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Rough Western send-off for Dr M

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IT is not unexpected really, as there was little love lost between our outgoing Prime Minister and the West, especially the media.

But they have gone over the top with the frenzied reaction to his Organisation of the Islamic Conference speech, only revealing there is more to it than meets the eye. Tentu sekali ada udang di sebalik batu!

The speech was excellent. US Secretary of State Colin Powell, meeting Foreign Ministers last week on the sidelines of the Apec summit in Bangkok (after their appointment in New York last month was broken by the New York traffic), found the whole speech kosher, apart from those few dreaded references to the Jews.

Even President Bush who, I suspect, has a sneaking respect and regard for Dr Mahathir's courage and consistency, expressed privately to the Prime Minister at the Apec summit a regret for having to come out so harshly against the speech.

But laser-sharp reactions have been unleashed driven by forces no-body cares to admit but all too evident to miss.

From coast to coast in America, from the Netherlands to Italy in Western Europe, not to mention our antipodean friends in Australasia, there has been such a lashing which only powerful forces and fears could have unleashed.

They all had to come out - and with gusto - once the first foray had been made by CNN. You cannot afford to be left out; it's like being found out.

This whole Jewish thing has extended from guilt to capture and fear.

Who exterminated the Jews? It was not the Muslims. Have the Jews not risen from the ashes, founded the state of Israel, and established positions of powerful influence in the most powerful states in the world? Has not the expression of policy by these states, especially the United States, been in furtherance of the interests of the state of Israel, to the detriment of the Muslims, especially the Palestinians and Arabs?

Has not the expression of Western interests also been that of Jewish interests with which they are inter-twined, be they on soft issues like human rights or on hard ones like high finance?

If you cannot state these self-evident truths without being accused of being anti-Semitic, you are forever condemned to be at the receiving end, with one hand tied behind your back. An absolute situation of total oppression by fully dominant forces - a situation many would contend that faces the Muslims in the world today.

What Do You Do?

SHUT your trap and suffer in silence? Lash back in indiscriminate fashion? Neither, according to Dr Mahathir's speech. Learn from the lessons of history and the example of the Jews, instead of the raving and ranting that the Muslims have been prone to do.

Dr Mahathir's OIC speech had been long-awaited in the West, if only because of the fear and expectation that he would use the summit to rouse the Muslims into a strong anti-Americanism.

He did not do that. Instead he heavily criticised the Muslims for their failings and called on them to pull up their socks - indeed to dis-card the jubah!

Isn't this what the West wants or is it what it fears? There is a long distance between survival and re-vival. The Muslims are at rock bottom.

Even Dr Mahathir will have a rough time of it pulling them up, but knowing the man he might just try.

Does the West, then, want to snuff out any such prospect, by the reaction to his speech and the various threats against Malaysia the Jewish lobby in America have been voicing?

These are extremist Judeo-Christian reactions against a Mahathir call for Muslim moderation. Why is that there is such fury against Mahathir and hardly any against Lt-Gen William Boykin, who is let off as a madcap, but is on the loose in the Pentagon!

Who is the more dangerous?

Where is the fairplay and the justice?

The buccaneering Paul Krugman, in his column in the New York Times, while attributing the whole situation to the failures of American foreign policy, qualified his comments with Dr Mahathir's alleged need to give a balance in his speech, by bringing in that Jewish bit, to placate the Islamic domestic constituency.

Krugman, too, has to placate his much more massive domestic constituency, the most powerful component of which is the Jewish constituency. They all can say that we have to placate our weak Muslim constituency, but we cannot say they have to their powerful Jewish one. We are accused of being anti-Semitic when we say it, but they cannot of being anti-Muslim when they so declare.

Calm When Right

AMID the furore, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's advice to be calm when we know we are right and when we know how best to protect our best interests, is impressive.

The Malaysian position is clear and has been made by Dr Mahathir. We know that it is consistent and logical, and that we are not anti-anybody. Dr Mahathir has told the Muslims that they are most at fault for not getting their act together, but we also wish to see justice in the world.

One of Dr Mahathir's most out-standing legacies in his 22 years as Prime Minister has been his courage in carving a moderate Muslim mould, at home and abroad. The Western and Jewish conspiracy to besmirch him is a travesty of justice.