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Loud and clear to US to abandon war plan

KOTA TINGGI, Sat. - With opposition to the war on Iraq growing louder each day, the message should now be clear to the United States, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today.

He said the US, together with Britain as its main ally, could be left alone in their war against Iraq following a revolt by lawmakers from British Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party.

Syed Hamid said worldwide anti-war demonstrations had increased in recent weeks and President George W. Bush should have heard the message by now.

"The demonstrators include US senators and the American people, who are of the view that war is not the only option. However, the Bush administration looks likely to go ahead with its plan to wage war.

"They even suggested that the war will be short but they have not realised the consequences of a war, which is likely to change the whole world," he said after launching the Kota Tinggi Umno Division convention today.

It was reported that Blair suffered the biggest backbench revolt when 12 lawmakers from the Labour Party came down against war on Iraq.

Syed Hamid said there was nothing wrong with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's strong statement against war in his opening address at the just-concluded Non-Aligned Movement Summit.

He said developing countries had the right to protest against war and to give an opposition view in a multi-polar world.

"I know they (US) are not happy with PM's speech but one must realise that what he had said was true."