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Realising the dream of ensuring NAM makes a difference in world affairs

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Malaysia hopes the 33rd Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement will help realise the dream of the organisation comprising poor, least developed and developing countries to make a difference in world affairs.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said this could be realised if NAM emerged as a cohesive organisation.

Speaking at Angkasapuri here today, he said: "NAM, which is the world's second largest political organisation after the UN, and the only truly multi-lateral voice, holds great promise for the world at large.

"If NAM is revitalised, and if it is cohesive, focused and concentrates on the basic principles of its establishment, its members could project the same message in the UN."

It was important that members were articulate and cohesive at the Summit so that they could speak at the UN with confidence.

"Now we are not cohesive; everyone has his own ideas and views."

He said NAM was trying to develop shared values and concerns so that its members could work together.

He said: "It is difficult to restructure the UN, which is not a democratic body with the presence of its five permanent members (Security Council) who have the power to veto any decision.

"The UN Security Council has got unlimited power, yet it is formed by the larger and more democratic UN General Assembly under the UN Charter."

He said the question over the integrity and status of the UN, whereby no country is safe, was one of the matters that would be discussed at the Summit.

"Of course, the expectations on Malaysia and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to lead the revitalisation of NAM is high.

"It is almost frightening of what is sought from Malaysia as the members recognise we can provide the leadership at a time when everyone feels that the onset of globalisation has left a vacuum."

Asked to comment on NAM's stand on the United State's war plans on Iraq, he said: "My impression is that a great majority of Non-Aligned countries don't want war and that the UN-appointed weapons inspectors should be allowed more time to do their work.

"War is not the answer and it will be a great tragedy if any country says it will go ahead regardless of the decision of the Security Council. It will be a great tragedy for the multilateral process."

He said as a multilateral organisation, NAM would not agree on any unilateral action.

"We would like to say, 'Go for peace and stop talking about war or the use of force or aggression as it will cause a lot of pain and sufferings to the civilian population'.

"No matter how accurate or precise your weapons of mass destruction are, war will only upset the peace and stability of the world."