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US welcomes PM's stand against terrorism

SEPANG, Sun: The United States government welcomes and thanks Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his strong condemnation of terrorism.

It also deeply appreciates the condolences received from Mahathir in the wake of the Sept 11 terror attacks on New York and Washington, US ambassador-designate to Malaysia Marie T. Huhtala said.

"Our two countries, along with nearly every country in the world, are now facing unusually severe challenges, particularly in the area of counter-terrorism," she said upon arrival at the KL International Airport today.

Huhtala said the attacks on the US were "attacks on us all" as citizens of over 80 countries lost their lives in New York.

"I would like to express

my most sincere condolences to the families of those Malaysians who were among the victims," she said.

The US government, she said, is grateful for the enhanced protection and cooperation the Malaysian government has given its embassy here.

"I look forward to working closely with the govern-

ment of Malaysia in the international effort to prevent further acts of terrorism," she said.

"Our relationship rests on common interest in regional stability and prosperity."

The US is Malaysia's largest investor and export market, with many of its companies operating here.

Huhtala, a native of California, joined the US Foreign Service in 1972. Early in her career, she served in France, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hongkong.

Huhtala served as consul-general and principal officer at the US consulate in Quebec City, Canada, from 1992 to 1995.

Prior to her nomination as ambassador to Malaysia, replacing B. Lynn Pascoe, she served as a minister counsellor and deputy chief of mission at the embassy in Bangkok.