

10 MAR 2003

Syed Hamid-Iraq

M'SIA HOPES SIX NAM MEMBERS ON UN SECURITY COUNCIL WILL VOTE AGAINST
WAR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia hopes that six non-permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council will reject the resolution proposed by the United States (US), Britain and Spain that will set the stage for a military strike on Iraq.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today he hoped that the six -- Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Pakistan and Syria -- which are also Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members, would support the stance taken by France, Germany and Russia against war in Iraq.

"We hope the NAM non-permanent members of the Security Council will be able to make a decision on principle and go according to the recent NAM (Summit in Kuala Lumpur) resolutions opposing war and wanting peaceful solutions," he said.

He was speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby after the opening of fifth session of the 10th Parliament by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail, here.

Syed Hamid said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his capacity as the NAM chairman, had written to all the Security Council members urging them not to support President George W. Bush's initiative to wage war on Iraq.

"War should not be put at the forefront, it should be put at the back. We should try to achieve diplomatic and political solutions," Syed Hamid said.

He said that the world public opinion against war and the outcry for multilateral process were being ignored by the US and its allies.

The UN Security council is expected to vote this week on a second resolution proposed by the United States, Britain and Spain that would set the stage for a military strike on Iraq by declaring it in non-compliance with UN disarmament demands.

Iraq has denied possessing banned weapons of mass destruction.

The resolution needs nine votes to pass while avoiding a veto by any of the permanent members -- China, Russia, France, Britain and the United States.

Washington has made it clear that it does not need UN backing to wage war on Iraq and would not wait for March 17 to take action if the resolution is rejected.

On British Prime Minister Tony Blair facing a home front revolt with the first public threat of a ministerial resignation over his unswerving support for U.S., Syed Hamid said it showed that their own people were against war.

"We should have principle but it is very sad that the US and Britain are so engrossed in wanting war," he said.

Syed Hamid hoped that the Malaysian Parliament would also take cognisance of what other countries were doing in condemning war.

-- BERNAMA

HS HS JK