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# Working to ensure peace and security

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia wants to work closely with Thailand to ensure peace and security of the region and the world as a whole, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia too was keenly aware of the important constitutional developments taking place in Thailand.

"As your friend and neighbour, we wish Thailand full success in carrying out the reforms it wishes to establish for the good of the people of Thailand," Abdullah said in his speech last night at a dinner held in honour of visiting Thai Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanont.

Former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra was ousted in a bloodless coup last September.

Gen Surayud was named the new leader until elections at the end of the year.

At Sunday's referendum, the Thais voted in favour of a new draft constitution, which is expected to pave the way towards restoration of democratic rule in the country.

Abdullah said he valued Gen Surayud's personal demonstration of friendship towards Malaysia which he believed was a reflection of the close relations between the two countries.

Reflecting on the meetings the two leaders had in Phuket and Bangkok in February this year,

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DATUK SERI ABDULLAH  
AHMAD BADAWI

Abdullah said they were able to discuss many subjects of mutual interest and agreed to enhance cooperation in certain specific areas.

"This includes Malaysia's willingness to give support to Thailand in its efforts to undertake comprehensive socio-economic development in the southern provinces of Thailand.

In his speech, Gen Surayud said Thailand and Malaysia had a strong foundation of friendship.

Earlier, Gen Surayud and Abdullah witnessed the signing of the memorandum of understanding on education in Putrajaya.

Later, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong granted an audience to Gen Surayud, who is on a three-day visit to Malaysia.