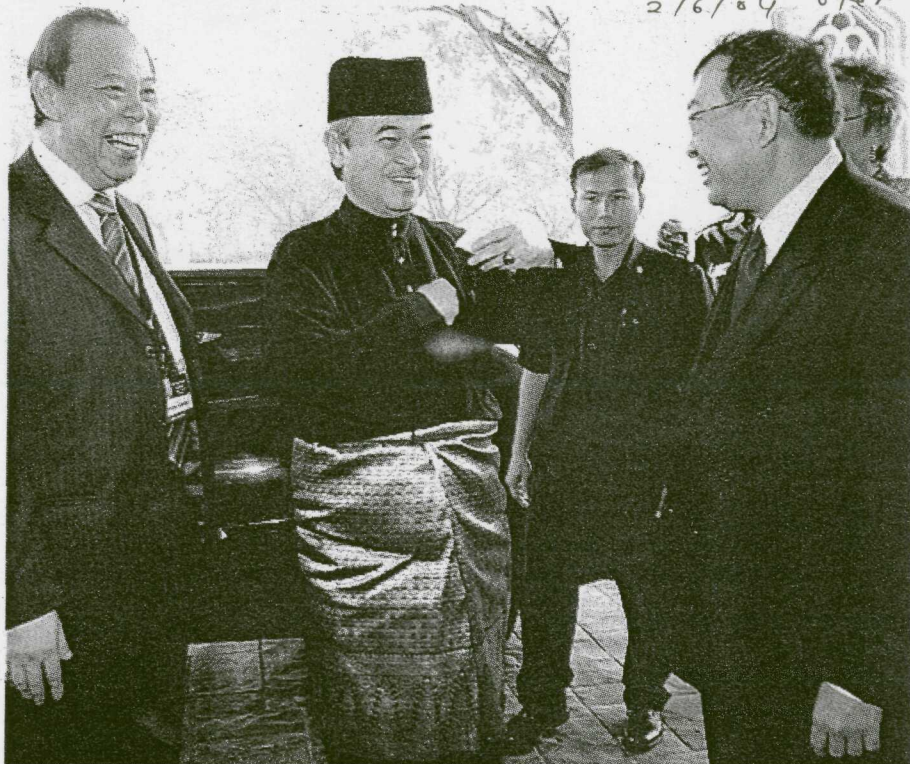


US has to address two long standing issues

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ALL SMILES: Abdullah sharing a light moment with Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee (left) and Prince Norodom Sirivudh during the 18th Asia-Pacific Roundtable in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

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will be absent.

"Many Muslims refuse to acknowledge that there can be bad Muslims, and that Islamic teachings have been corrupted by some groups to serve their militant cause. Like any other religion, Islam forbids the killing of innocent civilians," Abdullah added.

The very word "Islam" means peace, yet some terrorist groups have preached that heaven awaits those who kill innocent civilians, so long as it is in defence of their belief, he said.

"The cause cannot be just, neither can it be legitimate. Nothing can make a virtue out of the massacre of innocent men, women and children.

"Those who lead the campaign against international terrorism and are the principal targets of terrorists are also in similar denial. They will cite undemocratic government, oppression, poverty and a militant form of Islam as the root cause," said the PM.

Abdullah said the United States, in particular, and its

major allies must address two key and unavoidable issues — the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the situation in Iraq.

He said international terrorism and anti-American sentiment would not go away until the Israeli-Palestinian problem was resolved justly, morally and in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

On Iraq, Abdullah said the country; the region, the coalition and the rest of the world would have to pay the price because the damage that had been done cannot be undone.

On the latest Iraq plan announced by the United States last week, Abdullah said that full sovereignty must be given to the Iraqis to exercise their political, economic and security rights.

On the United Nations, he said it had taught the world the pivotal and indispensable role it played in international affairs, making it all the more important for the international community to remedy its weaknesses and fortify its strengths rather than marginalise the world body.