

# 'US and Israel must recognise Palestine govt'

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**HAVANA:** Efforts to set up a Palestinian national unity government should be supported and recognised by the US and Israel.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the recognition towards power sharing between Fatah and Hamas was crucial because it could bring about stability in the Middle East.

"We hope the US will be able to co-operate in recognising the government even though Hamas will be part of it.

"This is a government that is truly the Palestinian unity government, which represents all Pales-

tinian people," he said before the start of the G15 meeting and the Non-Aligned Movement Summit here.

Abdullah paid a courtesy call on Cuban Acting President and first Vice-President Raul Castro, younger brother of President Fidel Castro. Fidel is hospitalised.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was reported to have reached an agreement with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas to share power by setting up a unity government to end the international aid embargo.

The US and its allies have boy-

cotted the Hamas-led Palestinian government because it refuses to recognise Israel. They also demand Hamas end violence.

So far, the European Union has shown a positive attitude to support the coalition government while the US and Britain continue to press Palestine to recognise Israel.

"I'd like to welcome and encourage the Palestinian leaders' effort to create a national unity government in Palestine. It will actually stabilise Palestinian politics and with it, a leadership lineup representing all parties can emerge."

said Abdullah, who is also the Organisation of the Islamic Conference chairman. He said the support and recognition of all parties would give strength to the Palestinian government.

On his meeting with Raul, he said the latter had informed him that Fidel was recovering after undergoing treatment but doctors had advised him to continue to rest.

The Prime Minister said that during the meeting, Raul had expressed Cuba's hope that initiatives started by Malaysia would be continued. — Bernama