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Dr M welcomes UN-Baghdad accord

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today welcomed the agreement reached between United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Iraq to end the impasse over UN weapons inspection.

The Prime Minister hoped the various parties would accept what Annan had achieved.

Yesterday, Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz signed the agreement which would not only put an end to the impasse to the UN weapons inspection but also prevent a possible US military strike against Iraq.

The US had threatened to strike against Iraq if the latter refused to allow UN inspectors access to eight presidential sites which it had declared off-limits, to search for biological and chemical weapons.

"I am relieved that an agreement has been reached," he said when asked by reporters to comment on the accord after launching the MASTERcentre at Technology Park Malaysia.

Asked whether the economic sanction against Iraq could now be lifted following Iraq's full compliance with the UN Security Council resolutions, Dr Mahathir said he hoped it would.

However, he said he would not be surprised if other excuses were invented so as not to lift the sanction.

Dr Mahathir was also asked whether the US and its allies should stop threatening Iraq.

"They should not threaten Iraq. But, I am of the opinion that they will not stop doing so," the Prime Minister said.

Asked to comment on the roles of the G7 and Japan in assisting Asia in resolving the economic problems, Dr Mahathir said he hoped the industrialised nations would do something, "but I am not very hopeful".

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