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Hamid-Ireland/(With Pix)/BM

M'SIA, IRELAND SHARE SAME VIEW ON WAR, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Ireland today expressed their shared view that war is not the best way to resolve a conflict or dispute, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said the two countries believed the best approach to settle any problem, whether domestic or international, was through dialogue and diplomacy.

The stand was expressed jointly by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and President of Ireland Mary McAleese during their 40-minute meeting at a hotel, here.

McAleese, who is accompanied by her husband Dr Martin MacAleese, arrived last night on a four-day visit to Malaysia, the first by an Irish head of state.

She is leading a 55-member delegation that includes Minister of Science and Education Noel Dempsey, government officials and businessmen.

"She (McAleese) and Dr Mahathir are of the view that war will not solve problems. Only through dialogue and multilateral process problems can be resolved," he told reporters after the meeting.

Present at the meeting were Dr Mahathir's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Irish Ambassador to Malaysia, Daniel Mulhall, and National Unity and Social Development Minister, Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, who is the minister-in-attendance.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia and Ireland had a long history in bilateral relations, especially in the education sector, with Ireland being one of the preferred destinations of Malaysian students wishing to further their studies abroad, particularly in the medical field.

Total trade between Malaysia and Ireland totalled RM6.5 billion. Malaysia is Ireland's main trade partner in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia is also the third most important market for Ireland outside the European Union (EU).

Earlier, McAleese received the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, at her hotel suite.

-- BERNAMA

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