

Tuesday, January 15, 2002

MEMBER AREA

linuxcentral

LOGIN

bursapolitik

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Forum](#)

## FEATURED ARTICLES

## Islam Sees Itself as Oppressed

(Quota\* PM)

Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr Mahathir was interviewed by the French magazine, L'EXPANSION MAGAZINE 2001 at Putrajaya, Malaysia. The following was featured in the Magazine's ISSUE OF 22 NOV TO 6 DEC, 2

Malaysia is the only country with a Muslim majority which has managed to steer itself away from destitution, experienced economic success (apart for royalties from petroleum resources).

And what a success ! After two decades of dazzling growth, its 24 million people have multiplied by 10 % th income which now equals half of ours. This miracle is attributed, even by its most intransigent detractors, to who has led the country for more than 20 years. It is him who has planned the development, applying protec while striving to make Malaysia an export champion, building mosques and airports with the same vigour, fa Bumiputeras while not forgetting the Chinese and the Indians who are at the heart of the business communit

A friend of Jacques Chirac, this 75-year old Muslim has also stood out thanks to his provocative stands wort a Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore from 1959 to 1990: denouncing the international financial American domination, affirming that the Asian values are superior than the individualistic and materialistic addition, "skiddings" bordering on anti-semitism.

Mahathir faces a democracy with complex connections. In Malaysia, the elections are free but the freedom restrained/limited. Islam is the official religion but the freedom of religion is total.

Confronted with a rising Islamist opposition, which obliges him to give some guarantees to his electorate but the bridges with the West which is economically and geopolitically vital for this modest country surrounded teeth, Mahathir treads along a narrow ridge between two competing temptations of the Muslim world: one of confessional/religious confinement and the other of cultural alienation.

Q: You officially condemned the attacks of Sept 11 but, a short while later, you condemned with equal sever attacks in Afghanistan. Are they, in your opinion, the same?

Dr M : No, it's not actually comparable. But it's a fact that, just like the terrorist attacks had cost the lives of i the same manner, the American attacks on Afghanistan are going to exact the lives of other innocent peopl that these attacks are not going to contribute towards the fight against terrorism. It's the opposite! In fact, no are the real/genuine terrorists. Therefore, it is not by attacking Afghanistan that we would be contributing to terrorists who are hiding in Europe, in Arab countries or even in the United States. On the other hand, nume countries are going to have the feeling that it is less a matter of chasing the terrorists than a revenge. It's for do not support the attack against Afghanistan.

Q: In your opinion, what is the objective of Bin Laden? Can we understand such a criminal act ?

Dr M : First of all, I don't take it as a fact/as settled that these terrorists were the messengers of Bin Laden. I he is the head of a group of terrorists. Some of them had even trained Malaysians hoping to see that they w country and topple my government. So I don't have any particular affection for Bin Laden. But there's nothin if we attack Bin Laden, it will bring an end to terrorist acts. Most importantly, we'll have to try to understand rounded and relatively well-off people who have families, can decide to slam a plane into a tower! If we cont saying that they must be crazy people, we would not be able to treat/resolve the problem. As you know, I a

profession. A doctor starts by searching for the source of the illness and would not be happy to treat the pain with aspirin. The big question is this: what was it that could have motivated these people?

Q: And what is your answer?

Dr M: I feel that it is linked to the situation in West Asia. The feeling of discontent regarding this matter is well felt in the Muslim world. With one billion Muslims, surely there would be a handful of extremists who are willing to sacrifice themselves with the hope that this will help to fight terrorism that they themselves have to endure. For in the attacks by Jews also constitute an act of terror, state terrorism.

Q: But the situation in West Asia, which is not something new, can it all by itself fuel that much resentment?

Dr M: Muslims have the impression that the entire world is oppressing them. In Bosnia, some 200,000 Muslims were massacred by the Serbs before the world began to react. In Kosovo, the Muslims were once again attacked. In Chechnya, a lot more died simply because they wanted to free themselves from the grip/iron rule of the Russians. In Kashmir, Sudan and of course, Iraq where 500,000 children died due to the lack of food and medicine caused by the war. Muslims think that other people easily accuse them of terrorism whereas other terrorists are not distinguished by their religious belonging/adherence. When talking about Palestine, nobody in the West speaks of "Jewish terrorism" when it comes to "Muslim terrorism"! And when Timothy McVeigh blew up a building in Oklahoma, the first thing he said was to say that it was "Muslim terrorism"! Moreover, McVeigh surely had accomplices. How is it that they could not even try to do it just like they are trying to destroy Muslim terrorists?

