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Police pledge assistance to FBI

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Police are liaising with Wisma Putra and Interpol on the surveillance tape allegedly taken in Malaysia of one of the hijackers on the aircraft that rammed into the Pentagon in the United States last Tuesday.

Bukit Aman public relations officer Superintendent Benjamin Hasbie said police would give their full support and co-operation to the FBI or Interpol if they sought assistance.

He said police had yet to receive the tape or information on the FBI investigation into Khalid Al-Midhari who was reportedly seen with another suspected terrorist in Malaysia.

"We are closely liaising with Wisma Putra and Interpol on the matter," he added.

Benjamin said Bukit Aman was waiting for an official request to help in investigating and verifying the authenticity of the surveillance tape.

He added that security had been tightened at all key points in the light of the attacks.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian embassy in Washington said it would pass any information on the surveillance tape to Wisma Putra.

A spokesman said any information would only be released by Wisma Putra and not the embassy in Washington.

He declined to comment when asked if the FBI had contacted the embassy.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said yesterday that the FBI should liaise with Malaysian authorities if it wanted information on Khalid.

CNN and the Sept 24 issue of Newsweek have reported that Khalid was videotaped in Malaysia meeting another suspected terrorist involved in the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen last year.

Wisma Putra, when contacted, said FBI officials had yet to contact it on the matter.

A spokesman declined to comment on whether it had received any information on the issue from the Malaysian embassy in Washington.

US embassy Press attache Frank Whitaker, when contacted, also declined to comment on whether the FBI had contacted local police.

"Any statement should come from Washington, not the embassy here," he said.

Asked about FBI work here, Whitaker said such operations were based in Singapore and covered Malaysia.

FBI officers working abroad are known as legal attache staff of US embassies.

According to the FBI website (www.fbi.org), the organisation has field offices in 52 countries.

The FBI website states that its agents are placed in other countries to help prevent terrorism and crimes that threaten Americans.

The Wisma Putra spokesman said no new cases on Malaysians missing in the New York incident had been reported.

"The four same persons are still missing," he said. They are Ang Siew Nya, 37, (Penang), Khoo Sei Lai, 38, (Sabah), Gerard Philips and Vijay Shanker, both unregistered.

There has been no new information, he said.