

24 MAR 2003

Mahathir-Text

TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S MOTION AT SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION ON
IRAQ

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- Following is the text of the motion condemning the unilateral military action against Iraq by the United States (US) and its allies, tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

"In accordance with the Dewan Rakyat Standing Order 27(3), I beg to table the following motion:

THAT the US and its allies have launched a unilateral military strike against Iraq without the mandate and consent of the United Nations (UN) Security Council;

THAT the unilateral military action by the US and its allies is a breach of international law and the UN Charter;

THAT the rationale for the unilateral military action is totally unacceptable;

THAT the pre-emptive unilateral military action is not sanctioned by either the UN Charter or international law;

THAT the unilateral military action aimed at bringing about a regime change in Iraq tantamounts to an invasion of an independent and sovereign nation;

THUS, this House resolves to:

(1) Strongly condemn the unilateral military action by the US and its allies against Iraq;

(2) Urge the US and its allies to immediately cease the unilateral military action against Iraq;

(3) Call on all parties concerned to urgently return to the process of peaceful settlement in ensuring Iraq's compliance with UN Security Council resolutions relating to its alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction;

(4) Urge the US and its allies to respect the human rights of the people of Iraq and international conventions on human rights, especially the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(5) That Malaysia, together with members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other states sharing similar stance, uphold the principles of international law and the UN Charter in dealing with issues affecting relations between nations;

(6) Appeal to the international community to extend expeditiously emergency relief to the people of Iraq;

(7) That this House convey this resolution to all legislatures and parliaments concerned, especially that of the US, Britain, Spain and Australia.

I thank you Mr Speaker for allowing this august House to debate the issue of the military action on Iraq by the US and its allies.

2. The world today has entered a very alarming and dangerous phase following the attack on Iraq by the US and its allies without the sanction of the UN. This has left a black mark in the history of the world which saw a superpower and its allies, in blatant disregard of international law, humanity and justice, attacking a state that is no longer able to defend itself let alone pose a threat to a superpower. That Iraq is dangerous and a threat to the whole world, with its weapons of mass destruction, is ridiculous and unacceptable as a reason for launching such attack.

3. Sadder still, the use of the latest weaponry and wholesale bombings of Iraq, which has been forced beforehand to destroy its defence system on the orders of the UN Security Council, is really unjust. After having suffered for 12 years under UN-imposed economic sanctions resulting in the loss of 1.5 million lives due to the shortage of food and medical supplies, the Iraqis now face bombings and rocket attacks against which they are defenceless and devoid of any means to protect themselves. Even the bomb shelters are no longer safe since the ordnance used against them could penetrate concrete and earthwork. Essentially this is not a war since the aggressor is the world's superpower and the victim totally lacks the ability to defend itself. Surely a quick victory is a foregone conclusion for the superpower. Regardless of whether victory is swift or long in coming, what is certain is that death and injuries inflicted on the Iraqis will be substantial.

4. In the aftermath of the Second World War, countries of the world agreed to establish the UN to save it from further wars. The world entrusted the five major powers with a veto right although this is contrary to democratic principles. And yet the world willingly accorded them such right believing that they would check anyone among them from resorting to aggression by using the veto power. Moreover, the world believes that these superpowers, in particular those non-Communist states, would uphold those principles and not renege.

It is most unfortunate that those which reneged on their promise are the very countries which often demand strict adherence to the principles regardless of the circumstances. The Security Council and the UN have themselves been marginalised by the US which discards all international law. The US unashamedly resorted to unilateral action, forsaking its role as a protector and becomes undependable instead.

6. This is the second occasion that the US has destroyed an international body which the Americans themselves initiated to illegalise war. The US similarly destroyed the League of Nations which was formed after the First World War.

7. Today, smaller and weaker nations are no longer safe as the UN could no longer protect them from superpower aggression. The UN and international law are meaningless now. We have reverted to the Stone Age where might is right. It is thinkable now that the superpowers would violate sovereign nations at their whims and fancies simply because a country is perceived to

be undemocratic, disrespectful of human rights, disregards religious freedom -- justifying for intervention and a regime change by way of exiling and assassinating an undesirable leader. This is what's left after international law and the UN have been destroyed. The rule of law no longer exists because the very people who coined this term are themselves the violators. If there is any action that is destructive and violates all principles meant to bring about a peaceful world which is free from oppression, then this is the biggest violation of all by a superpower-cum-nuclear power.

8. Malaysia reinforces the conviction that weapons of mass destruction are a threat to the world community and which the world can do without. Destruction of all these weapons without exception to any country is a pre-requisite. But while Iraq is banned from possessing such weapons, its enemy, Israel, is not.

9. What guarantee is there that Israel would not use destructive weapons such as a nuclear bomb on its enemies given its wilful killing of Palestinians? Israel and the US have in fact threatened to use nuclear weapons as they deem fit in certain circumstances.

10. Despite repeated scrutiny, UN inspectors have failed to unearth any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Iraq may be hiding these weapons but they are not easily concealed given the sophisticated devices available to the superpowers to locate all nuclear and chemical weaponry. If at all they could be hidden, it is unlikely that their number is enough to destroy the world or Israel or its ally, the US. Any attempt by Iraq to use such weapons would prompt the superpowers, with their vast and superior nuclear weapons, to destroy Iraq and its leadership. Should Iraqis face annihilation in the search of weapons of mass destruction which may well not be in their country at all? While Bush and Blair claim they want to save the Iraqis, what is the meaning of security for dead Iraqis?

