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Syed Hamid-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR DELIVERS FINAL SPEECH AT UN ON THURSDAY

By: Salmy Hashim

NEW YORK, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will deliver his final speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at its 58th session on Thursday, emphasising international peace and security.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the Prime Minister is expected to cover a broad range of issues including post-war Iraq, failure of the Cancun World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"Dr Mahathir will present Malaysia's gift to the UN that depicts Malaysian sovereignty at his meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan," said Syed Hamid at a media conference at Malaysia's Permanent Mission in New York today.

The UNGA is expected to draw more than 60 heads of state and government. The UN has a current membership of 191.

Dr Mahathir, who is scheduled to meet Annan on Thursday, is expected to exchange views with the UN Secretary-General on regional and international issues, and the future role of the UN in the post-war Iraq.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to meet with the President of the UNGA, Julian Hunte of St Lucia. The two will focus on the restructuring of the UNGA and transparency and democracy of the UN.

Syed Hamid said these two issues are expected to be interesting considering the recent success of the general assembly (GA) in passing a resolution that Israel withdraw its Security Cabinet's decision to expel President Yasser Arafat from Palestine.

"The GA has an important role in international peace and security," Syed Hamid said.

On the question of Iraq, Syed Hamid said Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will discuss the inclusion of Iraq at the NAM meeting in New York and the OIC summit next month in Kuala Lumpur.

While in New York, the Prime Minister is also scheduled to hold a dialogue with Muslim scholars.

He will also hold a bilateral meeting with Philippine President Gloria Arroyo, where Malaysia has been requested to send a monitoring team for peace talks between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippines government.

Kuala Lumpur has played the principal role as host in the peace talks between the MILF and the Philippine government.

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