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Dewan Rakyat unanimously condemns attack on Iraq by US and allies

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Dewan Rakyat, led by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, unanimously passed a motion today condemning the unilateral military action by the United States and its allies against Iraq.

The Prime Minister, in tabling the motion, had proposed seven resolutions, including condemning the attack on Iraq and demanding an immediate end to the conflict.

Taking the cue from Dr Mahathir, who called on Malaysians to unite in protesting the senseless war, Members of Parliament, including those from Opposition parties, threw their support behind the motion.

It was the second time this month the lawmakers stood united on the Iraq issue, having supported a motion two weeks ago which lambasted threats by the US to take unilateral action against Iraq.

The House adjourned its proceeding under Standing Orders 27(3) to debate today's motion, which was telecast live by RTM.

Among those who spoke in support of the motion were Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik (MCA), Nasharuddin Mat Isa (Pas), Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (PBB), S. Sothinathan (MIC), Dr Maximus Ongkili (PBS), Kerk Kim Hock (DAP) and Ramli Ibrahim (Parti Keadilan Nasional).

Dr Mahathir had proposed that the House adopt the following resolutions:

- * To condemn in the strongest terms possible the unilateral military action by the United States and its allies;
- * To urge the US and its allies to immediately end military action against Iraq;
- * To urge all related parties to strive to immediately return to the use of peaceful means in ensuring that Iraq adheres to Security Council resolutions in the event Iraq is found to possess weapons of mass destruction;
- * To demand that the US and its allies respect the human rights of the Iraqis and principles of international humanity, especially the "Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war";
- * Resolve that Malaysia co-operate with Non-Aligned Movement members and countries sharing similar views in defending international laws and the United Nations Charter in dealing with issues among nations;
- * To appeal to the international community to immediately extend emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq; and,
- * The House resolve to convey the resolutions to all legislative assemblies and parliaments, especially those of the US, Britain, Spain and Australia.

Describing the attack as a black spot in history, Dr Mahathir said a superpower, together with its allies, had chosen to attack a weaker nation which was incapable of defending itself.

"Casting aside international laws, humanity and justice, they attacked a country which no longer has the capability to defend itself, what more posing a threat to the superpowers.

"Claims that Iraq is dangerous and a threat to the world with its weapons of mass destruction are totally illogical and cannot be accepted as the reason for launching the attack."

Dr Mahathir said the US-led attack, with massive bombing and employing sophisticated weapons, was directed against Iraq which had earlier been stripped of its defence by the UN.

"This is not war because the attackers are the world's superpowers and

the one under attack is a defenceless country. Surely, victory will side with the attackers in a matter of time.

"But whether it will be a short or long war, the fact is that many Iraqis will be killed or injured."

Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said, concurred with the views that weapons of mass destruction were a threat to the international community.

"The world does not need this kind of weapon. What needs to be done is to destroy these weapons without any country being given special treatment.

"But we find that while prohibitions are imposed against Iraq, no such thing is being applied to its enemy, Israel."

He said: "Can Israel, which is wantonly murdering the Palestinians, be trusted not to use weapons of mass destruction like nuclear bombs against its enemies?"

The Prime Minister said the unilateral action by the US had far-reaching consequences as it meant weak and small nations were no longer safe and the UN could no longer offer them any protection from major powers.

"The UN and international laws are now meaningless. We have returned to the Stone Age where might dictates right.

"We can predict in the future of countries whose sovereignty will be trampled by the superpowers.

"Accusations can be levelled that certain countries are not democratic and they have failed to observe human rights and freedom of religion.

"The accusers will interfere directly to change governments, effect a regime change, evict leaders from their countries and even order the assassination of those who they dislike.

"This is the world after the destruction of international laws and the UN by the US. There is no more 'the rule of law' because those who created this slogan have now violated it."

Dr Mahathir called on the weak nations to unite.

Considering that the major powers had no qualms about dismissing the UN, they would face continuous threats and be re-colonised, he said.

"Whatever our differences are, I am confident nobody among us wants the country to be re-colonised."

Dr Mahathir also called on non-governmental organisations in the country to contact their counterparts in the US and Britain, urging them to convince their governments to stop the war.

"Only the Americans and British can stop their governments from attacking Iraq and return to the UN. If governments rejecting the role of the world body are rejected by their own people, perhaps the new governments will subscribe to the UN."

The Prime Minister said the Government would like to see all mosques performing sembahyang hajat (special prayers) to pray for an immediate end to the war.

He urged the followers of other religions to pray for an end to the war.