

Dr M: No syndicate involved in secrets deal

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr **Mahathir** Mohamad does not think that the eight persons detained and one restricted under the ISA for allegedly **selling** national secrets **are linked** to a syndicate.

“The case is still being investigated . . . but I do not think they are part of a syndicate,” the Prime Minister told newsmen at Parliament House.

Dr Mahathir said the nation’s security had not been threatened, and indicated that measures would be taken to check **any** “flaws in the system.”

He declined to name the **Asean** member reported to have bought the secrets but said: “No country likes to be spied on.”

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said three of the eight Malaysians picked up were civilian staff at Mindef while the others were naval and army personnel.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk **Megat Junid Megat Ayob** had told **Dewan Rakyat** yesterday that eight of those picked up last month were in **Kamunting**, one was under **restriction**, and another had since been released.

Dr Mahathir said he did not know how long the eight would be detained, but added that this was not the first time Malaysians had been held for selling secrets.

He **cited** the case of his former political secretary Siddique **Mohamed** Ghouse, who **was** **de**-tained for three years from 1981 on suspicion of being a Soviet spy.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba was meanwhile quoted by Reuter as saying that Malaysia would adopt a “friendly manner” with the **Asean** country concerned to settle the case.

Malaysia would settle the matter on a bilateral basis with the nation involved, he said.

Asked whether he considered the matter serious, Encik Ghafar said: “Of course, it involves military people. (But) they were not **selling** big secrets. After all Malaysia has nothing to hide.”

The country concerned had denied being involved, he said, adding that “they say, they are not aware of it.”

Later in Malacca, Encik Ghafar told reporters after opening an Umno course at the Balai Rakyat Ujong **Pasir** that the Government would be firm in dealing with those found to have sold national secrets, regardless of who they were.

He, however, felt that the latest incident was “an isolated case.”