



WARM TIES: Abdullah shaking hands with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan during the annual debate of the 59th UN General Assembly. — AFP picture

Abdullah: Security Council must be representative

• From Hardev Kaur at the United Nations
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JAPAN and Germany should be included as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to reflect "a good geographical spread" of the UN membership.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Japan was well placed to assume a seat on the Security Council but conceded that Germany faced "very strong opposition" to its inclusion, especially from Italy.

Asked at a Press conference whether the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would seek permanent seats on the council for their members, Abdullah said that some countries, such as Liberia and Egypt, had ex-

pressed strong interest.

He however stressed that an expanded Security Council should also have representatives from the Asian and African continents.

Even Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheti said Arabs and Muslims have the "right to be represented in the Council on an equal basis with the representatives of other cultures and civilisations";

The bid by Japan, Germany and others will not be easy to push forward. Proposals for reform of the UN and its Security Council have been discussed previously.

The five permanent members of the Council — the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia — have veto power, giving them effective say over its agenda.

In his speech to the 59th General Assembly, Abdullah stressed that the exercise of veto by the per-

manent members of the Security Council should be regulated to prevent that power being used at the sole discretion of its holder.

"It is unjust that any one single country should be allowed the impunity of overruling at will the wish of the majority. This injustice can be rectified, for instance, by making certain types of resolutions of the UN General Assembly capable of setting aside a UN Security Council veto," Abdullah had told the assembly.

Although Abdullah did not mention any specific case and country, it was clear that the disregard of UN Security Council decisions' on Iraq was a case in point. On Iraq, Abdullah told the Press "the killing must stop". The escalating violence in Iraq, he said, was jeopardising the prospects of a successful Iraqi general election in January 2005.