

Embassy here expresses regret over treatment of Malaysian officials in US

Net - 3 OCT 2002

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The United States Embassy here expressed regret today at any inconveniences or inappropriate treatment senior Malaysian government officials may have experienced during their visits to the US.

In a statement, the embassy said it had received numerous inquiries over the past two days with regard to statements by senior Malaysian government officials on their experiences at US airports during their recent visits there.

"We look forward to working closely with the Foreign Ministry, the Malaysian Embassy and Consulates in the US and other protocol offices to

help ensure that any future visits by senior Malaysian officials are handled as efficiently and courteously as possible," it said.

Today, newspapers quoted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as saying that US immigration officers were rude and rough towards him while he was in New York recently.

He said US security authorities were obviously not thinking rationally, even when dealing with foreign dignitaries.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made a similar remark on Monday when he said he was subjected to stringent

checks and asked to remove his shoes and belt at the Los Angeles International Airport before he was allowed to fly to New York to address the United Nations.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar also said he was subjected to strict checks when he was with Abdullah at the Los Angeles International Airport for departure to New York on Sept 15.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Youth Council vice-president Sobri Ahmad said the rough treatment of Dr Mahathir and Abdullah by US immigration officers was excessive and did

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not respect the feelings of Malaysians.

"The tight security checks on national leaders cannot be accepted at all, as it portrays that America is in a state of fear of its own shadow."

He said this proved that their attitude was not sincere and they harboured ill feeling towards leaders from Islamic nations such as Malaysia.

He said the MYC detested such behaviour by US authorities, as their actions may be seen as discrimination against leaders of developing countries.