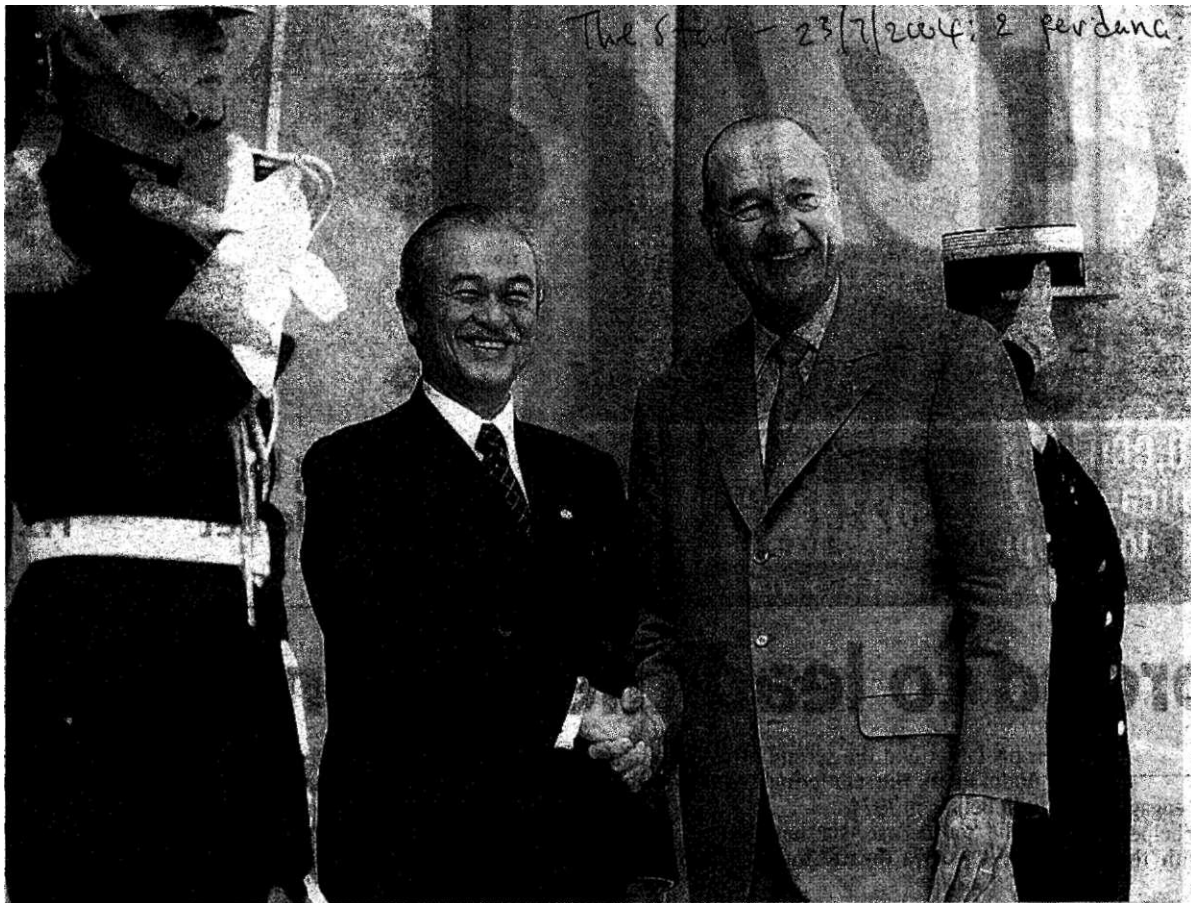


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Chirac hosts Abdullah at luncheon

PARIS: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Ba'dawi called on French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace here yesterday.

Abdullah, who arrived at the palace at midday, was given a military guard-of-honour and then hosted to lunch by Chirac where they discussed issues of common interest, including bilateral and international issues.

Yesterday's visit is Abdullah's first to France in his capacity as prime minister.

Malaysia's chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) added weight to the one-hour meeting as France shares similar sentiments on many issues with Kuala Lumpur, including the long protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the situation in Iraq.

"Abdullah, who was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, later left for the Le Bourget airport to board a flight to London to begin a visit to Britain.

At the airport, Abdullah inspected a guard-of-honour. - Bernama

COMMON STAND: Abdullah posing with Chirac before their meeting at the Elysee Palace In Paris yesterday. - APpic