

**Claims Linking Him Ridiculous, Says Former PM Abdullah
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REMBAU, April 3 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi regards as ridiculous, the claims that he was top of the United States National Security Agency's (NSA) watchlist of world leaders.

He said he was also not worried about the reports or claims made about him in the foreign media pertaining to the watchlist.

"I knew about it before (when I was prime minister). This happened perhaps because some people had asked me to recommend them for projects abroad. The projects they asked for were from a country that the United States was suspicious of.

".....and there was also someone who sold something that was not liked by the Americans. My name was then dragged into this," Abdullah said when met by reporters during his working visit to Sekolah Tinggi Islam As Sofa (STIAS), here, today.

He was asked to comment on a secret document exposed by the German weekly news magazine, Der Spiegel, last Saturday showing Abdullah's name at the top of the NSA's watchlist.

The list, compiled in 2009, contains the names of 122 world leaders, starting with Abdullah and ending with then Ukraine prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko as it was arranged in alphabetical order.

The other leaders include German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Syrian Prime Minister Bashar al-Assad.

"Why the need to make such baseless accusations?" Abdullah said.

On STIAS, Abdullah said he had seen for himself that it was a good school with achievements that had been impressive within a short time.

STIAS is a private school owned by Sofa Education Group.

Present during Abdullah's visit to the school were his wife Tun Jeane Abdullah, Negeri Sembilan State Assembly Speaker Datuk Dr Awaludin Said and state Mufti Datuk Mohd Yusof Ahmad.

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