

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 10/12/2003

# PM: Don't let Hollywood steal thunder

NST-10/12/2003

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants more military personnel to write books about their tours of duty overseas.

Abdullah, who is also the defence minister, said Malaysian troops who had served in peacekeeping forces in Somalia and Bosnia Herzegovina ought to record their exploits so that the nation and world could be made aware about "the true story of their

bravery".

Speaking at the opening of the Armed Forces Excellence and Leadership Centre at the Defence Ministry yesterday, Abdullah said if the army did not tell their story, Hollywood would spin a yarn of their own.

"They (Hollywood) love making action movies about wars and claim that they are based on true events.

"However, many times their films only portray the heroics of the

Americans and twist the facts about everything else."

Abdullah was referring to *Black Hawk Down*, a 2001 film about the Battle of Mogadishu, where two American military helicopters on an extraction mission were shot down by Somali militia and their resulting fight for survival before being rescued by United Nations peacekeeping forces 15 hours later.

The movie gave the impression

that the real battle was fought by the Americans alone, while Malaysian troops were merely tank drivers who ferried them out. In reality, Malaysian and Pakistani troops had fought to rescue the Americans.

Abdullah also launched the book, *Marksmen in the 21st century*, written by Malaysian Armed Forces General Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Zainal and officiated a two-week leadership course for 20 military officers.