

Bush invites Mahathir to visit Washington

KUALA LUMPUR: US President George W. Bush has invited Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for a visit to Washington from May 12-14, according to a diplomatic source.

It will be Dr Mahathir's first visit to the White House since 1994, when he met Bush's predecessor Bill Clinton.

The visit would be a major step forward in bilateral ties and reflects Washington's regard for Mahathir as a moderate Muslim leader.

Dr Mahathir has offered Malaysia as a nation that has embraced modernity and said the country succeeded in becoming a modern state because of Islam and not despite it.

Bush can expect Dr Mahathir to tell him to change US policy toward the Middle East, diplomats said.

"I do think he is trying to position himself with the West as a moderate voice," said one Western diplomat. - Reuters.