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Terrorist activity in Malaysia: Tell us more, US advised

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) should furnish more information on the alleged presence of a suspected hijacker here so that Malaysian authorities could act accordingly.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when asked to comment on the reported FBI revelation, said the FBI or Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) might have contacted Malaysian authorities for the information.

Asked if more information from the two intelligence gathering units of the US would enable Malaysia to pin-point the alleged terrorists and prevent them from entering the country, Dr Mahathir said more information and co-operation would certainly be of help.

"Yes, I think they should (furnish more information), I'm quite sure they have done so, I don't think they have information on their own," the Prime Minister said.

In Sibuluan, Home Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Government is ready to co-operate with any foreign agency, including the FBI or CIA, in their investigation over the matter.

He said Malaysia would co-operate in any effort to track alleged terrorist-related activities in the country.

Abdullah, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, said anyone with information on such activities should liaise with the Government by giving details.

"If at any time they want to check with us or if they have certain names that such and such person was in Malaysia, we would be ready to help," he said.

Abdullah said this when asked to comment on a report by Cable News Network that a suspected terrorist, Khalid al-Midhar, who was involved in crashing a jetliner into the Pentagon on Tuesday, had been spotted in Kuala Lumpur previously.

Quoting sources, CNN said al-Midhar and Salem Alhamzi, two of the men believed to have crashed the hijacked jetliner into the Pentagon, had been placed on a 'watch list' by US authorities, and the FBI had been notified they were suspected associates of Islamic militant leader Osama bin Laden.

The report said US intelligence had al-Midhar and Alhamzi under surveillance, and one source confirmed that Al-Midhar was seen on a surveillance tape in Kuala Lumpur, meeting a man suspected in last year's attack on the USS Cole, a US destroyer moored in Yemen. Bin Laden has also been linked to the attack which killed 17 American sailors.

Speaking after officiating at a school building here, Abdullah said the police were also investigating the incident where nine Malaysian passport holders had been barred from entering the Philippines.

It was reported the men had been ordered to return to Malaysia upon arrival at Mactan Airport in Cebu City last Thursday.

Yesterday, Federal police public relations officer Superintendent Benjamin Hasbie said the identities of the nine were still unknown.

The nine, who were reported to have stayed in Pakistan for five months, were refused entry by the Philippines immigration authorities.

They were stopped on arrival aboard a Malaysia Airlines flight from Kuala Lumpur and flown back to the capital.

Mactan Airport Immigration bureau chief Casimiro Madarang was quoted as saying the nine, all heavily bearded, had been in Pakistan for five months which, he considered, were enough time for terrorism training.

