

16/11/1998

`Bombing Iraq will not solve matters'

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when asked on the standoff between the United States and Iraq, said he had always hoped the crisis could be resolved through negotiations and not by bombing Iraq.

"Iraq is not an easy country to deal (with), but I don't think dropping bombs and grenades would do anything better to resolve the situation.

"Unfortunately, it is the ordinary Iraqis who will suffer.

"Saddam Hussein is going to stay in his bunker. After it is over, he is going to come out and be as recalcitrant as ever," he said during a dialogue session with participants after opening the three-day Apec Business Summit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

At the Press conference, he said even Americans agreed that those sent to inspect installations in Iraq could also be informing the United States on the location of targets for bombing.

"Why not let others do the inspections? When you insist on having people who are biased even before they reach Iraq, the report is not going to be accurate."

(END)