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War will not resolve issue of terrorism

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AT a time when world peace is under threat, particularly with the impending war on Iraq by the United States, Malaysia as a peace-loving nation is making great strides in advocating and promoting peace.

Malaysia's support and advocacy for peace started from the very day it attained independence. This was due to its realisation that peace is essential for development and progress.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his pre-decessors have always been stead-fast and uncompromising in their stand and advocacy of peace.

In April 2001, a group of mediators of peace and harmony met in Taiping - the town of "everlasting peace" - to discuss how a culture of peace must be embraced and promoted in the country.

The Taiping meeting issued a prescription for peace at local, national and global levels in the form of a sixpoint "Taiping Peace Recipe", centring on the soul, society and soil.

The six points, covering respect for life, rejection of violence, preserving the planet, willingness to listen and understand, preparedness to share with others and rediscovering solidarity are indeed most appropriate and should be practised by all in our daily lives to attain peace.

Another major development in Malaysia's advocacy of peace is the setting up of the People's Alliance for Peace Malaysia with more than 230 participating NGOs. It aims to collect one million signatures to support their petition for world peace.

The one million signatures, together with the Malaysians for Peace Memorandum, will be handed to Dr Mahathir on Feb 23 at Dataran Merdeka.

Organising the signature campaign will be most relevant at a time when Kuala Lumpur plays host to the 13th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement to be held from Feb 20 to 25. Malaysians will be able to express their true feelings for peace and such a message could be conveyed to the NAM Summit through Dr Mahathir.

Peace messages will reverberate through the city as City Hall will organise the Kuala Lumpur Art and Cultural Festival with the theme "Peace".

A cross-section of the Malaysian community, including students, made their presence felt when they displayed anti-war banners to protest against the impending action against Iraq by the United States and its allies during the recent launch of the Malaysian Peace Initiative logo.

At the Davos World Economic Forum's 33rd annual meeting, Dr Mahathir spoke very eloquently when he pointed out that the world is now embroiled in a war that has created turmoil everywhere, which, according to him, can only be overcome with a new thinking based on trust among the global community.

He said there was now little trust among the people; there was fear all over - even among the innocent and those uninvolved.

Such fears make our lives meaningless, and the only way to overcome them is not through war but by building trust among one another.

Worldwide protests against war in Iraq are growing at an unprecedented rate. Even in the US, a reporter of one US publication - the San Francisco Chronicle has remarked that never before in human history has an anti-war movement grown so fast and spread so quickly.

Going to war over global hegemony will not help resolve the issue of terrorism; it only aggravates it. It is important to identify the causes of terrorism and remove them.