

Dr M: It's now up to the US

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By T. Selva

SHAH ALAM, Fri. — Peace in the Gulf now depends on the United States accepting the Soviet proposal, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had asked the United States to accept an earlier Iraqi proposal which came with conditions.

"If they disagreed with the conditions, they should have negotiations and not continue bombing Iraq with the objective of destroying the country," he said in response to reporters' questions on the latest ceasefire proposal from the Kremlin.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia appreciated the intervention and role of the Soviet Union to resolve the crisis at a time when it was faced with domestic problems.

He said the Soviet intervention gave fresh hope to the world.

On reports that Iraq was prepared to withdraw unconditionally, Dr Mahathir said: "I hope Iraq will really withdraw from Kuwait as soon as possible so that there will no longer be unnecessary deaths."

Asked whether Malaysia would make any representation to the United States and Britain on the Soviet peace plan, Dr Mahathir said: "We will not be effective alone. We will work through the United Nations."

He also said the Cabinet would decide whether it was safe for Malaysians to perform their pilgrimage next month.

"We have been monitoring the situation in the Gulf and if the war ends, it will be easy for us to come to a decision," he said.