant.

Despite the heavy criticisms against Bush and his allies in his speeches, there are several instances where the ‘we’ is used interchangeably, this time to criticise the developing nations. Mahathir attempts to soften the blow by aligning himself with the developing nations whilst he scrutinizes the situation he presupposes is shared by the people of the developing nations, hence the need to claim responsibility:

We have not used **our** independence and freedom to develop our countries for the good of **our** people. Instead **we** have been busy overthrowing **our** governments, setting up new governments which in turn would be overthrown. **We** have even killed **our** own people by the millions. And frequently frustrated with anarchic democracy **we** resort to autocratic governments, exposing **ourselves** to much vilification. (Text 10: 117)

But **the developing countries must admit that we are responsible** for the mess the world is in today. (Text 10: 117)

It can be interpreted here that Mahathir is critical of people regardless of whether they are Western elites or non-Western, and employs the pronoun ‘we’, to indirectly accuse and criticize. By including himself in the use of ‘we’, Mahathir manages to speak as a leader who has vested interest in the well-being of the people.

4.3.2 Being Critical of ‘Them’

Apart from using ‘us’ to criticise, Mahathir is also critical of ‘them’. This means using negative descriptions of the ‘other’. In some of Mahathir’s speeches, Bush is addressed as the ‘they’ who are, according to Mahathir, selfish, exploitative and greedy:

They do not really care whether we buy their products or not because their markets are mainly they themselves, **the rich countries**. (Text 7:90)

Capitalists now can do what they like and what they like is simply to make more money for themselves. (Text 8:101)

Mahathir's descriptions of the superpower elites reflect how he personally views the capitalists. They are said to violate basic human rights norms, principles and values. There are also instances where Mahathir uses the word 'evil' to highlight the prejudiced perceptions of the West towards the non-whites (i.e. whom are viewed as 'evil').

The exploitation of the world by the greedy, the double standards and the hypocrisy about human rights and respect for human lives, the oppression of the weak by the strong, the disregard for human suffering, the expropriation of other peoples' land and the expulsion of the people, all these have been aggravated by the ending of the Cold War and the victory of the righteous over the evil. (Text 8:103)

Mockery is also employed to challenge Bush when Mahathir adopts the term 'axis of evil' as used by the U.S. government to refer to Iraq, Iran and North Korea for their possession of nuclear weapons. Here, Mahathir uses the term 'Satan', which is synonymous with evil, to describe the U.S government:

Actually we are in the midst of 'World War III', not the war against terrorists but the war between terrorists and the peace-loving anti-terrorists alliance, the war between the 'axis of evil' and Satan. Both sides are convinced that they are right, that theirs is the fight against evil. Evil and Satan must be destroyed. (Text 8:100)

Another example of mockery is when Mahathir describes the elite nations as war-mongering, and uncivilised. He does this by comparing them to those who lived during the Stone Age period:

Just as in the Stone Age the man with the biggest club rules, **in our modern and sophisticated Global Village** the country with the biggest killing power rules. (Text 8:101)

War solves nothing. War is primitive. **Today's war is more primitive than the wars fought during the Stone Age.** (Text 10:118)

By drawing an analogy between the elite nations and the Stone Age, Mahathir wants to make it clear that the elites are not as civilised or developed as they think. This also reflects Mahathir's perceptions about the superpowers: he views them as ignorant, violent and arrogant:

A contest based on who can kill more people in order to establish who the victor and who the loser is...does not speak well of the so-called high level of civilisation we have achieved,...unfortunately, thousands of years after the Stone Age, **we still measure the greatness of a nation by the capacity to slaughter the greatest number of people.** (Text 10:115)

Further examples where mockery is used with sarcasm is when he uses the adjective 'big' as a euphemism (to describe the West) and a form of personification to describe how the West will soon meet with an ill-fated ending, and deservedly so.

