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Syed Hamid-OIC

WISMA PUTRA STUDYING DR M'S ATTENDANCE AT OIC MEETING IN QATAR

KOTA TINGGI, March 1 (Bernama) -- Wisma Putra will study the latest developments in a day or two to determine the attendance of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the two-day Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Emergency Meeting in Qatar beginning Tuesday to discuss the Iraqi crisis.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia's stand at present was as stated by Dr Mahathir that he would attend the meeting in Doha.

"We'll study the developments in a day or two. At the moment, the Prime Minister has decided to attend but we have to see how the situation is," he told reporters after simultaneously opening the Youth, Wanita and Puteri Umno meetings of the Kota Tinggi Umno division here today.

Syed Hamid said Wisma Putra would study the current situation as information received showed only seven heads of state would attend the meeting of the more than 40 member countries.

The emergency meeting was called by Qatar in its capacity as the OIC Chairman to discuss the Iraqi conflict. Iraq is at the brink of being attacked by the US and its allies.

"We're checking...like Saudi Arabia not attending, Syria's head of state not going. I believe countries like Yemen will also not attend and Bangladesh probably only sending a representative.

"We've to study...like Saudi Arabia saying it does not think the meeting in Qatar will be useful and beneficial... we have to study," he said.

Syed Hamid, who is also Kota Tinggi Umno division chief, said Kuala Lumpur did not have any resolution to be tabled at the meeting.

"Although we played host to the informal OIC meeting to discuss the Iraqi crisis in Kuala Lumpur on March 26, it is merely to exchange ideas... but the inputs and views expressed in Kuala Lumpur, who wants to bring it up, can do so (at the emergency meeting)," he said.

He said the position of Iraq accused of having weapons of mass destruction was clear because if Baghdad had the military power, surely it would have retaliated on the aircraft which bombed at the "no-fly zone."

"In Iraq, when there are bombings at the no-fly zone area, if Iraq has the military power, it cannot be that Iraq did not want to fight back," he said.

Syed Hamid said the OIC countries at the informal discussion were of the opinion that, "We regard this war as the biggest ever mistake that can ever happen as it is not going to create a stable world but more crises."

On the setting up of a Malaysian secretariat for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at Wisma Putra, he said it was not a permanent secretariat but a secretariat only for Malaysia in its capacity as the chairman to the 116-member movement.

"Because we are the NAM Chair, we want to ensure the work is carried out properly. We will set up a secretariat at Wisma Putra level with special officers to handle matters on NAM," he said.

He believed the secretariat could help Malaysia coordinate and smoothen transactions as NAM Chair because in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration issued at the end of the 13th NAM Summit, there were many new responsibilities to revitalise NAM.

Syed Hamid said the secretariat was responsible to NAM Chairman in

coordinating and monitoring NAM activities to ensure the movement was not only active during its summit but also had frequent communication with member countries in wider areas of cooperation.

"This will make the presence of NAM better felt as there is consensus on difficult global issues like opposing war, make peace as a culture, strengthening the multilateral system and cooperating in the economic field," he added.

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