

24 MAR 2003

Parliament-Iraq (Resolutions)

DEWAN RAKYAT PASSES SEVEN RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING US' UNILATERAL ACTION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat today adopted seven resolutions after debating the motion condemning the unilateral military action on Iraq by the United States and its allies.

The three-hour motion tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad debated by 15 Members of Parliament, including from the opposition, voiced their solid support to the government's firm stand on the issue.

They unanimously agreed that the august House adopt these resolutions;

- * Strongly condemn the unilateral military action on Iraq by the United States and its allies;

- * Call on the United States and its allies to immediately stop the unilateral military action on Iraq;

- * Urge all parties concerned to make concerted efforts to immediately return to the peaceful settlement process to ensure Iraq's compliance to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions if it is true Baghdad had weapons of mass destruction;

- * Urge the US and its allies to respect the human rights of the people of Iraq and international conventions on human rights, especially the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

- * That Malaysia, together with members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other states sharing similar stance, uphold the principles of international law and the UN Charter in dealing with issues affecting relations between nations;

- * Appeal to the international community to extend expeditiously emergency relief to the people of Iraq;

- * That this House convey this resolution to all legislatures and parliaments concerned, especially that of the US, Britain, Spain and Australia.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, in winding up the debate on the motion on behalf of the government, said although all the parliamentarians did not have an opportunity to debate the motion, all of them agreed with the motion moved by Dr Mahathir.

"Most importantly the Dewan Rakyat, the Malaysian Parliament has the consensus in determining and presenting Malaysia's views," he said.

He said Parliament was the place to debate the Malaysian people's voice to uphold the sovereignty of the international law and the United Nations Charter which formed the basis to preserve peace for the benefit of smaller and weaker nations.

The voice of Malaysians was not the voice of the marginalised but actually the voice of the mainstream views of the international community, he said.

"Although our approach is different but what's important is that we are opposing the war on the basis that it did not have the mandate of the United Nations.

"Also, the war is waged to change the regime in Iraq. There is no resolution whatsoever which authorises the United States and its allies to initiate action for a regime change," he said.

Stressing that the military action was beyond the ambit of the law and contravened principles of international law, Syed Hamid said the US and its allies had ignored UN Resolution 1441 which required arms inspectors to conduct inspection and if not satisfactory, a second resolution should be

adopted.

He said Malaysia and other countries had on several occasions suggested that the UN be restructured but was disagreed by permanent members of the Security Council.

Nevertheless, Syed Hamid said the best place was at the grassroots level -- the people and the international community must move together.

"The people's voice must be pooled to tell the US that they should stop this unjust and cruel war which brought destruction to properties and loss of innocent people's lives," he said.

In reacting to the motion, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob hoped Malaysia's stand as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which strongly opposed the Iraq war, could be conveyed to all the 116 members of the movement.

He said Malaysia wanted the Iraq war to end immediately as innocent civilians suffered.

The support shown by the opposition to the government's motion reflected their maturity, Khalil, who is also Umno secretary-general, told reporters.

Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said she would instruct the movement's members to send letters to non-governmental organisations worldwide to notify them of the Malaysian government's stand.

She said the movement condemned in the strongest terms the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies.

"I'll ask Umno branches to gather basic needs like blankets to be handed to Wisma Putra for distribution to the Iraqis," added Rafidah, who is International Trade and Industry Minister.

Expressing full support to the motion, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said his party feared that if the war was allowed to prolong, it would have an effect on smaller and weaker countries.

"We fear it will be used as a ploy to attack other countries regarded as "dangerous" to the US and its allies.

"MIC strongly condemned the unilateral military action. We support the motion tabled by Dr Mahathir for the US and its allies to stop the Iraq war immediately," he added.

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