

**Pak Lah on "Awakening", what readers should look at
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Refuting criticisms that he is working against Umno, Tun Abdullah Badawi (pic) told critics today that readers should focus on his answers in a book about his administration between 2003 and 2009.

The former prime minister said he only answered questions from the editors of the book "Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia" and did not commission the book.

"I merely answered questions that were asked. Let my answers be the focus of readers," Abdullah said in a statement released in Kuala Lumpur today.

The book, edited by Dr Bridget Welsh and Dr James Chin, was released last week and has received criticism from pro-Umno bloggers and Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia daily.

"Do not make assumptions that the book was written by Pak Lah who has supposedly conspired with the opposition against his own party. That is a distortion of facts and slander.

"Whatever criticism I made in my interview was because I want to see Umno continue receiving the rakyat's mandate and trust," he said.

The former Umno president also said he would never abandon the ruling party.

"I have never left Umno, and God willing, when the time comes and I breathe my last breath, I will remain a member of Umno who loves his country," Abdullah said.

The avuncular politician also said he had expected that the book would invite various reactions, but said it was up to people to draw their own conclusions.

But he admitted knowing that the book would have articles that were unflattering of his administration.

"Like it or not, agree or not, I hold to the principle of openness that is the pivot of a mature democracy.

"It is this principle of openness that I practised when I was approached by the writers for an interview," Abdullah said.

The 73-year-old said it was only appropriate that he provided explanations when academics scrutinised his administration.

"It is the norm for academicians to analyse our country's political history and certainly my era does not escape academic research.

"I agreed to the interview so that my voice, opinion and explanation can be part of the book," the former Kepala Batas MP said. - August 12, 2013.

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