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DPM: We'll speak out despite negative foreign reports

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Negative foreign media reports will not prevent Malaysia from taking unorthodox stands or bravely voicing its views on national and international issues.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Government was aware of such reports about Malaysia's efforts in this respect, including hosting the 13th Non-Aligned Movement summit.

"We know it well. These media want to paint a negative picture of us whenever we do something not in line with their agenda.

"Despite this, we will continue to speak the truth to say what we have to, in voicing our views on whatever issue we feel is important and concerns us."

Speaking to reporters after meeting with police personnel who were on duty during the NAM meeting, at the Police Training Centre here today, Abdullah said Malaysia reserved the right to speak out and say what it felt as an independent nation.

He said one example of Malaysia's resilience against negative foreign media reports was in the way the country successfully implemented brave new measures to overcome the monetary crisis.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was lambasted by the foreign media when he introduced unorthodox measures.

"We took a stand that was against Washington's orthodoxy - we did not follow the established strategy of the International Monetary Fund.

"We knew that many people including the Western media, financial analysts and leaders of foreign countries were against us and they severely criticised Malaysia and Dr Mahathir."

Abdullah said Malaysia did not succumb and went on with what it was doing and succeeded.

Asked about Dr Mahathir's statement yesterday that the US dollar need not be the only international currency, Abdullah said the euro or yen could also be used.

"Currently these two currencies are not very popular among the world's countries which favour dealing in the US dollar. However in time, I am sure their popularity will increase."