Q: Isn't Malaysia exposed to Muslim terrorism too? Some people have even considered your country as one (with) one of the pilots of the Sept 11 attacks having been seen in contact with some extremist groups in your country?

Dr M: We have seen the emergence of a group comprising Muslims who want to turn Malaysia into what the state. As they could not impose themselves through the ballot boxes, they tried to topple my government. They were trained in Pakistan, then Afghanistan where they were trained by Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban. We had identified them in prison. We had even prevented an attack against American sailors in one of our ports. You see, we are not able to catch him. I would like to remind you that in the United States, the terrorists who were responsible for the Sept 11 attacks were not even suspects in the eyes of the local authorities! But to accuse us of hiding criminals on our grounds that some terrorists had been in Malaysia, this does not make any sense. Nobody is accusing the Swiss of colluding with the terrorists even though some of them who were involved on the Sept 11 attacks had also been in Switzerland.

Q: Apart from Malaysia, no other country with a Muslim majority had managed to pull out from the state of underdevelopment. Is it a stroke of good luck?

Dr M: In every Muslim community, you will find a minority of the people who would like to create an Islamic state and stop the government from developing the country economically. Instead of encouraging Muslims to study, to say to them: "You must only study religion, nothing else!". And this prevents Muslims from catching up with the rest of the world. Muslim countries are aware of the scourge of such extremism. A big chunk of our energy, that of the Muslim world, is spent in managing these internal tensions/problems. In Malaysia, it's true, we have been more successful than other Muslim countries. This demands a strong will, a steadfastness, a capacity to accept criticism, but also the support of the majorities. We enjoy a very strong support of the Muslim majority who are moderates in my country. And this is why I could not get governments in other Muslim countries, not getting popular support, are not able to achieve the same things. These countries remain very poor.

Q: So, isn't it unfair to criticise the West for the failure of the Muslim world?

Dr M: You have seen that I do not shy away from criticising Muslims when I think that it is fair. But you cannot place the burden of their failure all by themselves. The West had been very unfair with the Muslim world and the rest of the world, and this must be rectified.

Q: But beyond that, isn't there something in the Muslim faith that might be incompatible with the capitalist system based on the individual desire to enrich himself?

Dr M: It's only when this tendency is pushed to the limit that it will go against Islam. But if we follow strictly the teachings of Islam, we will experience the biggest success on the planet. The big Muslim empire of the past was founded on the teachings of Islam. Today, certain extremists distort these teachings to serve their personal and political ambitions. They call upon us to live in peace with those from other religions, calls upon us not to quarrel with them if they do not quarrel with us. This is what we're doing in Malaysia where all sorts of religious communities live together harmoniously. An Islamic country works on achieving development and peace, it wants to have good relations between the communities. It is a country where a Muslim is free to fulfil all his religious obligations.

and, furthermore, it is also the case for the non-Muslims. Extremism is condemned by Islam.

Q: The competition posed by China worries all the countries in this region. How could you deal with it if you favouring the Malays (Bumiputeras) to the detriment of the other communities (reserved public jobs, discou which erodes the competitiveness of the country?

Dr M: It is necessary to maintain a balance in the levels of economic development between the different eth Malaysia to ensure its stability. Giving up a part of our potential growth so as to maintain a peaceful domesti contitutes a necessary judgement. We went through, 30 years ago, racial clashes and we do not want to go However, despite this requirement, we experienced a period of annual growth of 8 per cent for 10 years! Th down is the result of a global sluggishness (of the economy). And our unemployment rate, less than 4 per ce yours.

Q: You have been advocating for an Asian currency to counterbalance the weight of the dollar. Why not cho

Dr M: We would have liked to choose the Euro! But European companies often refuse to deal with anything dollar! How do you expect us to have more faith in your currency than you yourself?

END

Source: <http://www.smpke.jpm.my/>

Copyright © 2001 bveritas sdn bh