

# NZ assured of continuity when Dr M steps down

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**LOS CABOS** (Mexico), Thurs: Malaysia today assured the New Zealand Government that there would be continuity when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad steps down from office late next year.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar provided the assurance at a meeting with his New Zealand counterpart Phil Bruce Goff on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation ministerial meeting today.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir's appointed successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, is not new in Malaysian politics and has worked with the Prime Minister for a long time.

Dr Mahathir announced early this year that he would step down from office sometime in October 2003, after more than 21 years as Prime Minister.

Syed Hamid also exchanged

notes with Goff on the current tense situation in the South-East Asian region, which in recent weeks has been branded as the future centre for international terrorism.

He said Goff agreed that both countries should actively exchange information on the subject.

Meanwhile, Goff said New Zealand shares similar views with Malaysia on the methods to fight terrorism/

He said the root cause breeding dissatisfaction, frustrations and eventually terror acts must be eradicated for a meaningful and long-lasting victory against the threat.

The country also shares Malaysia's views on the Iraqi issue, with Goff saying that any actions taken against Baghdad must be multilateral and undertaken under the purview of the United Nations.