

PM: Try other ways

8 = 7 NOV 2003

'Confrontation not the way to deal with anti-Semitic issue'

KUALA LUMPUR: Muslim countries should not deal with the anti-Semitic issue in a confrontational manner, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Confrontation is not the way. We must not choose confrontation. We must choose a better way of understanding the issues we are facing today," he said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here yesterday.

Abdullah was asked to comment in his capacity as Organisation of the Islamic Conference chairman on reports of a rise in anti-Semitism in the media of Arab and Muslim countries.

Abdullah said he took note of what was happening in the Muslim world on the matter and would think of the

best way in which they could respond to the situation.

"I think taking the path of confrontation may not be the best answer. There has to be a better understanding of the issue," he reiterated.

On whether his call for a non-confrontational way was a departure from the approach taken by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said his predecessor had already explained that his speech at the OIC summit last month was not anti-Semitic.

Defending the former Prime Minister, Abdullah said Dr Mahathir wanted Muslims to understand that they were being persecuted today and there was profiling against Islam.

He said Dr Mahathir had pointed out

● **TURN TO PAGE 2**

Abdullah: It's the OIC's stand

● **FROM PAGE 1**

that Muslims must respond with understanding and knowledge and they must strategise to survive.

Abdullah added that his predecessor also wanted to stress that the Jews, who were once persecuted, were now very powerful.

"My reaction at this moment is that we must not go on a confrontation course," he said.

To a question on whether he was backing down from what Dr Mahathir had said, Abdullah said: "No. His speech was to the OIC, and it is the OIC's stand."

Western media created a storm when they interpreted Dr Mahathir's OIC speech as being anti-Semitic when he said Jews ruled the world by proxy.