Big is beautiful again. **Big** is good. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the **big** will not cheat, will not fall, **will not go bankrupt.** (Text 8:102)

In some of his speeches, Mahathir makes the *ad hominem* move of accusing the West of racism:

But the Muslim world, weak and unable to be of any help to the Palestinians see in the unwillingness of the West to stop the Israelis as a sign that the **West is anti-Palestine, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim.** (Text 1:36)

In another speech, Mahathir implies that such racism from the West contributes to the ‘breeding of new terrorists’. The hedging (‘perhaps’), can be seen as a ploy to make such a remark seem off-handed, but can be interpreted as Mahathir’s way of blaming the Westerners for the rise in terrorism.

Discriminating against people who are ethnically or religiously similar to the terrorists only angers more people and **perhaps contributes to the breeding of new terrorists.** (Text 5:77)

Mahathir also makes a **comparison** of some Western countries with Afghanistan who are regarded by the West as terrorists. He uses the **counter-factual move** to indirectly mean that the Western countries are also ‘violent’ as in the following:

In the liberal Western countries there are quite a few terrorist cells working in support of terrorist organisations in other countries. **They are not too different from Afghanistan which provided a haven for the al-Qaeda terrorists.** (Text 4:63)

The example above reflects Mahathir’s ability to discern prejudiced acts by the West. This is why he presents the example of Western countries who are doing the exact same thing that Afghanistan is accused of.

Other ways that Mahathir uses **comparison** is by pointing out that Bush and his administration are unjust towards organised terrorism, stating that the Israeli state and the Israeli Prime Minister, the ‘man behind the systematic killing of Palestinians today’,

(Text 1:38) are also terrorists, thus implying that the West are hypocrites and are terrorists themselves, as in the following:

If the whole world, including the Muslim world is to be asked to participate in the elimination of terrorists and terrorism, then all terrorists, **irrespective of their race or religion or the particular acts of terrorism that they were involved in**, must be the target for elimination. And these must include state terrorists as well, **including the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon**. The man responsible for the massacre of thousands of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila and is still the man behind the systematic killing of Palestinians today. No terrorists should be spared; it does not matter whether their cause is right or not. (Text 1:38)

He also refers to **history** to prove that terrorism has been practised by the Westerners in the past. The use of 'you' replaces 'we' when he invites the audience to recall the violence during the Spanish Inquisition, the Holocaust, and the formation of the Israel state:

If **you** look at Christianity you must admit that being thrown to the lions by the Romans did not prevent Christians when they achieved power from being totally intolerant of those who did not accept Christianity. **During the Spanish Inquisition** suspected apostates were burnt at the stake after mock trials. In fact many who are in America today are descended from Christians who had fled from terror perpetrated by other Christians. And the Jews in America are the descendants of the Jews who fled the regular pogroms in European countries, especially Russia, and of course the **persecution by the Germans under Hitler**. (Text 2:44)

If we care to think back, there was no systematic campaign of terror outside Europe until the Europeans and the Jews created a Jewish state out of Palestinian land. Incidentally, **terrorism was first used by the Haganah and Irgun Zera'i Le'umi to persuade the British to set up Israel**. (Text 10:113)

References to historical facts are used to prove the point that the Westerners are neither different nor superior compared to the non-Westerners: they have themselves resorted to terrorism to maintain power in the past, and are still doing so.

This section has so far revealed Mahathir's evaluation of Bush and Bush supporters, where he resorts to making a lot of negative 'other' presentation, drawing on history, anti-imperialist remarks, accusatory remarks and blame. The examples have illustrated how Mahathir also uses sarcasm and mockery. The following section shows Mahathir taking another stance, this time employing a tactic that is supportive of the 'other'.

4.3.3 Being Supportive of the 'Other'

Mahathir's support for the 'other' is shown in his arguments that focus on the plight of the oppressed, tortured, and poor, and the minorities that have neither voice nor power. He appeals to the emotions of the audience by focusing on the fate of the Palestinians, Afghans, and Muslims in general who are threatened by marginalisation.

