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Chandra: Malaysia's voice can delay US war on Iraq

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The voice of the people of Malaysia, a nation well recognised for its international peace efforts, combined with antiwar protests in the West, would help delay the war against Iraq.

President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), Dr Chandra Muzaffar, said Malaysia had been in the forefront of various efforts to bring about world peace through the Non-Aligned Movement and Organisation of Islamic Conference.

"Malaysia had rendered assistance and acted as pacifier in many international conflicts including the Congo civil war in 1960s and the Iran-Iraq war.

"It has also been the most vocal exponent of world peace and, therefore, its people would be heard in international circles," he said at a Press conference on a Colloquium on International Law and Universal Peace to be held on Saturday at the Putra World Trade Centre as part of Peace Malaysia activities here today.

Chandra, who will present a paper on Human Rights, Human Dignity and Universal Peace, said Malaysia's good record in maintaining peace among its multi-racial community, gave the country the best qualification to lead the call for global peace.

Another speaker at the Peace Malaysia colloquium, assistant vice-chancellor (legal affairs) at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Prof Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi said every voice that was raised against the United State's adavance, in wanting to attack Iraq, would have its value.

"The world atmosphere now is similar to that of World War II, but increased awareness among the people and wide dissemination of anti-war sentiments, can make a difference.

"During World War II, Adolf Hitler and his henchmen didn't think of the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crime trials," said Shad Saleem who will present a paper on International Law, Universal Peace and War against Terrorism.

Shad Saleem said it should be remembered that empires in the past had collapsed and it was inevitable that the presentday superpowers would crumble one day and they would have to account for their wrong-doings.

The third speaker, Lt Jen (Rtd) Datuk Seri Panglima Zaini Mohd Said, said he would explain the no-war conclusion, based on his 35-year experience in the army.

Chairman of the colloquium, Mukhriz Mahathir, said non-governmental organisations, interested in taking part in the colloquium, could contact the Peace Malaysia secretariat at 03-64118006 or e-mail to sekretariatkolokium@yahoo.com.

He said Peace Malaysia, which is a coalition of non-governmental organisations with the common goal of pursuing a comprehensive, permanent and just world peace, would not be a seasonal set-up but continue its work to strive for peace in the world.

Meanwhile, in a Press statement, Chandra said the Bush Administration was expected to coax, coerce, bribe and blackmail close allies and distant friends in the next week or two, to put into motion its plan to seize control of Iraq.

He said the attempt by US Secretary of State Colin Powell to present the UN Security Council with "new evidence" of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction and his alleged link with al-Qaeda, was part of this exercise.

"A section of the public will be swayed just as some members of the Security Council will be persuaded by the so-called new evidence."