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Mahathir-Gulf

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has consistently condemned any and every act of aggression by one country over another and this is why it has voted for the UN Security Council resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq if it does not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan 15.

This was stated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in a statement today, explaining why Malaysia chose to vote for the resolution.

+We do not condone nor accept the use of force in the settlement of disputes between states, let alone an outright military invasion. This is why Malaysia has given its support to Security Council Resolution 678,+ he said.

He said the decision (to support the resolution) had not been an easy one for the Malaysian Government to make, and the government had +considered very carefully+ all the various factors regarding the situation between Iraq and Kuwait before arriving at its decision.

He added: +Malaysia is always conscious of the responsibility entrusted upon it as a member of the UN Security Council. As a small nation and member of the OIC and the Non-Aligned Movement, it is Malaysia's duty to support and uphold the unity and resolve of the council to confront aggression and restore peace.

+Malaysia's stand against strong nations invading or annexing small nations is well-known. We cannot compromise on this.+ -- more

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The prime minister also said that the governments of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and other OIC countries had appealed for Malaysia's support at the Security Council and this appeal weighed heavily in its consideration as Kuwait was one such small country which had been invaded and annexed by a powerful neighbour, Iraq, on Aug 2.

Noting that Malaysia had co-sponsored and supported various UN resolutions for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, he said: +Unfortunately, and much to our regret, Iraq has not evinced any willingness to comply with the resolutions calling for peaceful and unconditional withdrawal and restoration of Kuwait to its legitimate Government and people.

+We, therefore, share the view that Iraq should be reminded of its obligations to the United Nations Charter and under International Law and that a final opportunity be given to Iraq to adhere to the ten previous resolutions adopted by the Council, within a definite time-frame before further action is taken.

+It is now for Iraq to make possible a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis which started with its invasion of Kuwait,+ he added. -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia had been +less than happy+ over the United States' ambivalent stand on the questions of peace in the Middle East, particularly on the question of Palestine and Israel's brutal treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

He called on Washington to show its serious concern for the rights of the Palestinians and its resolve to move towards a just and even-handed approach to the various issues affecting the Middle East.

+But, we believe the fate of Kuwait and its people cannot be subjected to the solution of the Palestine Question. We do not believe Iraq's invasion of Kuwait can be a means to solve the Palestine Question.

+We reiterate our unequivocal support for the Palestinians and demand that the Security Council fully address itself urgently to this problem in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions,+ he added.

The prime minister also urged Iraq to take heed of and abide by this urgent call of the international community to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait before Jan 15, next year.

It is our fervent hope that the use of force can be avoided. It is essential that Iraq respond positively and comply with this resolution to avoid war,+ he said. -- Bernama

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