

01 MAR 2003

Syed Hamid-United States

MALAYSIA HOPES US WOULD BE MORE OPEN TO CRITICISM ON WAR

KOTA TINGGI, March 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysia hopes that the United States will be more open to criticisms and viewpoints from the global community which do not want the Iraqi issue to be settled through war.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the United States must be open to accepting that the world was concerned a bigger turmoil would occur with negative consequences if America and its allies attacked Iraq.

"We worry about the war... they expect to settle the crisis in a short time using military might.

"But after the war, it would bring problems to the world... with the Arab nations and citizens in the Gulf feeling dissatisfied, angry and its consequence to Islamic country," he told reporters here today.

The statement of not going to war was not only made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad but by the whole world when millions of ordinary people demonstrated against the war including the people, the media and American leaders themselves.

Syed Hamid said the United States should allow the United Nations weapons inspectors to complete their work on the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction in the next three or four months.

"But now it seems there is strong intent to go to war (on the side of the US) while the initial goal was to achieve peace... let them do their work, in another three or four months the work will be done," he said.

He said Malaysia, as Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) chair, merely voiced the stand of the developing world and Islamic nations who do not want war.

"In war, human beings will be slaughtered... we cannot consider death as a side effect ... this is life, human flesh and blood," he said.

Syed Hamid stressed that Malaysia voiced its anti-war opinion as this was the intention of the world that wanted peace, more openness, respect for the process of multilateralism in international relations and not to be anti-American or to be enemies with the superpower.

Syed Hamid said this was the same when Dr Mahathir made the statement on using oil as a weapon to impede US' attack on Iraq after the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) unofficial meeting on Feb 26 - it was not meant to instigate the US.

"When the PM spoke about using oil as a weapon many admonished us from the US although they did not say we were instigating.

"This is not instigation... there was no decision... Dr Mahathir said the matter was brought up and was settled there but it had far greater effects that needed to be studied, we did not say it can be done," he said.

He said the OIC discussion was not a meeting that had power to make proposals, resolutions or take any final decisions as it was only an unofficial meeting.

"We hope the US has a big heart to accept differing viewpoints and criticisms...as the world situation now we have no choice other than to speak and if we cannot even talk, the situation is difficult," he added.

-- BERNAMA

MNY MNY PR PC