

24 MAR 2003

Parliament-Iraq

...IT IS A BREACH OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, UN CHARTER- DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- The United States and its allies through their unilateral military action against Iraq have clearly breached international law and violated the United Nations Charter, the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, told the Dewan Rakyat today.

The Prime Minister was moving a motion which called on members of the House to strongly condemn the military action against Iraq.

Earlier the House adjourned proceedings so that the Prime Minister could move the motion under Standing Orders 27 (3).

Dr Mahathir said the US and its allies had launched the attacks on Iraq without the support and approval of the UN Security Council.

He said there were no rational grounds at all for such an attack.

"The unilateral military action is a pre-emptive strike...aimed at regime change in Iraq and is a violation of that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said.

The Prime Minister in the motion also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Iraq.

He also appealed to all parties in the conflict to speedily return to the negotiating process peacefully and in ensuring that Iraq abided by UN Security Council resolutions if indeed it had weapons of mass destruction.

Dr Mahathir said the House should also resolve to urge the United States and its allies to respect the human rights of the people of Iraq and international humanitarian principles specially the "Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War."

The Prime Minister said as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), he would seek the cooperation of NAM members and like-minded countries in upholding the principles of international law and the UN Charter in handling issues pertaining to relations among nations.

The House should also resolve to appeal to the international community to urgently extend emergency aid to the people of Iraq.

"The House should also resolve to convey this motion to all legislatures and Parliaments especially that of the United States, Britain, Spain and Australia," Dr Mahathir said.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Lim Si Cheng when met outside the House, said there was no time limit for members to debate the motion.

"As long as there are members who wish to speak, they will be allowed to do so. It will probably go for more than an hour or even until late evening and then the government will wind up," he said.

Earlier while in the Dewan, Lim explained to Dr Syed Azman Syed Nawawi (PAS-Kuala Terengganu) why his motion on the US attack on Iraq, which he moved on Thursday, had to be rejected.

"This is a similar motion but as it is related to the government and moved by the Prime Minister himself, it is substantive and merits precedence and warrants urgent debate," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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