

KL hopes NAM stays strong

The Star - 28/5/2006

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia, which will pass the baton to Cuba to lead the 114-member Non-Aligned Movement in September, hopes there will be a continuous "NAM voice" when the international community deals with issues like terrorism, illiteracy, poverty and other problems plaguing the world.

"It is important for us to come out, raise our efficiency and improve our delivery system.

"If we can do this, the international community will see that we are focused and committed, not rhetorical or emotional. Then people will begin to listen," said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

"After all, we are two-thirds of the international community.

"Diverse as it is, we can play a role," he told reporters yesterday after opening a senior officials' preparatory meeting

ahead of the NAM coordinating bureau meeting (NAM-CoB) here tomorrow.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia, which took the NAM chairmanship from South Africa in 2003, had provided the movement with a good opportunity to interact with other regional organisations as well as with the United Nations.

He said the 45-year-old movement has come a long way from being a so-called "non-relevant" organisation to become a "strong and guiding voice" representing not only NAM members but also all developing countries.

He said NAM would continue to be relevant for two reasons:

- **MANY** of its goals have yet to be fulfilled and therefore, the struggle must continue, and

- **IN** a world dominated by one super power, the existence of NAM is vital to further promote and strengthen multilateralism, while keeping unilateralism in check.

Syed Hamid said in defending its principles, NAM needs to make a realistic re-assessment of its strategies around key priorities, one of which is to restructure the centrality of the United Nations in world affairs.

"To be meaningful, the restructuring exercise must result in the strengthening of the General Assembly, in which we all have a stake as members, rather than empowering an already powerful Security Council, in which we are merely 'birds of passage'," he said.

Syed Hamid said NAM foreign ministers would discuss recent admissions by US President George W. Bush and British premier Tony Blair that they had misjudged the Iraq invasion.

He said the admissions came at a right time, reflecting NAM's strong belief against unilateral actions, which have tendencies to alienate, create mistakes and dissensions.