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Mahathir - Iraq '''

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to retain its eight diplomats in Baghdad even though it voted for a United Nations Security Council resolution authorising the use of force to resolve the Gulf crisis, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The diplomatic staff would only be flown home in the event of war, he added.

+The diplomatic staff will not be recalled because Malaysia has not broken off diplomatic relations with Iraq. We hope the Government of Iraq will respect the diplomatic status of our personnel there,+ he told reporters after attending today's session of the Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

The eight persons still in Baghdad had diplomatic status while their families had already returned home, the Prime Minister said.

+The ball is at the feet of Iraq. They (Iraq) can make a decision to avoid war.+

Iraq had been given 45 days to withdraw its forces from Kuwait and if they were willing to do this war would not break out, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said. -- more

▼30/11/19-30MST

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Mahathir - Iraq 2 Kuala Lumpur '''

On Malaysia's support for the Security Council resolution, he said this move was taken after realising that economic sanctions so far had not been very effective and would need a long time before they would have any effect on Iraq.

Even though Malaysia was greatly dissatisfied over the Security Council's delay in arriving at a decision pertaining to Israel's action against the people of Palestine, it still could not just let the people of Kuwait continue to suffer until the Palestinian issue was resolved, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

+According to reliable information, the people of Kuwait are being oppressed and there had been efforts to wipe out all records of the Kuwaiti people so that there will no longer be a Kuwaiti nation or region,+ the Prime Minister said.

The people of Kuwait should not be just left to wait until the Palestinian issue was resolved.

+If we wait until the Palestinian issue was resolved before deciding the fate of Kuwait then this will place Kuwait under colonial oppression ... we do not know for how long,+ he said. -- more

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Mahathir - Iraq 3 Kuala Lumpur '''

He said Malaysia in fact did not want the issue to be resolved through the use of force and therefore agreed to give 45 days to Iraq to abide by the Security Council resolution.

+Kuwait was conquered in just 24 hours... as such the 45 days are adequate to enable Iraq to abide by the United Nations decision,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said pressure had been mounted for a peaceful solution through economic sanctions but there had been no effort on the part of Iraq to respond positively and instead it had increased its forces in Kuwait.

In fact the United States, Britain, France and other countries could take action under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter without referring the matter to the Security Council, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

The article gives the right to any country to seek assistance from other countries and such assistance can be given without referring the matter to the Security Council. -- more

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Mahathir - Iraq 4 Kuala Lumpur '''

+But in this case, all countries agreed to refer to the Security Council even though this is not necessary,+ he said.

This was a good move, he added.

He said Malaysia through Foreign Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar had suggested to United States Secretary of State James Baker that any follow up action to the resolution be reported to the Security Council.

Malaysia also did not want any action that was taken to exceed what was decided at the Security Council.

+In view of these reasons we agreed to support the resolution even though we are still not satisfied that the Palestinian problem has not been given the same serious attention in the Security Council by several quarters,+ he said.

Nevertheless Malaysia would continue to ask the Security Council to give equally serious attention to the Palestinian question, he said. --
Bernama

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