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Mahathir-Iraq

MALAYSIA AGAINST THE USE OF ARMS TO RESOLVE IRAQ ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has called for diplomatic efforts to resolve the escalating dispute between the United States and Iraq over the issue of United Nations arms inspection.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia's stand is that the issue should be resolved through negotiations using diplomatic channels.

"We are opposed to the use of arms in order to coerce any country to submit," he told reporters after launching the "Tabung Ehsan Wanita", a women's fund organised by Wanita Barisan Nasional, at the Putra World trade Centre, here.

He was asked to comment on Malaysia's stand on the United States' threat to use military force against Iraq if diplomatic efforts fail to convince Baghdad to give UN arms inspectors unrestricted access to all its suspected weapons of mass destruction sites.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was also against weapons of mass destruction.

"There are countries which have weapons of mass destruction. Those also should be destroyed," he said.

In fact Malaysia's stand was that even the conventional weapon should be stopped, he said.

The weapons were forever being improved, making them more costly including very sophisticated missiles and aircraft, said Dr Mahathir.

"All these things are waste of money. The money could be better spent helping poor people," he said.

"Instead they are making poor people poorer," he said. -- BERNAMA  
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