He makes references to the Israel-Palestine conflict where Palestinians were expelled from their own land, and subjected to oppression and humiliation for five decades. He does so by using emotionally laden words and imagery ('expelled', 'killings' of 'children and non-combatants') that suggests Mahathir's involvement with the oppressed. This is to show that he is championing for human rights, unlike Bush and the Western powers ('the world' who 'ignored' and 'raised hardly an eyebrow'). An example is illustrated below:

The Palestinians have had their land taken away from them and they have been **expelled** from their land and made refuges. Every time they try to regain their land, they lost even more. **Their struggle has been ignored by the world.** Even the **killings of their people, children and non-combatants included**, raised hardly an eyebrow. Unable to wage conventional war, they resort to acts of terror. (Text 3:55)

He even compares the Palestinian sufferings to the Jews:

What is an undeniable fact is that **more Palestinians are killed than Jews.** (Text 1:35)

Further in his speeches are more descriptions of Palestinians with emotionally laden adjectives to describe the feelings of the terrorists, such as ‘grievances’, ‘bitterness’, ‘anger’, ‘desperate’ and ‘suffering’. Such descriptions are likely to conjure up in the minds of listeners that they have feelings (unlike Bush who had likened them to Satan and labelled them evil and inhumane), that they are normal human beings and are victims of circumstances. It is also a way for Mahathir to show that the terrorists are victims of the sufferings caused by particular groups of people. Clearly Mahathir is putting the blame on external forces which include Bush and his allies who have made them suffer. The word ‘grief’ itself is an accusation that something has been taken from the terrorists; Bush and his supporters have taken the Palestinian citizens out of their rightful homeland.

Mahathir also frames the Palestinian issue with another significant event in history that affected the Jews. He exploits the term Holocaust (a word that conjures to the minds of the Jews of the ethnic cleansing in the 1940’s under the command of Hitler in Germany) to show that this (ethnic cleansing) is now happening to the Arabs too. This reference may have been used to make the Israelis empathise with the Arabs, as in the following extract:

The Holocaust did not defeat the Jews. **A second Holocaust with Arabs for victims will not defeat the Arabs either.** The Israelis must come to their senses and opt for de-escalation of terror rather than escalating it. If the Israelis won't, then the world must forcibly stop them. (Text 4:66)

Apart from arguing from the viewpoint of the innocent 'others', Mahathir's speeches reveal repetitive examples of the plight of the Afghans and the use of rhetorical questions to provoke the audience to see his argument that their suffering will worsen when the 'war on terror' on them results in greater loss of innocent lives. The following extract illustrates this:

The Afghans must be living in a state of terror, waiting for the bombs to rain on them, to maim and kill them, their children and their friends. **Can we say that because other innocent people had been killed therefore it is right to retaliate by killing other innocent people?** Terrorists are unprincipled, despicable people. **Should civilised people do unprincipled, despicable things because the terrorists did?** (Text 1:32)

He compares Bush to terrorists by asking a rhetorical question whether they are like terrorists too ('unprincipled' and 'despicable') because terrorists kill innocent people, just like military action on Afghanistan will result in mass killings of innocent citizens of Afghanistan. The use of the phrase 'civilised people' to refer to Bush and his allies and their 'war on terror' agenda is a persuasive tactic to reveal their agenda.

4.3.4 Discussion of the Discursive Strategies of Resistance and Challenge

Thus far, Mahathir's arguments are composed of criticisms of 'us' and support for the 'other' in his discourse of resistance and challenge. What is apparent in his

discourse is the interchangeable reference to ‘us’ and ‘them’ to refer to the same group of people who are involved in terrorism. This strategy allows him the liberty to criticise the powerful directly and indirectly, thus in one argument, ‘us’ means Bush and the superpower elites who abuse their power, whilst in another argument, ‘them’ also refers to Bush and the superpower elites. They are described as hypocrites, exploitative, racist and violent.

As he argues for human rights, he invokes symbolic values of tolerance and cultural diversity. He makes references to the plight and on-going sufferings of Palestinians in the hands of the Western power via powerful adjectives and imagery, and the present suffering of the innocent civilians of Afghanistan to invoke humanitarian feelings of empathy and pity. It is also meant to rouse the audience to feel the unjustness of things so that they can challenge and resist such abuse.

