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Syed Hamid-Sanctions

LIFTING OF IRAQI SANCTIONS DOES NOT LEGITIMISE INVASION, SAYS SYED  
HAMID

PUTRAJAYA, May 9 (Bernama) -- Any resolution to be introduced in the United Nations on the lifting of sanctions on Iraq will not legitimise the United States-led invasion of that country, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia would also insist that the resolution to be introduced reflect the interest of the people of Iraq over the control of their oil fields and other assets.

Asked to comment on Washington's announcement yesterday on the US intention to introduce the resolution and calling on other countries to support the move, Syed Hamid said that Malaysia would study the draft resolution.

"The most important thing is that we do not wish to see the resolution on the lifting of sanctions as if to legitimise the unilateral action which has been taken. After we've studied the draft resolution and it's in the interest of the people of Iraq who will be in control of all its resources, then it's something which we can accept," he said.

Earlier, Syed Hamid launched a book entitled "A Diplomat Arrives In Washington" by Dr Fauziah Mohamad Taib who wrote of her experience during her 1998-2003 tenure as deputy chief of mission at the Malaysian embassy.

She has been appointed as the Malaysian high commissioner to Fiji.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia had always opposed the sanctions which had been imposed for over 12 years, causing hardship and misery to the innocent people of Iraq.

Malaysia felt that the sufferings of the Iraqis were actually due to the sanctions imposed by the UN following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, he said.

Iraq claimed that some 1.5 of its people especially children have died during the period.

President George W. Bush said that the US and its allies Britain and Spain intended to introduce a resolution in the UN to end the economic sanctions.

Syed Hamid said that the countries now intending to see the end of sanctions were the very ones which had previously strongly objected to the lifting of the sanctions.

"As such, if this (resolution) is not linked to the invasion which has taken place and solely in the interest of Iraq and the weapons inspectors could verify that there're no weapons of mass destruction and it's under the auspices of the UN and a multilateral process...that should be no problem," he said.

"So, Malaysia, I think, in terms of principle, we support the removal of the sanctions but in the context of what's happening in the present, I think it's important that we look at the exact wordings on what needed to be done," he said.

In this context, Syed Hamid also said that the verification on the demolition of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, the main condition for the lifting of sanctions, should be conducted by the UN weapons inspectors.

The foreign minister also said that the presence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the G8 Meeting in Paris next month would enable him to express not only Malaysia's views but also that of developing countries on various issues.

The invitation to Dr Mahathir was extended because of his reputation as

a well respected leader, he added.

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