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Hishammuddin-Peace

ONLY AVENUE LEFT IS SHOW OF PROTEST BY WORLD POPULATION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia feels that with all diplomatic avenues to avert a United States-led attack on Iraq grinding to a halt, the only way peace can be attained is through a show of protest against war by the world population.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said that although the US had not listened to the United Nations (UN), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) or the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the world population could make it listen to the clamouring voices calling out for peace.

"We feel that any attack on Iraq is illegitimate. The world population have to be united in wanting peace. They (the US) have not listened to these organisations but they cannot afford not to listen to the world population," he told reporters after meeting the Iraqi ambassador to Malaysia, Qais Subhi A. Al-Yacoubi, at his office here today.

He said that the factions aligned to the US in pushing for a military attack on oil-rich Iraq do not want to listen to any other position "but if the people of the world stood up, then they might make an impression on the hawkish stand of these blood hungry nations."

He said that Iraq had over the last few months shown that it was willing to be inspected and had even gone to the extent of destroying missiles which were banned.

"We are coordinating with other nations to help attain peace. It is a matter for the international community, even when the UN Security Council was rejected by the US," he said.

Hishammuddin said that as for Malaysia, the People's Alliance for Peace Malaysia (Peace Malaysia) would hold a peace rally, which will begin at the Merdeka Stadium and ends at the Merdeka Square, either this Friday or Saturday.

Peace Malaysia organised a peace rally on Feb 23 at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium, attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and some 150,000 Malaysians.

Meanwhile, at the same media conference, Qais thanked Malaysians for the support shown towards Iraq and the Iraqi people in this time of need.

"Malaysia is a brave country expressing loudly on the unjust and cruel campaign against the Iraqi people. What Malaysia is doing is towards the right direction," he said.

He said that NAM, from a sleepy organisation, had received the much-needed rejuvenation when Malaysia took the helm of the 116-member movement last month.

When asked by a foreign news agency reporter about the ultimatum given to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein by US President George W. Bush to leave the country to avoid attack, he said: "There are more chances for Bush to step down. We are not the ones bent on attacking. We will fight. We will resist and we shall prevail."

To another question as to what the Muslim governments across the world would do if there was an attack, he said: "Wait and see. There are countries like Malaysia, like all good Muslims will come together against the attack on Iraq."

-- BERNAMA

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