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PM can't see how there could be threat to US here

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not see any reason why Malaysia should be named as one of the countries where there might be a threat to United States' interests.

Dr Mahathir said there had been no signs of terrorist activities in Malaysia.

"I just don't understand this. May be they know something we don't know. As far as we can tell, there is no danger here," the Prime Minister told reporters after meeting the Malaysian contingent to the Commonwealth Games at Stadium Putra, Bukit Jalil.

He was commenting on news reports quoting a US State Department spokeswoman as saying that the US Government had received information that there might be a threat to US interests including attacks on buildings in Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir was asked by reporters whether there was any basis at all to such a threat and why Malaysia was singled out instead of other "troubled" countries.

Dr Mahathir said while such incidents could happen anywhere, focusing on Malaysia might result in missing out on some other countries where the attacks were not suspected, but might happen as it did in Tanzania and Kenya.

"Where (Tanzania and Kenya are concerned) obviously they did not expect, and it happened. Focusing on Malaysia will mean that it will not happen here because those people are not going to come."

On whether Malaysian police would extend co-operation to the US Embassy here to beef up security, Dr Mahathir said: "If they think they are in danger, they can ask us for protection, and we will be ever willing to do so."

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor said today US citizens in the country and staff of the embassy need not worry as their safety would not be compromised.

He said it was the Malaysian police's duty to ensure the safety of embassy staff and this was the reason why patrols and security measures had been doubled.

Speaking to reporters at the Federal police headquarters in Bukit Aman, Rahim said the police would have to take heed of the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and hoped that such a thing would not happen in Malaysia.

He added that police had received full co-operation from US ambassador to Malaysia John Malott and embassy staff.

Asked to comment on measures taken to screen people entering the country as possible threat to the US embassy and citizens, Rahim declined to comment.

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