

23 MAR 2003

IRAQI WAR: M'SIA'S FEAR BECOMES A REALITY, SAYS DR M

SEPANG, March 23 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's fear over the adverse effects caused by the war is more and more becoming a reality as the attacks by the United States (US) and its ally, Britain, on Iraq have now caused more destruction and injury to civilians, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

"This is what we fear. Right from the start we have said that when there is a war the victims will be civilians, children, old folks, women who are not related to the war at all, they become the victims," said the Prime Minister when asked to comment on reports that the attacks by the coalition forces were hitting more civilian targets instead of the military.

He said that was why Malaysia had opposed any settlement of conflicts between countries through war.

Dr Mahathir said this to reporters after witnessing the Formula One (F1) race at the Sepang International Circuit, here.

Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf, in a press conference shortly after the bombing of Baghdad on Friday, was reported to have said that almost 250 civilians were feared injured following the bombing of Baghdad since Thursday.

To a question that there were conflicting reports by CNN and CNBC on the war, and that they were not reporting the truth on what had happened in Iraq, Dr Mahathir said: "Well, the truth will eventually come up and we will know who are telling lies."

In a column monitoring the Western media reports on the war, a local press had stated that the West in their 24-hour CNN broadcasts focused more on the war strategy of the US and its allies instead of reporting on human sufferings by the Iraqis.

Yesterday, Deputy Information Minister Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin urged the public to have self-censorship when watching the Western media reports aired by RTM.

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