

Dr M arrives in Okinawa to speak at international forum

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OKINAWA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here yesterday to address the Globalisation Forum 2003 - his first speaking engagement since he stepped down as Prime Minister on Oct 31.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, touched down at 11am at Naha International Airport here.

They were received by Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk Marzuki Mohammad Noor, Institute for International Socio-Economic Studies chairman Tadahiro Sekimoto and Japanese newspaper *Ryukyu*

Shimpo president Akiya Miyazato.

Today, he will be among several speakers taking part in the one-day forum themed "Democracy and Security in the Globalisation Era", which will touch on globalisation and the clash of ideologies, among other topics.

Other speakers include former Soviet Union president Mikhail S. Gorbachev, former Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, former national security adviser to the US president Zbigniew Brzezinski and former Korean ambassador to the United States and the United Nations Kim Kyung-Won.

Dr Mahathir will also participate in a panel discussion of the forum, aimed at deepening mutual understanding worldwide and seeking viable solutions to challenges ahead.

The forum is co-organised by the Institute for International Socio-Economic Studies, the Gorbachev foundation and the *Ryukyu Shimpo*.

Dr Mahathir said he was looking forward to the forum, as "I believe it to be very interesting."

He said he had a very relaxing time during his holiday. Asked if he had followed the Malaysian news, he said: "No."

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to attend functions in Italy, Korea and Tokyo within two months.