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Security at strategic American installations will be stepped up, says

KLANG, Thurs. - Strategic United States installations in the country will be better guarded to ensure that there are no untoward incidents, acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahamd Badawi said.

He said it was learned from the interrogation of those detained under the Internal Security Act, that US installations were their target.

Speaking after opening the general meeting of the Ex-Officers of Malaysian Education Service Association, today, he said there was always fear that angry people might resort to detrimental actions.

"If there is an attack on any installation, it will affect us," he said, adding that police would look into stepping up security.

On a news report that police had seized four tonnes of ammonia nitrate which could be used to make bombs, he said police were investigating.

According to the report, the ammonia nitrate belonged to the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist organisation linked to Osama bin Laden. Police reportedly found the chemicals, with which the JI planned to build bombs to hit several American targets in Singapore, buried in a palm oil plantation in Muar, Johor.

On whether Malaysia would rally Non-Aligned Movement members to condemn the attack on Iraq, Abdullah said NAM's stand had been clearly announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during its summit in February.

"Member countries' actions are consistent with NAM's stand that war is not a solution to the issue."

Abdullah said he would be addressing the Parliament on Monday on this.

In Kuala Lumpur, police have beefed up surveillance at foreign embassies and places frequented by foreign tourists to avert untoward incidents following the outbreak of war in Iraq.

Kuala Lumpur police chief Deputy Commissioner Datuk Dell Akbar Khan said for the time being there were no plans to assign additional policemen for patrol duties to places that would be probable spots to stage demonstrations like the embassies of Australia, Britain, the United States and Spain.

"We will not increase our men, especially at the US Embassy, but will mount more frequent patrols in areas around the embassy to closely monitor the situation," he told Bernama.

Dell said patrols at tourist spots like Bukit Bintang, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Bangsar have been stepped up since a month ago.

"We have been keeping tabs on these places even before the war broke out by deploying our men to carry out patrols more often," he said.

Dell said the people might react beyond the bounds of the law to vent their anger over the war and police were prepared for it.

"Our men are prepared in the event something beyond expectation occurs."

"We hope the people, particularly foreign tourists, will not be worried as we are constantly monitoring the situation," he added.

In Penang, State police chief Datuk Arthur Edmonds said police had increased surveillance and would hold meetings with managements of multinational companies, international schools and foreign banks in the State to ensure security was guaranteed at these premises.

He said several police officers have been assigned to meet managements of the multinationals following the outbreak of the war.

Edmonds said round-the-clock patrols would be mounted at sensitive spots

with the co-operation of other units in the police force.

Police would not wait for something untoward to happen before taking action, he said when asked to comment on security measures at US and British properties in the State.