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Iraq warns NAM of possible US pressure

KUALA LUMPUR: Iraq, a founder member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), has cautioned members that the United States may pressure them to safeguard its global interests.

Iraqi Ambassador to Malaysia Kais Al-Yacoubi said the US, as the sole superpower, would want to exert pressure on NAM so that it could dominate the world.

He hoped NAM members, in line with their aspirations to live peacefully and to be independent in decision-making, would not give in to such pressure.

"The noble principles of NAM itself are against the aims of the US to dominate the world as the sole superpower.

"I am expecting that there will be very big pressure exerted on this summit in an attempt to make it a failure," he said in an interview with Bernama.

He said US wanted a split between NAM and other countries.

Iraq is now locked in a confrontation with US over its alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction.

US has said it would attack Iraq to disarm the country with or without the approval of the UN.

Countries across the globe, including many NAM members, have voiced strong opposition against any unilateral action by US.

They urged that the Iraq issue should be resolved peacefully within the UN framework.

Kais expressed hope and belief that the 13th KL NAM Summit this month under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would be able to overcome this pressure as well as any attempt to weaken it.

"I have full confidence in



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the wise leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir and his government.

"They will carry out this summit effectively and successfully. Our hopes are big that this summit can achieve success in line with the noble principles of the NAM movement," he said.

Kais said the 114-member movement has never been against any country but had always strived to ensure a peaceful world with respect for each other.

Kais said NAM was much more important now and needed to be more active as the "challenges are big and decisive".

The KL NAM Summit is to be held at the Putra World Trade Centre from Feb 20 to 25.

Kais said Iraq would raise "basic issues as well as current issues" such as the UN sanctions on his country, the US threat to wage war and the Palestinian issue.

"We are sure other countries will also be keen to help and support the Iraqi people in confronting these unjust sanctions," he said.

The provocation and US threats to invade Iraq should be discussed within the movement," he said.

Kais said about 1.5 million Iraqis had died as a direct result of the sanctions imposed some 13 years ago by the UN Security Council.