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Comply with UN resolution, Iraq urged

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The informal meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference today unanimously urged Iraq to comply completely with the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1441, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

This also includes the destruction of Iraq's long-range Al-Samoud II missiles, as ordered by chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix.

Speaking at a Press conference after chairing the meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre, the Prime Minister said the informal session was united on averting a war in Iraq and resolving the Palestine conflict.

"We are all of the same view with regard to Palestine and Iraq. That is we would like to find ways and means to stop the killings of Palestinians by Israelis and we would also like Iraq not to be invaded by any foreign force."

The informal meeting was held a day after the conclusion of the six-day 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit at the same venue.

Dr Mahathir however said Iraq was in a precarious situation as it had repeatedly denied possessing any weapons of mass destruction.

"Iraq maintains that it has no such weapons and had extended an open invitation to any party wishing to verify their assurance," he said, adding that when such weapons could not be located Iraq was accused of hiding them.

As a result, he said, Iraq was facing the possibility of being attacked.

"Under this situation, we (OIC) asked ourselves what we could do, and we agreed to make common cause with the countries who are opposed to a war in Iraq," adding that countries which could be important allies included France, Germany, Belgium and Russia.

He pointed out that by teaming up with "powers from the North" that shared the OIC's anti-war sentiments, the organisation hoped to be able to influence the United States against attacking Iraq.

Dr Mahathir said following suggestions from fellow OIC members, he would be writing to the UN Security Council and the European Union to seek their support.

"We don't know what they will do... they may throw it in the waste paper basket or they may respond in some way. Our letter to them would probably add weight to the anti-war argument," he said.

Asked by a Pakistani reporter whether the Muslim nations would be destroyed one by one if they fail to unite, Dr Mahathir said: "The same applies to NAM. We know we are weak, there is no great power among the Muslims, so if we don't work together and agree on a common strategy we will one by one be rendered incapable of doing anything."