

Blair: Malaysia can help curb nuclear proliferation

NEW YORK: Malaysia, as chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), can play a role in influencing certain nations on nuclear proliferation so that they do not become a threat to the world.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said this when he met Prime Minister Datuk Sen Abdullah Ahmad Badawi during bilateral talks at the United Nations on Wednesday.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly that opened here. They both addressed the assembly on Wednesday.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar told Malaysian journalists that the meeting covered a range of issues including nuclear proliferation, the issue of terrorism, the Prime Minister's role as chairman of NAM and Islam Hadhari.

He described the 30-minute meeting as successful, saying it was friendly and productive. During the meeting, Abdullah invited his British counterpart to visit Malaysia.

Syed Hamid said both sides talked

about the importance of working together on nuclear proliferation that was a threat to mankind.

"Prime Minister Blair said that Malaysia, as chairman of NAM and the OIC, could play a role in influencing certain nations so that the issue does not become a threat to the world," he said.

He said that as far as the European Union was concerned it was willing to negotiate with Iran on its nuclear programme, but at the same time it wanted to ensure compliance.

Malaysia believed that the best way to deal with Iran on its nuclear programme was through peaceful dialogue and to encourage compliance, said Syed Hamid.

"We'll have to look at both sides. Malaysia's position is that we want a total ban of nuclear weapons, no proliferation, and compliance with Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty," he said.

On the United Nations, the two discussed Malaysia's position on multilateralism, reform, and the Outcome Document.

The Malaysian Prime Minister also reiterated the need to find the root causes of terrorism.

FRUITFUL SESSION: Abdullah and Blair leaving a meeting room after holding bilateral talks at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Wednesday. — *Bernamapic*

