

# PM: We'll work with Iraq on unity

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## Malaysia hopes to see conflicts resolved

**DAVOS (Switzerland):** Malaysia hopes to see the emergence of a truly united Iraqi Government that can represent the three major groups of Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Prime Minister said sectarian conflicts within the Muslim community would only weaken the government, which was striving to unite all factions in the country.

"Malaysia will continue to work closely with Iraq in its efforts to unite the people," he told Malaysian journalists in reference to his discussions with Iraqi Vice-President Adil Abd Al-Mahdi on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting yesterday.

Abdullah said Malaysia was prepared to help Iraq as part of its aspirations to see a strong and stable government.

He, however, said Iraq's sectarian problems could only be resolved by the government and

**»You cannot expect the Americans to solve their (Iraq's) sectarian conflicts«**

DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

not by outsiders.

"You cannot expect the Americans to solve their sectarian conflicts," he said.

The Prime Minister said he also held bilater-

al talks with Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, where they discussed efforts to further improve trade and investments between the two countries.

On the human rights issue, he said Malaysia shared Switzerland's concern that countries should not practise double standards.

On Friday, the Prime Minister said Asean regarded China as a friend and not a threat.

Asean, he said, had developed good relations with China through increased trade and economic relationships.

"We see China as a challenge, a friend in the neighbourhood," he said this in reply to a question on Asean's response to the rise of China and India when speaking at the plenary session on "Asean's 40 Years: A New Future".

Abdullah said China was involved in the Asean process through various mechanisms in the grouping's pursuit of engagement for

peace, stability and security in the region.

Asean had done well in terms of its relationship with China, he said, adding that China's prosperity was also due to its increasing trade with Asean countries.

On the possibility of China and India joining Asean, he said both already had lots of dealings with the grouping and such interaction had benefited all parties concerned.

The important question, he added, was not so much whether Asean needed China and India but whether they really needed the grouping.

Earlier, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo paid tribute to Abdullah for playing a major role in facilitating the peace process and heading the ceasefire monitoring team in Mindanao.

▶ See World 36

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