

02/10/2002

US, Britain should heed world on Iraq

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I AM proud that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad spoke on behalf of all peace-loving and fair-minded nations when he advised both the United States of America and Britain to listen to the rest of the world before taking a decision to attack Iraq.

It is even more saddening to find that these two nations who preach democracy, justice, fair play and the need for democratic reforms the world over find it difficult to practise what they preach.

For the record, even prior to the latest allegations about Iraq possessing or developing the potential to make weapons of mass destruction, the two countries have made public their deep rooted dislike for the regime in Baghdad. Nothing short of overthrowing Saddam Hussein seems acceptable to Washington and London.

One cannot but regret that the US has not learnt from the Sept 11 tragedy nor performed the much-needed post mortem or examination of its foreign policy. Neither has there been consideration of the fact that the people of Iraq have suffered over a decade due to the misuse of sanctions.

Three of the five permanent members, China, Russia and France, have clearly stated their displeasure at any unilateral decision to use force. Interestingly, of late there have been repeated demonstrations in London, Washington, Berlin and Rome against the use of force.

Despite all this, it is common knowledge that "American interests" will rule the day, and public opinion and morality be damned.

Those of us who had hoped that out of the "ashes and sacrifices of ground zero" will emerge a fair, equitable, sensitive and morally upright American foreign policy find their hopes dashed. Instead, we find an American administration that has failed miserably to deliver on several domestic issues hoping to divert public attention by waging a war on foreign soil against a defenceless nation that has suffered for over a decade.

Are the United States and Britain ready for a further groundswell of