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Mahathir-Iraq(UN)

SMALL AND WEAK COUNTRIES NO LONGER FEEL SAFE- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, today said small and weak countries no longer feel safe because the United Nations is unable to protect them from the terrorism of big powers.

He said the unilateral attack on Iraq by the United States and its allies would be a black page in world history for they had rendered meaningless all aspects of international law.

Through their unilateral action on Iraq they had ignored international law as well as the humanitarian aspect and denied justice for a defenceless people, he said.

"They have returned to the stone age where might is right. We can predict that in the future, the borders of independent nations will be breached at the whims and fancies of the superpowers," Dr Mahathir said when moving a motion calling on the House to strongly condemn the unilateral military action of the US and its allies on Iraq.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-month leave from March 6 to May 4, came to Parliament to move the motion which also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Iraq.

"The people of Iraq who had been suffering for the last 12 years from economic sanctions, so much so 1.5 million of them died from starvation and lack of medicine, are now being attacked with bombs and rockets," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said there was no longer the slogan "the rule of law" coined by the superpowers as they themselves had breached it.

He said the claim that Iraq was dangerous and threatened the whole world with its weapons of mass destruction was incomprehensible and could not be accepted as a reason for launching the attack.

It was most unjustified and saddening that the military action involving use of sophisticated weapons and large scale bombing was being carried out after Iraq was forced to destroy its weapons for defence purposes on the orders of the UN Security Council.

Dr Mahathir said the number of killed and injured would indeed be many among the defenceless people of Iraq.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia agreed to the contention that weapons of mass destruction were a threat to the international community and that the world had no need for them.

However the objective of the attack of the US and its allies on Iraq was not aimed at locating weapons of mass destruction but to topple the government of Iraq and achieve the strategic aims of the superpower and its allies.

To realise this objective, the Prime Minister said Iraq should not only be defeated but the peoples and governments of the region should be monitored and threatened through the continued presence of US forces in West Asia since the Persian Gulf War of 1991.

"This means there will be no democracy but iron-fist rules by foreign powers through puppet governments and this will become the system of the world."

The Prime Minister said the governments of the Gulf would probably be forced to accept domination by the superpowers but there was a big possibility that their peoples would not accept this and would not remain idle.

"They will act violently and terrorism will spread rapidly," he said, recalling that while the world was at peace suddenly New York and Washington were attacked.

The Prime Minister said terrorist attacks were likely to come at anytime from a people who had been angry as long as they could remember.

He said the attacks of Sept 11, 2001, had been successful beyond the expectations of the terrorists in view of the irrational reaction of the superpower which far from handling the source of terrorism had resorted to action that could be considered insane.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia strongly condemned the unilateral attack of the United States and its allies on Iraq and firmly held to the stand that war was not the way to settle conflicts and hostilities among nations.

"War is only for the defence and security of a country under attack. Pre-emptive strikes should not be allowed altogether particularly by superpowers and their allies on weak countries."

"Unilateral action should be banned and the world should act against anyone who breached international law and principles," he said.

Holding in high esteem the stand taken by France, Germany, Russia, China and several other countries of Europe in opposing the action of the United States and its allies, Dr Mahathir said he was happy that there were also big powers that were against such unilateral action.

"We also hold in high esteem the demonstrations against the actions of the United States and Britain by their own people and by people the world over," he said.

The Prime Minister also stressed that the Iraq war was not a crusade or a war between Christians and Muslims but a war launched by the United States and Britain against a weak Islamic country, Iraq.

Dr Mahathir noted that Pope John Paul II, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, had himself strongly opposed the war and so has the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury.

The attack on Iraq was the action of imperialists who still wished to dominate the world after trying to wage an economic war.

"If the country is strong, surely they will not attack. This is the attitude of a coward, a bully," he said.

The Prime Minister said as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and incoming Chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), he would urge member nations to voice their opposition to the attacks on Iraq by the United States and Britain.

He said if the NAM and OIC member nations did not close ranks, they would always be threatened and probably be recolonised.

"As NAM Chairman, I have written to express the NAM stand that it opposed war against a fellow member nation, Iraq. We will use this channel to get as many countries as possible to condemn the action of the United States and its allies," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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