In his attempts at criticising, reminding, and challenging different groups of people to act, he is also careful to include himself as part of the collective ‘we’. This is to show that this should be a joint effort. He also employs the hyperbolic phrase ‘the world’ to chastise that people are not doing enough to address power abuse, fight terrorism or work together to bring peace—these are the problems spelt out by Mahathir which can also be interpreted here as blaming everybody in ‘the world’, that is the dominant and the dominated groups. This also frames another of his arguments where he says that the state of the world is reflective of the poor governance by the dominant elite.

4.4 The Construction of Mahathir as a Political Leader

In this section, the analysis of the speeches focuses on the lexico-grammatical features and the semantics moves employed by Mahathir as he constructs a positive self-presentation of himself.

When Mahathir speaks against the dominant ideology, he makes references to his various social and political positions which are as Prime Minister, leader of the Malaysian government and a Muslim leader. These roles are presupposed in the speeches by the multiuse of the pronoun 'we'. As he does so, each of the 'we' influences the topic choice and the semantic contents of his arguments. Most apparent in the analysis however is that in each of his roles, he presents himself positively in order to assert his authority in the matter. These identities are further analysed in the speeches with reference to the following questions:

- 4) What words (lexical items) does Mahathir use to describe himself in the midst of the 9/11 attack?
- 5) How does he position himself as an authority to speak against Bush and the political actors involved in the 'war on terrorism' and 9/11?
- 6) What examples or facts are used to establish his own credibility in the matter hence shaping the mental cognition of the audience?

4.4.1 Mahathir as Prime Minister of Malaysia

His identity as Prime Minister of Malaysia is signalled with the use of the possessive pronoun 'we', 'I' and 'our' in several of his speeches to illustrate the Malaysian government's glorious past dealings with terrorism. This move can be

categorized as **national self-glorification** which is under the semantic strategy of positive self-presentation.

Malaysia is familiar with terrorism and the war against terrorists...**we** defeated them...**we** carried out a campaign to win the hearts and minds of the people so as to ensure that the terrorists lost their civilian support...the government of Malaysia did not just fight them with arms...**We** took remedial action. (Text 1:34)

In Malaysia, for 42 long years **we** fought communist guerrillas which employed terror tactics in Malaysia to force the acceptance of the ideology. **We** defeated it. (Text 2:41)

In Malaysia, **we** have been very successful in **our** fight against terrorism. The communist insurgents whom **we** defeated practised widespread terrorism. **We** defeated them, and eradicated terrorism from **our** country not only by military means, but also by addressing the root causes of the terrorism that plagued Malaysia. (Text 7:75)

The use of the pronoun 'we' when making reference to Malaysia's fight against terrorism, i.e. 'we defeated' and 'we fought', has two ideologically political functions. Firstly, it is political because as Mahathir talks about Malaysia's past success in dealing with terrorism in Malaysia, Mahathir speaks as if it is shared common knowledge that 'all Malaysians' were involved and had worked as a united front to overcome terrorism issues even though, as history has revealed, 'we' actually refers to the ruling government at that point in time.

Also, by generalising this presupposed commonly known historical success and backgrounding it (using the past tense) as if it is an agreed fact, Mahathir also implies that the government of Malaysia has found the answer and therefore has the solution,

which is the second political function of asserting credibility on overcoming terrorism. By doing so, he reinforces the impression that the audience listening to his arguments share his view of the ‘historical’ account of Malaysia’s fight against terrorism. The excerpt below (from text 4:68) needs to be viewed from Mahathir’s historical context where he describes how Malaysia dealt with terrorists for ‘42 long years—from 1948-1990’, then, he describes that the terrorists were ‘mainly Chinese who felt alienated because they had not been given citizenship by the British.’ The action taken by the Malaysian government is described below:

The independent Malaysian government gave more than a million citizenship to the Chinese, protected them, provided land for them...and gave them a meaningful participation in the government of the country. This was what the Malaysian government refers to as winning the hearts and minds of the people. And the Chinese were won over. (Text 4:68)

The outcome of Malaysia’s handling of terrorists is presented in the present tense with positive words as illustrated in the example below:-

Today, Malaysians of Chinese origin are peace-loving people and are loyal to the country. (Text 4:68)

By implying that the Chinese were ‘terrorists’ in Malaysia’s past and comparing the situation to the present time (that the Chinese today are peace-loving and loyal), Malaysia is presented as tolerant of other ethnicities, therefore it is truly a democratic country.

