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Syria-Accusation

ACCUSATIONS TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM ATROCITIES, SAYS SYRIAN ENVOY

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

AMMAN, April 16 -- Accusations that Syria possesses chemical and biological weapons and was supplying weapons to Saddam Hussein are aimed at diverting world attention from the coalition forces' aggression on Iraq, the Syrian Ambassador to Jordan Abdul Fattah Ammourah said today.

The accusations by the Americans were also aimed at distracting world attention on Israel, which is known to possess weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, he said.

"They wanted to cover up their failure and cover up the aftermath of the war. I would say very simply, maybe they succeeded in making us busy in such matters.

"We are not talking about the number of civilians who have fallen (in Iraq), we are not talking about the destruction, we are not talking about the instability and insecurity (in Iraq)," he said in an interview with the Joint Media Team Malaysia (JMTM) at the Syrian embassy here.

Abdul Fattah said Syria was not worried and gave no importance to such accusations because it knew who was behind them.

"We know that Syria plays a very important and crucial role, has its way, has its position, has its multi-economic, multi-political systems, and we are also not worried because we are with justice and international legitimacy and we will continue this," he said.

The accusations have diverted the world from talking about foreign occupation of a country as the accusers do not want the world to criticise them on their acts.

"In the same way nobody is talking about the victims in Palestine, nobody is talking about criticising the Israeli forces...showing the truth," he said.

The Americans, he said, wanted to divert the world's attention from seeing the victims in Iraq and the victims in Palestine.

Abdul Fattah said the Americans had been making all sorts of allegations to divert attention from their acts.

"It seems to me that the weather forecast was against them. They did accuse themselves because they said it is by mistake, the rockets or missiles by mistake hit another target, they did accuse a number of people," he said.

The Americans also accused the mass media to be biased and even attacked the media for saying something they were not happy with, he said.

Abdul Fattah said to the Americans, if one wants to be with them you have to accept all that they dictate upon you.

"Where is the freedom, where is the international legitimacy, where is the justice, where are the principles?" he said.

The Ambassador said the accusers were also trying to impose their hegemony for oil.

"We saw the aftermath, what happened with the looting and all, except the oil fields, and they have started pre-planning for signing of contracts for the rebuilding and reconstruction of this vital thing," he said.

Abdul Fattah said the Americans claimed they wanted to protect democracy but they should remember that it should not be imposed by force.

"Democracy is the very symbol of the rule of the people, by the people. There is no democracy under occupation. This is a mere occupation," he said.

Abdul Fattah appreciated Malaysia's opposition to the invasion of Iraq,

saying it had expressed its views openly, clearly and positively.

"This shows the very commitment of the people of Malaysia for a peaceful solution to the problem in Iraq, and this is what exactly we called for."

"We feel it was very much appreciated and welcome, not only in the Arab world but also in the Islamic world and the people of the world will continue to remember that position," he said.

He hoped that the world would continue to coordinate its efforts in a post-war Iraq so that the Iraqis could preserve the right to self-determination without foreign domination.

On the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), he said it was now in safe hands under the leadership of Malaysia.

He believed that the position Malaysia had taken so far, particularly with regard to the crisis in Iraq, would attach a very important role to be played by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It will be effective, and we hope for it to be more effective," he said.

He said NAM had played a very important role for people with similar problems on the need for development and progress and for fighting against colonialism.

"Now I believe the Non-Aligned Movement, with the very characteristic of the new world order with the 'with us or with them', 'with us or against us', I believe everybody will be a target.

"It is our duty to cooperate and coordinate to stand very effectively and unitedly with each other, to stick to our principles and values of peace, stability, security and development and stick to the international legitimacy to give all the UN and regional organisations more effective roles to play," he said.

-- JMTM