

KUAN YEW: DR M A MAN OF DEEP CONVICTIONS

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SINGAPORE, Fri — Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has described the present Malaysian leadership as a new generation of self-made and self-confident Malay leaders, administrators, professionals and businessmen.

In an interview with the *Far Eastern Economic Review* he spoke of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a man of deep convictions, forthright and open in his pursuit of objectives.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, said Mr Lee, has a completely different social background from his predecessors.

Unlike him, former leaders Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak and Tun Hussein Onn all came from Malay upper ruling class backgrounds.

"To borrow a British establishment classification, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is non-U. So is Datuk Musa Hitam," said Mr Lee in the interview with the editor of the *Review* Derek Davies, and cor-

respondent Susumi Awano-hara at the Istana recently.

"They represent a new generation of self-made and self-confident Malay leaders, Malay administrators, Malay professionals and Malay businessmen."

Mr Lee said he found it 'easier to work' with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir when he was the Deputy Prime Minister than with Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Efficient government

"Probably, it is because I am also non-U," said Mr Lee.

"The Tunku was sometimes very difficult to interpret. His royal style was so subtle that I often missed his nuances.

"Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is forthright and open in his pursuit of objectives, foremost amongst them being effective and efficient government. He is a man of deep convictions."

Mr Lee has known Datuk Seri

Dr Mahathir from 1964 when they were MPs in the Malaysian Parliament.

He added that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir has a mind of his own and gives his officials the lead.

Recounting the fight against the international civil aviation policy (ICAP) in 1979 — the Qantas-British Airways duopoly — as an example, Mr Lee said Asean would not have been so united if Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir did not see in ICAP an issue of principle.

Said Mr Lee: "He saw this as a classic case of the charge he had made at an UNCTAD meeting in Delhi in 1979 that developed countries changed the rules of the game of free competition whenever the developing countries showed they were about to catch up and compete successfully.

"He united Asean to counter this protectionist move. The Australians had to concede changes. Now they have decided to abandon ICAP."