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## Officials wrap up talks

SENIOR officials wrapped up their talks yesterday as more Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement arrived for the summit.

With an agreement on the separate statement on Iraq sealed on Saturday - the issue having taken centre stage during the preparatory discussions - officials and foreign ministers were able to turn their focus to fine-tuning the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, the Final Document and the separate statement on Palestine.

An official said the KL Declaration was expected to emphasise the need for the movement to defend and promote multilateralism, adding the leaders would reaffirm that it would form the basis of international relations in today's contemporary world.

Unity and the collective voice of the developing world is another focal point that would be stressed by the summit in the declaration.

The leaders are expected to undertake an indepth analysis of the position of the movement on international issues, with a view to consolidating the common denominators. This will be achieved by focusing on issues that unite rather than divide.

The Committee of 10 on Palestine stood down after giving its nod to the statement which, together with the one on Iraq, will be issued at the end of the summit.

Diplomats said the leaders were expected to express their grave concern at the continued destruction of the Palestine State by Israel.

The Tel Aviv regime will also be condemned over the systematic human rights violations and reported war crimes that have been committed against the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's inability to attend the summit will also be noted, with the leaders expressing dismay at the obstruction of his freedom of movement.

"The statement expresses NAM's solidarity with Arafat as the elected leader and symbol of the struggle of the Palestine people," an official said.

The last few obstacles to the Final Document have also been surmounted.

One of them involved the working group on disarmament and international security, which encountered difficulties following a proposal from North Korea blaming the United States for the tension created over the resumption of its nuclear weapons programme.

North Korea had lobbied for NAM to urge the US to end its hostile policy and nuclear threat against the country, reiterating that the only viable solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula was through dialogue and negotiation between the parties directly concerned.

But the reference that the US was the root cause leading to the tense situation was opposed by countries "friendly" to the US in the working group.

A counter-proposal was introduced where the "Heads of Government call upon North Korea to reconsider its withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and reiterate their belief that the only viable solution to the latest setback for disarmament and non-proliferation is through peaceful means, dialogue and a spirit of mutual interest".

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar confirmed that the contentious paragraph had been resolved. "It has been accepted and will be forwarded to the leaders."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, meanwhile, had a busy day engaging leaders who arrived for bilateral talks at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He met several of them in the morning before leaving to open the NAM Business Forum at Sunway Lagoon Resort.

Dr Mahathir then returned to the PWTC where he met more leaders.