

Medical team to Iraq to be 'sufficiently big'

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PARIS: The proposed military medical team that Malaysia plans to send to Iraq will be "sufficiently big and not a just a token" so that it can do something worthwhile, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said Malaysia had already made up its mind to send the team and would postpone the plan only if the situation in Iraq made it impossible for the team to be deployed there.

Reiterating that the plan was not under review in view of a recent Al-Qaeda warning to Islamic countries not to send their troops to Iraq, the Prime Minister said Malaysia had no other reason than to provide medical relief to those in need.

"Let's not anticipate too much about threats. Since we are going there to provide only medical help and not to interfere in the running of the government, I believe there will be no such threats," he told French and Malaysian journalists.

He said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar would work out the details of the team, adding that no date had been fixed for its departure.



CORDIAL MEETING: Abdullah speaking with French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy at a hotel in Paris yesterday. Looking on is an interpreter. — *Appic*

He said the team's departure would be delayed if the situation in Iraq made it impossible to operate there, adding that it was only natural to do so.

Abdullah said Malaysia would definitely seek the approval of the interim Iraqi government.

Asked why he had brought up the

issue with US President George W Bush, Abdullah said it was a "natural subject" as he had discussed a host of issues affecting Iraq in his capacity as chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

On terror threats in Malaysia, he said the situation was under control,

adding that action had been taken against those who announced their intention to overthrow the Government by force.

"They claimed that our Government was not Islamic enough according to their definition. There is no more such struggle," he said.