

Breaking away
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Malaysia's soft-spoken Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, below left, and his fiery predecessor Mahathir Mohamad, shown in portrait, differ in both style and substance. Here's how they compare:

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Mahathir: A one-man show, always in control at meetings. Given to lecturing fellow Malays fiercely about their laziness and lack of business acumen

Abdullah: A consensus builder who listens to all sides. His oft-repeated slogan is "Work with me, not for me"

ECONOMY

Mahathir: Emphasized growth above all, with heavy industry the catalyst to propel Malaysia to developed-nation status. Favored megaprojects such as the Petronas Towers, until recently the world's tallest buildings

Abdullah: Wants the country to return to its agricultural roots and also use biotech as a niche to compete internationally. Has scaled back or suspended several Mahathir projects, such as a \$3.8 billion railway line that would have been Malaysia's largest infrastructure scheme

BUSINESS

Mahathir: Favored certain businessmen with government contracts, helping them become Malay tycoons who could act as role models for their community. Critics claim this was a cover for cronyism

Abdullah: Appears to have no favored business associates. Has made the awarding of government contracts subject to open tender. Recently, one Mahathir ally, businessman Eric Chia, was charged with corruption

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mahathir: A combative and outspoken leader, he excoriated Jews and the West, particularly the U.S.

Abdullah: Has not made any provocative remarks. Has also moved to restore long-soured ties with Singapore

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