

Dr M sends letter to Gorbachev

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. Prime Minister Datuk Seri D Mahathir Mohamad has sent a letter to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev expressing delight over his safety and resumption of duty following the recent coup attempt.

A Wisma Putra statement said the letter was handed to Soviet ambassador to Malaysia, Mr A.I. Khmelnitski, in a meeting at the Prime Minister's office today.

During the 45-minute meeting, arranged at Mr Khmelnitski's request, the latter briefed the Prime Minister on the latest situation in the Soviet Union.

The statement said Dr Mahathir noted that although enormous challenges laid ahead, he was confident that Mr Gorbachev would successfully lead the Soviet Union to a brighter and more prosperous future.

Dr Mahathir also noted that the policies pursued in international affairs by Mr Gorbachev had helped us-

er in a new era of international peace and co-operation.

"All who cherish peace cannot but appreciate these efforts," the statement said.

The Prime Minister wished Mr Gorbachev and the Soviet people success, stability and progress, it added.

Mr Khmelnitski, told the Press after the meeting, that Mr Gorbachev had conveyed a special message of appreciation to Dr Mahathir over Malaysia's stand during the coup attempt.

"The situation is now back to normal and I presented this information to the Prime Minister on the direct instruction of the President," he said.

"We expressed to the Prime Minister that we appreciate very much the position adopted by Malaysia towards the events of the past few days in which Malaysia was sympathetic to President Gorbachev and to *perestroika* (restructuring pro-

cess)."

He described claims by the coup leaders that Mr Gorbachev could not carry out his duties due to health reasons as "a shameless lie".

Mr Khmelnitski described the meeting as "very friendly and warm" and said it also covered the future of Soviet-Malaysian ties.

He said both countries were confident that bilateral relations could be developed further in accordance with their common wishes.

He reiterated that relations were back to normal and the Soviet Government would honour all agreements and pacts with Malaysia. "Our relationship will continue as usual," he added.

Mr Gorbachev, in a Press conference televised globally yesterday, had expressed appreciation for the sympathy and moral support for him and for *perestroika* from Heads of State and Heads of Government.