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NAM-Mahathir

M'SIA TO PUT FORTH ISSUES ON WAR AT NAM SUMMIT, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia does not only wish to present issues on the possibility of a war in Iraq at the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit but also wants to state its stand that it disagrees to war being used as a means to resolve conflicts between countries, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia also disagreed to killings as a way to pursue the politics of a country.

"We also do not agree to pre-emptive actions because (actually) nobody has the right to claim that his country was in danger and so he had to launch pre-emptive strikes on a country which is suspected to attack his country," he told a media conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was responding to a question on issues to be raised by Malaysia at the six-day summit which started here today with the Senior Officials' Meeting.

Asked whether the mammoth demonstrations worldwide would help prevent a war in Iraq, he said the United States would surely say the demonstrations did not reflect the views of the majority.

"From the demonstrations throughout the world...and these are the biggest ever demonstrations, a show of opposition by the people...but of course, the US can claim that these people do not reflect the total opinion of the people.

"However, when in Malaysia, when we had a demonstration by 200 or 300 people, they were already suggesting that this government (the Barisan Nasional government) should resign because the people do not like us.

"Now that millions are demonstrating against them, they do not talk in the same way," he said.

Commenting on reports that Palestine had sought Malaysia's assistance to enable Palestine President Yasser Arafat to attend the Kuala Lumpur NAM Summit Dr Mahathir said: "We can help, but we fear...not only he comes here (but) whether he can go back or not.

"We know that Israel's intention was to banish Arafat from his country," he said.

Palestine had asked for Dr Mahathir's help, in his capacity as the incoming NAM Chairman, to negotiate with the United States to enable Arafat to attend the summit following Tel Aviv's refusal to relax travel restrictions imposed on him.

-- BERNAMA

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