

'Manage peace the Asean way'

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Asia-Pacific can emulate S-E Asia, says Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asia-Pacific region can emulate Asean states in managing peace and security, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister said although the Asean system of managing peace and security needed to be further developed, there was a similarity between Asean and the Asia-Pacific.

"The Asean experience could in fact serve us equally well in the wider Asia-Pacific region. I think relations among the Asean states have been peaceful because 40 years ago, we made the correct choice and took the right path. The window of opportunity to make a similar choice is open to the countries in the Asia Pacific," he said in his keynote address at the Asia-Pacific Roundtable meeting here yesterday.

"The situation in the wider Asia-Pacific, extending from India in the west to Australasia and Northern America in the east, may not be exactly similar to the dynamics and challenges that confront us in South-East Asia.

"But I would like to suggest that there is much greater similarity than we sometimes tend to think."

Asean, he said, did not exaggerate threats and did not overreact to exaggerated threats.

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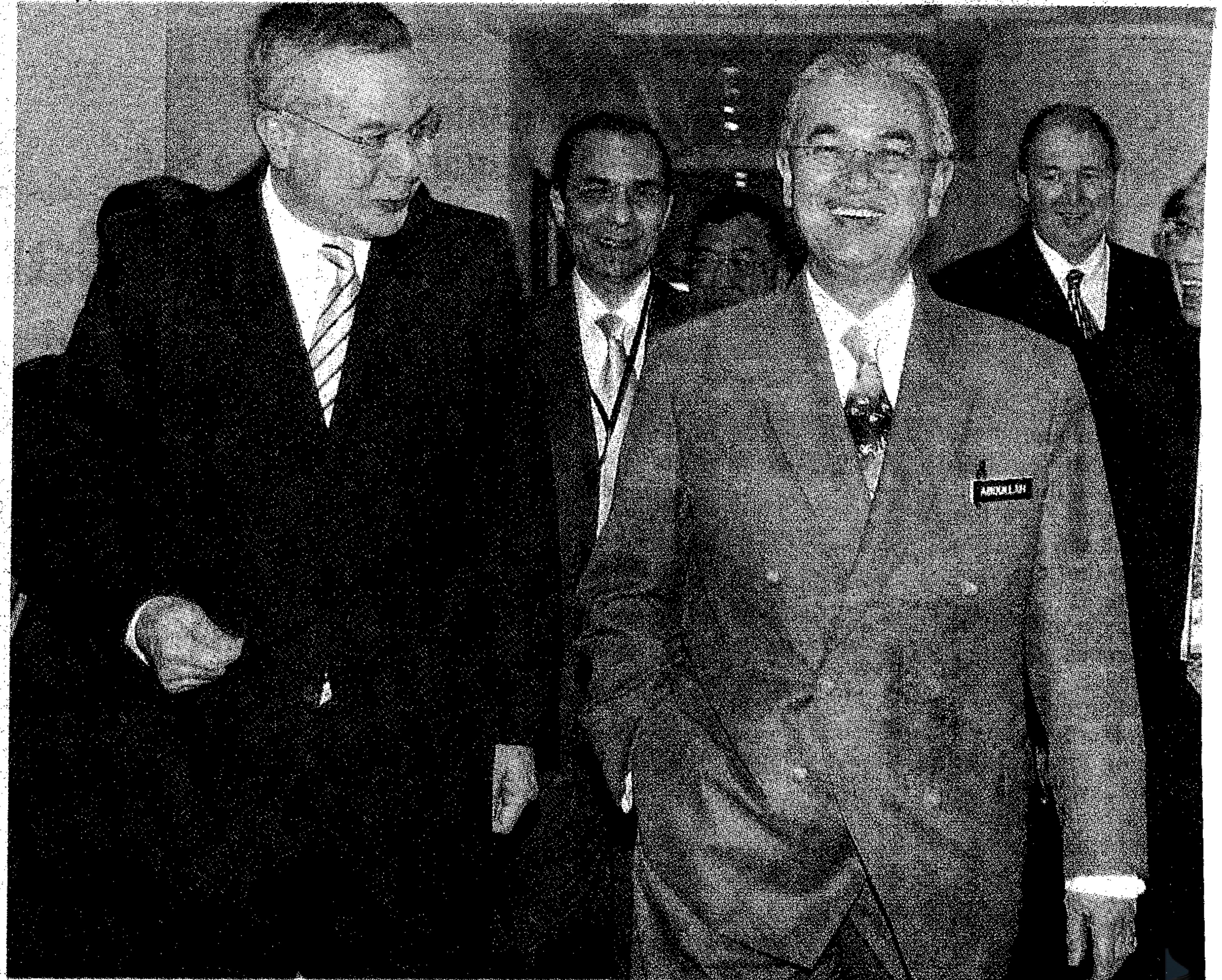
DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

major powers and chose to distance ourselves from the rivalry."

Instead, he said Asean states opted to engage with the major powers for mutual peace and prosperity.

He said Asean retained its existing security arrangements and military alliances as they were already in place but did not spend excessively on weaponry.

Abdullah said countries in the Asia Pacific region should not allow the momentum of constructive rapprochement and cooperation that had been gained over the years to falter.



Light moment: Abdullah and the Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah sharing a light moment at the opening of the 21st Asia-Pacific Roundtable in Kuala Lumpur yesterday as conference chairman and Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia chairman and CEO Datuk Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan (centre) looks on.