

'OIC can discuss Iraq on the side of NAM'

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JITRA: Malaysia is prepared to provide the facilities for a special meeting on the Iraq crisis by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) during the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Kuala Lumpur next week, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The prime minister was, however, sceptical as to whether any decision made at the OIC meeting would hold sway.

"This is because some OIC member countries are

supporting the United States (in its plans to attack Iraq)," he told reporters at the Umno Kubang Pasu Hari Raya Aidiladha open house.

Mahathir said Malaysia had noted that the OIC was not taking any action to prevent member countries from being attacked because the 51-member grouping of Islamic nations held the view that any decision it might reach would not have any impact on the US.

France, Germany and Belgium made a firm stand against the plan to attack

Iraq because the three European countries were strong, he said.

"That is why it is important that Muslims, if they want to save their fellow Muslims, unite and remain strong," Mahathir said.

"Instead, what is happening now is that the Islamic countries are weak and do not wield any influence over the fate of Muslims."

He said Malaysia had not received any proposal to convene a special OIC meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia will play host

to the OIC summit in October.

On the suggestion made by some Muslims that they should defend Iraq in the event of a war, purportedly a holy war, Mahathir said: "It is a stupid idea. We want to fight a holy war if we can win. If we go in just to be killed, that is not jihad.

"If we want to go to a war, we must have a strategy and strength. If we go in without this, I don't see any benefit in it apart from being a means to vent anger."