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PM writing to Bush urging a halt to strikes

Ramlan Said; Aion Mohd

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he would be writing to President George W. Bush to ask the United States to stop its bombings of Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister said this was one of the things he said to Barisan Nasional MPs during a meeting at his office earlier today.

However, he did not say when the letter would be sent.

As early as Oct 12, Dr Mahathir had urged the US to stop its military operations against Afghanistan, saying it has so far killed only innocent Afghans instead of terrorists.

Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri yesterday joined an increasing chorus of voices calling for a halt to the bombing.

Speaking at a Press conference after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn, Dr Mahathir, who is party president, said all parties had adopted a common stand in condemning terrorism.

On DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's remarks that the Dewan Rakyat had failed to make a common stand on terrorism and the US attacks despite being in session for the last five weeks, Dr Mahathir said such a stand already existed.

"There is a common stand ... all parties in Malaysia condemned terrorism. They also opposed the US attacks. The only difference is that some held demonstrations (to protest) while others did not."

Dr Mahathir said the Institute of Strategic and International Studies would be organising a conference on terrorism on Nov 16 and 17, and Umno would be taking part.

"Umno will give its input. I will also explain the Government's stand on the matter and views of world's leaders on terrorism."

Dr Mahathir felt a common stand opposing terrorism could be made at the conclusion of the conference.

* news@nstp.com.my

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