

# PM: Give info on purported meeting

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia should be given information on reports that one of the suspects who hijacked the airliner that crashed into the Pentagon was seen on a surveillance tape here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this yesterday in response to questions on whether the United States intelligence authorities had approached the Government on this issue.

"Whether or not they approach us, they will still find out," he said.

A news report had stated that one of the suspects, Khalid al-Midhar, was seen on a surveillance tape in Malaysia meeting with a man who American officials sus-

pect played a hand in the attack on the US warship *USS Cole* in the Yemeni port of Aden last October.

The report also said that Al-Midhar and another suspected hijacker of the airliner had been under surveillance before the attack on the American military installation.

When members of the media pointed out that Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had stated that the FBI had not contacted the Malaysian authorities over the matter, Dr Mahathir said:

"They should liaise with the local authorities.

Earlier in Sibul, Sarawak, Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said Malaysia needed

information from American intelligence agencies to help in the global hunt for associates of the attackers.

He said the Government would appreciate the sharing of such information, particularly those linked to Malaysians.

Abdullah said Malaysian security agencies were prepared to assist the Americans anytime if they wanted to check out any information.

"If they have certain names they want to verify, we are ready to receive the information and investigate," he added.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia had always responded quickly to threats

by militants or to terrorist activities and had co-operated in exchanging information with other countries, including the US.

He said Malaysia did not want to be used by any militant or terrorist groups.

"Malaysia is one of the countries which has been successful in fighting communism and terrorism through various methods, including psychological warfare," he said.

In Kota Kinabalu, the army's Region Two commander for Sabah and Sarawak, Mejj-Jen Datuk Mohd Azumi Mohammed said Malaysia and the Philippines were co-operating to check on any movements of extremist groups

linked to Osama bin Laden.

He said all information on "intelligence movement" was being shared by the security forces of both countries.

"We do not condone or support international terrorism," he told reporters after attending a parade in conjunction with the 68th Armed Forces Day celebrations at the Fifth Infantry Brigade in Lok Kawi, near here.

Mejj-Jen Azumi said security forces remain on high alert for movement of any terrorist groups in Malaysia's eastern borders.

*International Herald Tribune* in a report last week said Osama's al Qaeda network had links with extremists in the Philippines,

Indonesia and Malaysia, all of which have porous sea and land borders.

Azumi said reports of movements of the associates of the US attackers towards Malaysia were speculative so far but they were still on alert against any such possibility.

On Sept 13, nine people holding Malaysian passports who had stayed in Pakistan for about five months, were refused entry into the Philippines as the authorities thought that they were a potential threat.

Philippine's Cebu airport immigration chief Casimiro Madarang said they were suspicious that the nine had undergone terrorist training during their stint in Pakistan.