Mahathir further illustrates Malaysia’s firm stance against terrorists by using the modality ‘will’ and the present tense. The effect is to warn how Malaysia will deal with terrorists to prove further that Malaysia is a fair, non-discriminating country. The example is as follows:

We are firm when dealing with terrorists, whether they are Chinese, Indians or Malays, Muslims or non-Muslims. If anyone plots terror in Malaysia he **will** be arrested under the laws of our country. (Text 5:76)

However, despite the many positive descriptions of Malaysia and the ruling government, Mahathir admits to a political struggle in Malaysia as in the following:

Now there is an attempt by a small group of Muslim Malays to mount a violent struggle to take over the Government of the country. They are almost all **young** members of the opposition Pan Malaysia Islamic Party. These **young** people do not believe that democratic elections would ever bring their party to power so they can install their version of an Islamic country. (Text 2:45)

The example above reflects Mahathir's criticism of the opposition party, the Pan Islamic Malaysia Party (PAS), who is the ruling government's biggest threat. It also seems that Mahathir is reluctant to admit that there is friction and a power struggle between the government and PAS as can be seen in his choice of words that belittles PAS such as the adjective 'small' and repeating how 'young' they are to show their insignificance. It also reflects that he thinks they are irrelevantly small in number. He is also quick to undermine them with negative descriptions ('violent and undemocratic') to reassure the audience that the government will overcome this minor problem. According to Dhillon (2008), the threat from PAS supporters who are pro-Taliban (the suspected terrorists behind 9/11) was overcome by imprisoning PAS members and sympathisers without trial under the Internal Security Act laws.

Another example of belittling the opposition group is seen here where he compares PAS to the Taliban:

Recently, Malaysia had to deal with another source of terrorism: extremist Muslim groups who claim that our government is not Islamic and want to replace it with a Taliban-style state spanning Malaysia, Indonesia and the southern Philippines. (Text 5:75)

By saying PAS is like the Taliban, Mahathir implies that PAS is a threat to democracy similar to the Western view of the Taliban from Afghanistan. At the same time, this comparison allows Mahathir to imply that the government under his leadership is democratic—a value held high by most Western governments. Interesting to note here is that these two examples assert that Malaysia continues to deal with terrorism of some sort from its own citizens. For Mahathir to mention these negative examples can be interpreted here as a strategy to lend some credibility to his and his governments' handling of terrorism.

4.4.2 Mahathir as a Muslim Leader

Mahathir's second role as a Muslim leader is asserted by describing the emotions and views he presupposes are shared by all Muslims with regard to the Palestinian conflict and the 9/11 attack.

In the Muslim world there is a great deal of **anger** which the West cannot understand. (Text 1:36)

For the Muslims the **grievances** are real and truly **unbearable**, beyond mere understanding and tolerance. For the past five decades, the Palestinians, for example have not only had their lands **confiscated**, they had also been **expelled** from their own land by the Israelis. (Text 4:66)

Muslims do have serious grievances. The Palestinians in the occupied territories are subjected to oppression and humiliation. Israeli troops attack and kill Palestinians civilians, including women and children, who have nothing to do with suicide bombers; they bulldoze their homes and demolish their business; they destroy airports, water and electricity supply. (Text 5:77)

In the first two examples, Mahathir uses emotionally laden adjectives like ‘anger’, ‘grievances’, and ‘unbearable’ to describe the sufferings of the Palestinian-Muslims , feelings that are shared by all Muslims (note the use of the present tense). By using strong verbs like ‘confiscated’ and ‘expelled’ (as in text 4:66), it also shows how Mahathir appears to be deeply sympathetic of the Palestinians. He also invites the audience to sympathise with their plight. The third example is used to invite the Muslims to grieve at the seriousness of the issue—how the Muslims are victims of abuse under the Israeli forces who are supported by the U.S.

