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CIA FILES

## Dr M: Fourth page of report says no direct links to me were established

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday said the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had cleared him of any involvement in the Bumi-putera Malaysia Finance (BMF) scandal in the 1980s.

He said on the fourth page of a recently declassified report, under the subheading "Assessing the Political Damage", it was stated: "Thus far, no direct links have been established between Mahathir and the corruption at BMF...".

"That CIA report pointed out that, as early as July 1983, I had announced my views that the BMF's handling of its financial lending was imprudent, and that I had also pledged that action be taken upon investigations.

"This was in spite of the fact that the BMF issue related to the affairs of a bank, and not the government per se," Dr Mahathir said in reaction to the report.

He said that the same report also pointed out that a committee of inquiry (Special Investigation Committee) was set up to look into the BMF issue.

"Records show that the Special Investigation Committee, headed by Tan Sri Ahmad Nordin (the then auditor general) had forwarded the necessary recommendations for further action.

"There was no cover up of that report.

"It was made public. It was certainly not put under the OSA (Official Secrets Act)," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to claims that the CIA report had linked his administration to the BMF scandal.

He had previously claimed that the timing of the release was politically motivated and was aimed at demonising him.

The report, released online by the CIA last week, said that Dr Mahathir's position as prime minister was then at risk due to the graft scandal.

It said while no direct links were established between Dr Mahathir and the BMF graft, the CIA believed that the "hint of association" had damaged the political standing of Dr Mahathir's administration, which was elected in 1981 "under a banner of clean government".

The CIA's claim was revealed last week after its move to declassify more than 13 million documents, making them accessible online for public viewing.