

27/01/2003

KL will evacuate embassy staff, students if there are signs of war

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Malaysia will evacuate embassy staff and students from Iraq if there are signs of war, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"The effect of any war on Malaysia will be minimal, but we will definitely pull out our (embassy) staff and students in Iraq if there are signs of war," he said on his return from visits to Lebanon, Egypt and Switzerland.

He said this when asked to comment on a request by the United States to US expatriates worldwide to be ready for emergency evacuations in the event of unforeseen circumstances, including war.

Dr Mahathir cautioned Malaysians visiting or staying in countries neighbouring Iraq to return home if war was imminent in Iraq.

"The US is looking after its own personnel, I suppose," he said, adding that Malaysia would look after the safety of Malaysians in Iraq.

The US State Department yesterday said it had sent cables to all US diplomatic missions abroad, instructing them to alert Americans in their jurisdictions to be ready to move quickly amid increasing signs that war in Iraq may be looming.

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