These arguments are used to stir the emotions of the Muslims listening to his speeches. As for declaring openly what Mahathir thinks the ‘war on terror’ is about, he uses the **present tense**:

We hate to say it but it is beginning to look more and more like a war against Muslims. (Text 1:33)

To justify why he thinks the ‘war on terror’ is an anti-Muslim war, he speaks as a victim of prejudice as he draws on his Muslim identity:

In the first place, only Muslim terrorists are linked to their religion. No one ever mentioned the religions of the terrorists of Northern Ireland, of Sri Lanka, of Japan, of Germany and of many other countries or people. They are always called Muslim terrorists. (Text 2:42)

By presenting himself as a leader of Muslims, it allows him to motivate the Muslims to rise and do something. Here he uses the imperative command ‘must’:

Bitter and angry though we may be, we **must** demonstrate to the world that Muslims are rational people when fighting for our rights and we do not resort to acts of terror. (Text 4:69)

But Muslims everywhere **must** condemn terrorism once it is clearly defined. Terrorising people is not the way of Islam, certainly killing innocent people is not Islamic. Terrorism must be identified by their acts, and nothing else. And we as responsible Muslims **must** contribute to the fight against terrorism and who the terrorists are. And when that is done we can all join in the fight against the terrorists, be they Muslims, Christians, Hindus or Jews. (Text 4:69)

But in aligning with the Muslims, Mahathir is also critical of them, describing them as weak and disunited.

The September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C are unmitigated disaster for Muslims all over the World. **Our** image which had not been good has been made worse. It does not help that **we are all weak and disunited.** (Text 4:69)

By inviting Muslims to join in a campaign to fight against terrorists, he is also implying that Bush’s ‘war on terror’ is not really a fight against terrorists in the true sense. Bush’s ‘war on terror’ targets Muslims which is why Mahathir says, ‘we can all join in the fight against the terrorists, be they Muslims, Christians, Hindus or Jews’ (text 4:69). In order to communicate invitation to Muslims to obey the true calling of the faith, to spread peace and to become an example, Mahathir invokes the Islamic principles to explain it

from the perspective of a Muslim. He does so by invoking the Arabic words *ummah* to mean Islamic nation, and *Allah* to mean God.

We have a duty here to the Muslim Ummah, to Islam and Allah. Let us put aside other considerations and **strive for consensus in our fight** against the blight of blind anger and frustration and prove that Islam is indeed a way of life that will bring about well-being and glory to Muslims and to Mankind as a whole. (Text 4:69)

By showing his alignment with the Muslims, he also attempts to portray Islam positively:

Terrorising people is not the way of Islam. **Certainly killing innocent people is not Islamic.** (Text 4:69)

4.4.3 Mahathir as Champion of the Third World

In his third role as champion of the third world, Mahathir uses the personal pronoun ‘we’ and ‘our’ to presuppose shared sentiments felt by the dominated who are reluctant to do anything about injustice despite knowing it is happening (see text 4:63). He also addresses their fear of rousing anger and displeasure from the powerful countries (see text 10:118).

Certainly **we** do not feel a need for a universal effort to fight against terrorism. But **we** know now that no country is safe, no one is safe. Clearly, today’s terrorists may be redesignated freedom fighters tomorrow and today’s freedom fighters may become terrorists the next day depending on circumstances. (Text 4:63)

We may want to remain uninvolved and to avoid incurring the displeasure of the powerful countries. But **our people** are getting restless. They want us to do something. If **we**

don't, then **they** will, and **they** will go against us. They will take things into their own hands. Unable to mount a conventional war they will resort to guerrilla war, to terrorism, against us and against those they consider to be their oppressors. (Text 10:118)

In text 10:118, 'our people' are the oppressed whom he describes as restless and frustrated. But by using the word 'they', Mahathir creates distance between the identity of the terrorists and the identity of 'we' the developing nations. In the same speech, Mahathir adopts an anti-imperialist view of the superpower elites:

Frankly, **I** think **it's because of a revival of the old European trait of wanting to dominate the world.** (Text 10:113)

It is no longer just a war against terrorism. It is in fact a war **to dominate the world**, i.e., the chromatically different world. We are now being accused of harbouring terrorists, of being an 'axis of evil', etc. (Text 10:119)

