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Mahathir-Iraq

LET UN FIND SOLUTION FOR IRAQ, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the solution to the Iraq crisis should be left to the United Nations although the United States alleges that Baghdad is concealing weapons of mass destruction.

"Our stand in the UN is until the UN is satisfied (that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction). Not until the government of United States is satisfied," he said.

"Until the UN is satisfied, we shall not go to war with Iraq," he told a media conference after inspecting the Putra World Trade Centre, the venue of the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit (NAM) here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on US Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation, using what he said was intelligence data, to the UN Security Council yesterday that Iraq has concealed equipment from its suspected weapons programme to hamper UN inspectors searching for evidence of biological, chemical and nuclear arms.

Dr Mahathir said that in any case, war was not the solution to the crisis.

"Because the cost is too high. Far too many people are going to be killed, merely because you want to change the government of the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if that becomes a precedent, then it would be worrisome for weaker countries because should they not change their governments, they were likely to be involved in war.

Asked if there will be protection for the Iraqis in this tense situation in a show of support for Iraq by Malaysia, he said that Malaysia does not envisage that the Iraqis would come here to avoid the war.

However, he said that there would be refugees and therefore, nearby countries had to accept the fact that there would be an influx of refugees into these countries.

On Malaysia's part, he said, the country has yet to consider the possibility of granting asylum to these refugees.

-- BERNAMA

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