11. Of late, what is obvious is that it is not Iraq's weapons of mass destruction that is uppermost but the objective has shifted to ousting the Iraqi government and pursuing the strategic goals of the US and its allies. Towards this end, their strategy is not only to defeat Iraq but also station American forces permanently in West Asia to monitor and intimidate the governments and the people there. This means democracy is unlikely to flourish and instead authoritarian rules by foreign powers and their puppets will be a feature of the world system.

12. Gulf countries may have to accept superpower domination but this may not go down well with their people who will show their rejection by resorting to acts of violence, thus nurturing terrorism. We should be mindful that just when we thought the world was safe, New York and Washington suddenly came under attack. Despite the US and Britain being on full alert, there is nothing to guarantee security for all people at all places at all times. Terrorists bent on vengeance all this while could mount attacks maybe today, or tomorrow or a year or 10 years from now. The world will not be safe and people will forever live in fear. The world's economy will not recover, and political instability will prevail while relations between nations remain strained. The truth is that the success of the Sept 11 attacks is beyond the expectation of the perpetrators given the irrational reaction of the superpowers. By right, it is the root causes of terrorism that need addressing but instead irrational actions compounded the problem. The attack on Iraq will not help diminish the possibility of

terrorist attacks from recurring.

13. For this reason, the government of Malaysia strongly condemns the action of the US, Britain and their allies on Iraq. Our strong stand is that war is not a means of ending hostilities between nations. War should only be allowed for the defence and security of a country under attack. Pre-emptive war against weaker nations by the superpowers and their allies should altogether be banned. Unilateral attacks should be illegalised and the world should act against anyone breaching this principle and international law.

14. We are relieved that at least there are superpowers which oppose the American and British actions. We highly commend France, Russia and China together with Germany and several other European nations for their opposition to the actions of US and its allies. We regard highly Americans and Britons who protested against their own governments alongside people from all over the world through anti-war demonstrations.

15. It is clear that this is not a war between Europe or Christians and Muslim countries. The opposition to the war by the leader of the Catholic Church Pope John Paul, the Archbishop of Canterbury of the Anglican Church and the Archbishop of Britain's Catholic Church prove that Christians at large are against US' actions. This is not a Crusade. This is a war between the superpowers, the US and Britain, and Iraq, a weak Muslim state. This is the actions of imperialists still in pursuit of world dominance. After launching attacks on the economy, they follow suit with military strikes. If the targeted country is strong, surely they won't attack. This is a cowardly act of a bully.

16. This alarming situation prompted the Malaysian government to embark on a mission to rescue Malaysians in Iraq and West Asia. Three C-130 aircraft have been dispatched to airlift the Malaysians home.

17. In the face of several potential problems that may undermine Malaysia's peace and stability, we have taken several measures, the most important being to preserve national stability and security.

18. Malaysia being a democratic country, it is understandable that Malaysians and their political parties have differing views on various matters. However, on the issue of the violation of international law and unilateral strikes against Iraq by the US and Britain, I hope we Malaysians and our political parties could come up with a common stance. Any differences between us on this issue can only lead to problems and weaken our resolve to oppose the violations of the UN Charter, international law and attacks on Iraq. We should bear in mind that now it is Iraq that is at the receiving end. No country will be safe after this. Defending Malaysia is the responsibility of all Malaysians.

19. Malaysia is not only a member of the Non-Aligned Movement but is currently its chairman. We are also a member of the OIC or the Organisation of Islamic Conference. At a time when a member nation of both organisations is under military attack, it is vital that we give support by being vocal in opposing the aggression by the US and its allies, which are the enemies of our friend.

20. We will be constantly under threat and will be recolonised by the superpowers who can turn their back on the UN if they so choose, unless the

weaker nations close ranks. Whatever differences that we and our political parties may have, I am convinced that none among us is willing to see our country recolonised.

21. As NAM chairman, I've written letters expressing the movement's opposition to the war against one of its members, namely Iraq. We will use this channel to garner the support of as many countries in the world as possible to condemn the action of the US and its allies.

22. I hope that Malaysian non-governmental organisations would communicate with their counterparts in the US and Britain to influence their respective governments to stop attacking Iraq. Only the Americans and British people could bring their governments to stop attacking Iraq and persuade them to return to the UN fold. If the governments which bypass the UN are unseated by their own people, then probably the new ones may re-embrace the UN.

23. Malaysia is aware that the US and its allies may be displeased with our stand. We don't hate the Americans. We do not wish to be at odds with the US or Britain or anybody for that matter. But we cannot turn a blind eye to injustice and oppression. What they are doing to Iraq is gross injustice and compounding the oppression of the Iraqis, who, for the past 12 years, have been deprived of food and medical supplies. While the Iraqi government has been accused of cruelty, sanctions on the Iraqis for the past 12 years till today are far more cruel. No matter how good democracy is, to kill the people of a country into accepting democracy is in fact against democratic principles and immoral.

24. Islam teaches us to improve our lot before God changes our destiny. We have so far done our best to save Muslims. We shall work harder still to the best of our ability. Hence, it is only proper that we pray for divine help.

25. The government encourages all mosques nationwide to conduct special prayers for an immediate end to the war. The followers of other faiths are likewise encouraged to do so according to their respective practices.

26. God willing, through our efforts and prayers, the number of Iraqis killed and injured will be minimised and the US and Britain will immediately stop their aggression on Iraq.

27. We pray that God will realise our wishes.

28. I beg to table this motion."

-- BERNAMA
MAM RYN JK