He also calls for an end to war and calls on the people to outlaw war. He uses the modality 'must' to call for action. The examples below are taken from the same speech:

War **must** therefore be made illegal. (Text 10:120)

There **must** be a new world order in which power is shared equitably by all. The United Nations **must** be reformed. (Text 10:120)

Brutal ethnic cleaning **must** be stopped by a multinational standing army. (Text 10:120)

We **must** work for a new world order, where democracy is not confined to the internal governance of the world. (Text 10:121)

We **must** do away or modify the powers of the victors of a war fought half a century ago. (Text 10:121)

Finally, in his last call to define the ‘struggle’ of the third world nations, he suggests that the ultimate goal is to rid the world of injustice and war, to create a better world where there is equality for all, as in the following example:

This then is **our** struggle. We are not irrelevant. We are not anachronistic. We have a vision, the **vision to build a new world order**, a world order that is more equitable, more just, a world order which is, above all, free from the age-old belief that killing people is right, that it can solve the problems of relations between nations. (Text 10:120-122)

4.4.4 Discussion of the Construction of Mahathir as a Political Leader

In constructing himself as a political leader in the context of the ‘war on terror’ Mahathir implicitly refers to his role as champion of human rights, which is to speak from a moral angle and to play the script of a virtuous, morally upstanding leader—a leader who is confident of himself and who sees himself as the agent of change. The analysis has shown how he positions himself which is as the spokesperson for Malaysia, Muslims in general, and the third world, through the multi function ‘we’. The underlying ideological stance he takes is that the government of Malaysia (hence, his own role in it) has been crucial in the maintenance of peace, and that his experience in dealing with domestic terrorism gives him the authority to speak to the audience on terrorism. By referring to terrorists as ‘they’ he implicitly distances his political identity from them. Citing examples of Malaysia’s present problem with domestic terrorists whom he labels as extremists, is a strategic move to show that his government is not an extremist, that he has knowledge of what constitutes extremists and therefore is on the right path to prescribe a solution. His arguments and call for change are intended to

further resist the 'war on terror' stance. In calling for change, Mahathir's use of the imperative 'must' is designed to command and exhort but is used sparingly to appear as if it is not a direct accusation towards anybody in particular but a reminder for everybody to claim responsibility for the present state of the world and the imbalance of power. This also avoids direct accusation of injustice against the superpowers.

The struggle that he attempts to put forth therefore is that he, as Prime Minister, a Muslim and a Third World Leader, represents a large segment of the population in the world who are against the 'war on terror' and any form of war and killings (by state or individual). These are people who are civilised, democratic citizens of the world. This then contributes to the overall positive self-presentation of himself as a credible leader representing a challenge against Bush and his allies.

4.5 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter shows how Mahathir argues against, challenges and resists the 'war on terror' stance taken up by Bush using various strategies and moves. His arguments, which mainly comprise of polarising of 'us' and 'them', criticise Bush for power abuse and supporting the dominated 'other' but at the same time criticise the 'others' for not empowering themselves.

To do this, Mahathir takes a critical view of all the political actors involved whom to Mahathir are the cause of the present state of the world that contributes to terrorism. To understand the significance of Mahathir's claim, it is important to look at the society that Mahathir aimed to change. At the time the speeches were delivered, the global media especially the Western media were playing on the crowd's sentiments and

fears post 9/11. The media bombarded the public with news about Bin Laden and terrorism, even to the point of derogating Islam, the religion of the ‘terrorist’ Bin Laden, who is the so-called master mind of the attack on the World Trade Centre in the U.S. on September 11, 2001. The wars of retaliation against the 9/11 terrorists by the U.S. were thus targeted at Bin Laden’s country, Afghanistan, as well as Iraq, who were seen to be the land that provided Bin Laden’s Taliban members sanctuary. As these two countries were occupied by majority Muslims, the religion Islam was thus looked upon negatively even to the point of being constructed by the Western media as the religion of terrorists (Poole, 2002). The Americans were led believe to that Iraq was also responsible for 9/11 (Edwards, 2004).

