

Obama win will 'boost international relations'
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Foreign Minister Rais Yatim backed US presidential candidate Barack Obama on Tuesday, saying a victory for the Democrat would improve America's relations with the world.

"I hope Obama wins... due to the need of the world to see the United States represent a more cosmopolitan or universal political attitude and levels of relations," he told reporters.

"We have had the experience of sampling the Bush type of international politics and international dealings, so with Obama... I could visualise that there would be many more windows open to the world to understand America and for America to understand the world better," he said.

Americans vote in a historic election Tuesday, with front-runner Obama seeking to become the first African-American president and Republican John McCain hoping for a poll-defying comeback.

Senator Obama, 47, the son of a Kenyan father and a white mother from Kansas, has sought to rise above the issue of race and project himself as the candidate for all Americans.

Obama's African roots

suhakam religion culture conference 090906 rais yatim speak Rais cited Obama's "experience of being in the east" when he lived in Indonesia as a youngster, his African roots and growing up in Hawaii as factors which could work in his favour.

During his campaign, Obama has promised to repair ties with US allies, open talks with foes such as Iran and Cuba, bring troops home from Iraq and refocus on the Afghan war.

"If that kind of window would be opened, it would be a better place for us," Rais said, adding that an Obama-led government would also improve Malaysia's relations with the United States, one of its top trading partners.

Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim country which promotes a moderate and progressive form of the religion, has had rocky relations with the US in the past, with Washington frequently airing criticism over human rights issues.