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PM: We will not support war

By Hardev Kaur

MALAYSIA will not be involved in the war against Iraq and will not support it even if the UN Security Council sanctions the attack, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Our stand is that war is not a solution. So we will always oppose it and we will have to make contact with some countries which are opposed to it," he said.

Asked what impact the impending war in Iraq would have on Malaysia and what preparations had been made to cushion any adverse impact on the country, Dr Mahathir said: "We don't have any military preparations of any kind. We don't expect any attack against us. We don't expect to be a base for any attack against Iraq.

"And to the extent that we can be of help in any way in terms of supplying medical aid (we would)," he said during a Press conference at the end of his two-day visit to Brazil.

Dr Mahathir hoped other countries will try to persuade America not to resort to military action and added that although it seems inevitable there could be some last-minute developments.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has written to UN secretary-general Kofi Annan asking him to convene a meeting of Heads of Government which are not in the Security Council and added that "if there is a response from Annan, we may still be able to do something."

Many others were also opposed to the war including those on the security council among them veto-wielding members France, Germany and Russia and the march to war has been described as "a failure of diplomacy".

Asked on the impact the war was likely to have on Malaysia, the Prime Minister said the war was anticipated and "we have looked at alternatives we can resort to particularly with regard to our economic development and growth."

Dr Mahathir said he believes that "economic growth will be affected".

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