Noting the drastic anti-Muslim phenomenon, Mahathir championed the Muslim cause and sought to redefine the religion. His call and challenge were for the Muslims to rally and condemn terrorists, and to realise that they have long been victims of stereotyping, violence and prejudice. Hence Mahathir’s call was for the Muslims to be stronger and for anti-war supporters to initiate change.

One of the ways that Mahathir does this is by finding an alternative definition of key terms like terrorists and terrorism. From the CDA perspective, he aims to expose the hidden ideological agenda of the Western elite so that the audience would be empowered to change. In other words, Mahathir attempts to show that he knows what the real Western agenda is—hegemony and dominance. In doing so, Mahathir adopts a self-righteous and moralistic stance in his discourse of resistance.

Apparent in all ten of the selected speeches is also Mahathir’s various references to his political identities. This is a strategic move to assert credibility on the present situation as he speaks against Bush and calls for change at the same time. The positive self presentation move is discernible when he calls upon his various identities

and social positions with the use of 'we' to refer to his role as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the voice of the Muslim nations, and a champion of the Third World.

Mahathir demonstrates these identities with the use of pronouns 'we' and 'our' to signal his membership. In each of his arguments, Mahathir attempts to appear to be in control of the welfare of Malaysia so that Malaysia appears to be the model which the Muslim world and the third world nations should emulate. Although he does not make direct reference to himself when speaking of the success of Malaysia's dealings with terrorism, he does align with the country with the use of 'we' and in doing so, implies that he is part of Malaysia's past success in dealing with domestic terrorism, hence positioning himself as an authority on the subject (as opposed to Bush who does not have a successful history of non-violent means). By stating that Malaysia is now a peaceful country, he implies that it is because of his wisdom and good governance, and more importantly, that the people of Malaysia support and respect him as Prime Minister. It was therefore necessary that Mahathir positions himself as a rational, wise leader by appealing to his presupposed or perceived social status as an authoritative voice on the Middle East and his powerful position in the global community.

However, Mahathir also enacts a form of dominance in his speeches when he portrays the opposition groups in Malaysia as extremists. This supports van Dijk's view that the 'reproduction process may involve such different 'modes' of discourse-power relations as the more or less direct or overt support, enactment, representation, legitimation, denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance, among others' (1993:250). Mahathir's use of modality indicates the authoritative way he speaks—perhaps this is influenced by an expectation to live up to his reputation of being honest and critical. Use of adverbials like 'frankly' and 'of course' is a form of self-legitimizing himself as somebody who says what is on his mind. To assert authority

further, he also uses the imperatives to express authority and command, which also contribute to self-legitimizing his own position.

As a Muslim political leader of an Islamic country and the former chairman of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), he aims to be viewed as a leader who represents the voice of Islam. He informs the non-Muslims how Muslims feel by using 'we' and various adjectives to describe strong emotions. He also asserts his ideology on the international community whom he regards as people who misunderstand and misconstrue Islam. Then when speaking to Muslims, he commands the Muslims to behave in a certain way through the use of the imperative command 'must'. He believes that the rights of Muslims must be heard and known and in his speeches, even though he does not make any obvious assertions that he is a Muslim political leader, several declarative sentences reveal his identity as an authority on the matter. He also uses negative evaluations of present Muslims as an example of why Muslims are seen negatively and the blame lies in the Muslims themselves for being weak.

To defend Islam further, Mahathir uses the 'common-sense' approach by drawing on the principles of Islam to illustrate Islam as a peaceful religion. He also compares Islam to other religions to show that it is not the religion that causes terrorism as other religions too have practised terrorism in the past.

This act is an expression of reasserting political power, that is by re-presenting the situation and doing so in a matter of fact way, he is also saying that the opposing administration and the whole world who agrees with them are blinded. In a way, he implicitly points out that the Bush administration is ignorant and stupid. However, Mahathir's acknowledgement of how the 9/11 has affected the world in terms of economy and on the public at large shows that despite the desire to resist and call for challenge, his discourse is also proof that Mahathir still wants to appear to be diplomatic

in his arguments. This is so that his speeches are not misconstrued as emotional or too offensive for the Western powers whom he has heavily criticised.