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OIC-Syed Hamid

OIC NEEDS UNITED STAND TO AVERT WAR, SAYS SYED HAMID

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

DOHA, March 4 (Bernama) -- Muslim countries still have the ability to avert war in Iraq if they show a united front in dealing with the issue, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said Muslim countries would only allow themselves to be divided and to be used if they were not united.

"This will be very sad and unfortunate because there'll be a continuous process of being used," he told Malaysian journalists on the country's expectation of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) emergency meeting here tomorrow to discuss the threat of a United States-led war on Iraq.

"The most important thing is for us to arrive at a consensus decision that we are against war to be used as a way of resolving the conflict in Iraq, and we want the Israelis to be stopped from the continued occupation and killings of the Palestinians," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be the first leader to speak at the summit after the opening speech by the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

Syed Hamid said the meeting was expected to come up with a communique, the draft of which would be discussed by the foreign ministers tonight.

"I think the mandate of OIC countries should be how we could contribute to resolving the crisis in accordance with the multilateral process, with the United Nations being given the responsibility and the arms inspectors being allowed to continue with their work," he said.

"It's clear that we are not for war and I don't think the question of regime change in Iraq should be the responsibility of the OIC but the Iraqi people," he said.

Noting the worsening situation in Palestine, he said there was the feeling in many Muslim countries that if war broke out in Iraq, it would allow Israel to continue with its atrocities and the killings of innocent Palestinian people.

-- BERNAMA

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