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`Dr Mahathir never asked to meet Bush'

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had never indicated his desire to meet United States president George W. Bush, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said the Prime Minister had not asked that such a meeting be held. Abdullah was asked to comment on a Far Eastern Economic Review magazine report that US officials would only allow Dr Mahathir to meet Bush if certain conditions were met.

The conditions include allowing former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to seek treatment abroad and freeing six Parti Keadilan Nasional members held under the Internal Security Act.

The report said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar had met US Secretary of State Colin Powell to discuss a meeting between the two leaders.

Abdullah said Syed Hamid's visit to the US was on other matters and not to discuss a meeting.

He said certain quarters in the US were always looking for faults in Malaysia and formed opinions that opposition parties here were not free to voice their views, or win votes and support in elections.

"Is it that they do not know that the opposition also wins in elections and form State governments?

"They make comments as if they do not know what is happening in our country," Abdullah said.

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