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Trade Centre-Andrew

PRINCE ANDREW TURNS BACK FROM FLIGHT TO ATLANTA

By: Wan A. Hulaimi

LONDON, Sept 11 (Bernama) Prince Andrew turned back from his flight to Atlanta in the United States when news broke of the attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York, it was revealed here today.

The news was watched aghast by the afternoon television audience on both the BBC and the independent channel ITV, which both cancelled their entire afternoon programme to report on the unfolding story of the devastation in the United States.

Prime Minister Tony Blair interrupted his speech at the conference of Trades Union Congress in the seaside town of Brighton where he was supposed to explain his controversial plans for private sector participation in the health service.

He told the stunned audience of trade unionists that it would be inappropriate for him to continue delivering the speech, the text of which had already been distributed.

Blair, due to meet Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today, returned to Downing Street for an emergency security meeting of the Cabinet, COBRA to discuss security implications for British airports and the country as a whole.

Dr Mahathir has cancelled his visit to Britain and has not decided on his trip to Russia and Germany following terrorist attacks on targets in New York and Washington Tuesday.

Major embassies in London were closed and evacuated, as was the Stock Exchange which suspended trading within hours after the news broke when it became clear that they too could be a target.

In Canary Wharf, the centre of high-tech commerce in the Docklands, workers in high rise office buildings came down to the streets as a safety precaution.

Earlier in a panic reaction, share prices had been on the downward slide.

Speaking on BBC television, a spokesman of Jane's, the expert on world military situation, said that they had been receiving intelligence from their informants in the Middle East over the last few days of an imminent attack outside the Middle East.

--BERNAMA

WAH AFY ABG