

Dr M will write to Bush on bombing

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will write a letter to President George W. Bush to ask the US to stop bombing Afghanistan.

While Malaysia has condemned terrorism, the government has been against the attacks on Afghanistan, which have resulted in civilian casualties and suffering.

Mahathir said all the political parties in Malaysia have a common stand against terrorism, but problems exist on the parties' stand on the attacks on Afghanistan.

"We all disagree with it (the attack on Afghanistan), but some of us demonstrate (our views) and some of us don't. That is

the only difference," he said after an Umno Supreme Council meeting today.

Commenting on DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's remark of "no-common stand" by MPs against terrorism, Mahathir said DAP had suggested an intra-party or non-partisan discussion on terrorism.

"That is also our view. We have asked the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (Isis) to hold such a seminar and, after that, we can issue a common stand," he said.

He said Isis will hold a seminar on violence on Nov 16-17, and Umno will take part.

"I will give an explanation on the views of other world leaders on violence and terrorism, and also on our stand," he said.

The letter to Bush was

among the things discussed at a meeting with Barisan Nasional MPs this morning.

Mahathir said he will release a statement on the outcome of the meeting, but many of the problems discussed were minor and internal matters of the coalition.

He said other issues such as dissatisfaction with ministers for not attending parliament regularly and complaints that MPs are being left out of small projects carried out by the government have been resolved.

Mahathir also said the

three-hour Supreme Council meeting today discussed the drive to increase Umno membership by 10%.

The exercise is being held to offset the party's decreasing membership because of deaths and other reasons.

"But the 10% targeted increase does not include Puteri Umno members," he said.

"They will be counted separately. They already have about 84,000 members, although we have not finished printing their forms.

"They have so far only distributed about 38,000 forms."