

■ Multilateralism: Dr M  
praised for playing his part

# Chirac: We can't accept law of jungle

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PUTRAJAYA, Tues. — French  
President Jacques Chirac, who was  
here for a brief but meaningful visit,  
expressed his gratitude and appreci-  
ation to the Malaysian Government  
and the people for their untiring  
support for world peace.

Receiving the inaugural Kuala  
Lumpur World Peace Award from  
Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad,  
Chirac paid tribute to the Prime  
Minister for being a leader whose  
words and actions were guided by his  
true feelings and wisdom.

“Dr Mahathir is a great man.  
Whatever he says he bases it on what  
he feels in his heart and what he  
feels in his mind.

“And this is precisely what makes  
him a great man,” he said. “So it is  
very significant for me that I should  
receive this award from this man.”

The award was initiated by the  
Malaysian World Peace Foundation  
in recognition of Chirac's outstanding  
dedication to the peaceful resolution  
of international conflict, courage in  
the defence of principle and com-  
mitment to co-operation among the

nations of the world.

Speaking on the current world  
scenario through an interpreter,  
Chirac said what was needed now  
was a mechanism that could do away  
with unilateralism for it was impor-  
tant to bring about multilateralism.

“We can't accept any longer, given  
the changes in the world and the at-  
titude of the people, the law of the  
jungle,” said Chirac, who was one of  
the strongest opponents to the United  
States-led war in Iraq.

He said the voice of each individ-  
ual and nation should be heard for  
they had a contribution to make to-  
wards the betterment of the world.

At a joint Press conference at Seri  
Perdana after an official dinner  
hosted by Dr Mahathir in honour of  
Chirac, both leaders reaffirmed that  
ties between Malaysia and France  
were already on a strong footing.

But both countries needed to find  
ways to enhance co-operation. To  
achieve this, they agreed on the need  
for regular dialogue and greater in-  
teraction between groups in both  
countries, including the business  
community.

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# French language school to be set up here ✓

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To facilitate co-operation and hasten the transfer of technology in the scientific and technical fields, a French language school would be established in Malaysia, both leaders announced.

Chirac was on a six-hour stopover in Malaysia en route to New Caledonia before proceeding to Tahiti to attend the South Pacific Nations' Conference.

Both leaders had earlier held a 90-minute meeting at the Prime Minister's office soon after the French leader arrived at 5.30pm at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Dr Mahathir said there was no difference in the stance of Kuala Lumpur and Paris on many international issues, adding their discussion today reaffirmed the common ground shared by both countries.

"We had a very good discussion on international and bilateral matters and have reached agreement on many issues. Politically and bilaterally, there is no problem."

Dr Mahathir thanked Chirac for stopping by in Malaysia.

"He should have been here in February on an official visit but because of events in the Middle East, he was not able to make it.

"Since his probable official visit would only take place next year, he decided to visit Malaysia while I was still the Prime Minister. That was very nice of him indeed."

Chirac, describing French-Malaysian relations as one based on trust and friendship, said he had a fruitful discussion with Dr Mahathir on various international and bilateral issues.

On Iraq, he said both of them agreed on the need to intensify efforts to bring the crisis to an end, adding that all sides had to play their role to see the realisation of this aim.

On globalisation, the 71-year-old President said he told Dr Mahathir he shared the sentiment that it should have a human face, and that people should be integrated in a globalised world.

"We also discussed bilateral issues but they are not really issues because what we have is a close relationship and co-operation that are constantly evolving.

"We have not only economic co-operation but also cultural, technical, and social co-operation."

Chirac said they also agreed on the need to further enhance the people-to-people relationship.

"We agree that we should increase as much as possible the exchange of students."

Chirac also commented on Putrajaya, describing the Federal administrative centre as a great success and evidence that Asians could do wonders if they put their mind to it.

"This is the first time I have seen Putrajaya. The city is an expression of both modernity and culture and tradition, and it is a great success."

To a question on the role Dr Mahathir could play after his retirement, Chirac felt the world would lose a lot if the Prime Minister did not go on playing a significant role.

Both leaders were also asked to comment on the situation in Myanmar, to which Dr Mahathir said that "whatever we do, we must not think about invading Myanmar in order to achieve a regime change".

Echoing Dr Mahathir's views, Chirac responded: "I can only endorse the wisdom of that statement. I do not approve of the attitude of the Myanmar authority...of course, I favour democracy in Myanmar and that means releasing Aung San Suu Kyi and other political opponents."

To a question on unilateralism and the need for an alternate mechanism to bring about multilateralism, Chirac, stating his country's stand, acknowledged that in today's world of heightened tension, there was a need for everybody to observe and adhere to international laws and regulations.

On whether Malaysia and France still shared a common view on Iraq now that war was over, both leaders said there was not much difference in their opposition to the goings-on in the country.

Dr Mahathir said: "We certainly believe that the situation in Iraq is not going to be easily tackled. Iraq is going through a very difficult period and what has been done in Iraq is wrong, both during the war and after."

Reaffirming the Prime Minister's concern, Chirac said: "I fully share the Prime Minister's view. I will not add anything, we have the same views before, during and after the war."

Chirac also met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when the latter paid him a courtesy call at the Shangri-La Hotel here.

Both leaders exchanged views and ideas on several matters affecting both nations.

Chirac left for New Caledonia at 11pm.