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Mahathir-Iraq

MALAYSIA TO PROPOSE COMMON STAND BY OIC ON U.S. ATTACK

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia will propose to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to make a common stand on the recent United States' missile strikes at targets in Iraq.

However, he said, the government has not made an official decision on the matter.

"We will try," he said when asked by reporters whether Malaysia would make a proposal to the OIC to have a common stand on the issue.

He was speaking to reporters after calling on visiting Malawi President Dr Bakili Muluzi at his hotel here. Dr Muluzi arrived today for a three-day visit.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia truly regretted the US missile strikes which the Americans claimed were launched in retaliation against Iraq's military assault on the country's Kurds.

"We are unhappy because the US has acted without referring to the (United Nations) Security Council or other parties," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein should not have attacked the Kurds in a part of northern Iraq which is under the protection of the US and its allies.

But he said "the US was in too much hurry to act".

Asked whether the missile strikes may have a bearing on the US presidential election, he said: "I dare not say, but some people have claimed that they were related to the presidential election and if it is indeed true, it is very sad because as a result of internal politics, we are prepared to launch bomb attacks on other people."

Dr Mahathir said the US missile strikes could not be classified as having a military objective.

"As usual, we cannot ascertain whether it could be classified as only having a military objective," he said.

On allegations by the DAP that an independent candidate in the Sarawak state election had been "bought" to ensure the victory of a Barisan Nasional candidate, the Prime Minister said the opposition party should provide proof.

"Ask him to show proof if it is true. That's an allegation. It's easy to make allegations, but provide proof.

"We don't need (to bribe). We can win there, it's not necessary to pay money," he said. -- BERNAMA

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