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Envoys should widen their role, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: Malaysian diplomats should assume a wider role in explaining government policies to Malaysian students studying abroad.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "In future, they are required to have close contact with students. Of course, our students are not an easy lot to deal with because other peo-

ple come from Malaysia to incite them."

He said so far Malaysian diplomats have done a good job in explaining government policies and the country's relations with other nations.

Referring to the Malaysian Students Department, he said no other country has a special department just to look after the affairs and welfare of its students abroad

except Malaysia.

He said that despite the establishment of this department and adequate staff to handle students' problems and welfare, Malaysian students tended to develop anti-government sentiment because of instigation by others.

Asked which country should be the focus of diplomats, Mahathir said they

must seek out Malaysian students.

Mahathir was speaking to reporters after opening the Malaysian Heads of Mission Conference in Seri Kembangan near here today.

He said Malaysian ambassadors have done their job well, adding they have explained Malaysia's position as well as its policies to the host countries.