

Malaysian leader slams geopolitics

Since late May, when it became apparent that the Clinton administration's plan to take U.S. military action against Serbia had collapsed, statements emanating from the Malaysian government and reflected in the country's media indicate that many Malaysians are convinced that from any moral standpoint, the West is finished. The government of Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, while expressing disappointment at the lateness of Clinton's proposal to take military action to save Bosnia, nevertheless strongly supported the plan. One of the important questions, however, is how to pick up the pieces, and Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who travels extensively, has been instrumental in the Third World and Muslim dialogue about "where do we go from here?"

EIR reprints here an excerpted version of the keynote speech which the prime minister delivered June 3 to a conference on "Islam and Justice" that was sponsored by the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia. Mahathir accurately presents the horrors of geopolitics in the framework of an international order devoid of justice. He presents the Islamic concept of justice, and concludes with the hope that the prevailing injustices can be counteracted through clarification of these concepts within Islam itself. (Subheads are ours.)

Several centuries after the decline of the Islamic Empire, the world has been dominated by the non-Muslim countries of the West. They not only succeeded in dominating almost the entire world, but also influenced the thinking of those they control and imposed their values and philosophy on these people. Their concepts and principles of justice are also widely disseminated—so much so that the world is very engrossed with them and no one would question whether it is good or bad. At the same time, the West became powerful militarily and economically, and they controlled various kinds of knowledge, including information technology which enabled them to suppress anyone who challenged them on their principles, as well as the values they uphold and disseminate.

They speak eloquently of the rule of law, human rights, democracy, or the voice of the majority, without taking into account the existence of certain man-made laws that are unfair, excessive [demands for ostensible] human rights, and unwise majority voices. Hence the laws in the West place too much priority on the individual's right that allows him to do anything he pleases, even though his actions may threaten

the peace and security of the society. International laws, meanwhile, were formulated to provide the mighty with the right to suppress the weak. The same applies to human rights which are highly valued to the extent that groups in the name of democracy, are given protection even if their activities threaten society, peace, and progress. . . .

At the same time, the West would not hesitate to turn their backs on the very principles of justice they profess to uphold. . . . When it was evident that the Serbs were terrorizing and killing the Bosnian Muslims, the West had a thousand and one excuses for not acting on the Serbs. The truth is that they acted in Kuwait because they wanted to protect their source of petroleum. Since they have no interest in Bosnia, they are willing to allow the Serbs to kill, terrorize, and suppress the Bosnian Muslims.

'Might is right'

The actual principle subscribed to by the West and the majority of present-day world civilization is based on "might is right." Since the West is powerful, everything they do is fair. Since the Serbs are strong, their annexation of Muslim land is condoned. As Islamic countries and Muslims everywhere are weak, everything they do is wrong and unfair. Efforts by Muslims to re-assert the concept of justice, as expounded by Islam, were criticized by the West as an attempt to revive old and antiquated thinking. The danger is that Muslims, in their frustration with their weaknesses and failures, will react contrary to their religious teachings. Because of the disappointment, Muslims may act rashly, and commit the same offense as that committed by their foe. This would then confirm the allegations of the West that Muslims are extremists.

History is replete with examples of Islamic justice. When the Romans conquered Palestine, the Jews were expelled, reducing them to exiles across the world, in what is known as the Jewish diaspora. But when the Umar Ibn Khattab, the caliph, conquered Palestine, the Christians and the Jews were allowed to stay. The same thing happened when Salahuddin Ibn Ayub, the caliph, conquered Palestine—the non-Muslims were protected. . . . Today when the Jews, with western help, annexed Palestine, Muslims, including children, are suppressed, convicted, and killed every day. . . .

In Islam, a religion which is also a complete way of life, justice is supreme and clearly defined. In Islam it is clearly emphasized that the objective of the universe is primarily to uphold justice and truth. Verse 85 of the Surah Al-Hijr (15) in the Koran says: "We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, but for just ends." This is true in Verses 38-39 in the Surah Al-Dukhan (44), which says: "It was not in (idle) sport that We created the Heavens and the Earth and all that lies between them. We created them to reveal the truth."

The verses clearly state the real objective of creating the earth and sky, and in fact the whole universe, that it is to

uphold justice and remove cruelty and evil. In the Surah Al-Dukhan (44), the said Verse 38-39, Allah made it clear that the universe was not created for nothing. The universe was created for a reason. . . . It was created to uphold the truth and justice. If we accept the fact that the universe was created to uphold justice, we, being one of Allah's creations, should also uphold justice. In fact, upholding justice is one of our responsibilities as a human being. . . .

Disregard for justice

The world's present chaos is a result of the international community's disregard for the principles of justice. . . . Again, the Bosnian experience can be cited as an example. The weak Bosnian Muslims are not allowed to obtain arms even for self-defense. The Serbs, who are already strong, are allowed to increase their weaponry. Now, the big powers have agreed to give the territories forcibly taken by the Serbs to them without due regard to the rights of the Bosnian Muslims. . . .

Legal history has proven that the process of making laws into statutory legislations was initiated and implemented by Muslims. . . . But it should be noted that since the process of making Islamic laws into statutory legislations was done by people who are not immune to imperfections, adjustments and corrections on these documents need to be made from time to time, depending on time and place. If there is a perception today that Islam is extremist or cruel, the reason is not that Islam is cruel, but because there are Muslims who, when in power, become arrogant and do not abide by the teachings of the Koran and the sayings of the Prophet (Peace Be Unto Him) and the examples of the rule of the Prophet (Peace Be Unto Him) and well-known caliphs in Islamic history. . . .

Islamic countries, including Malaysia, should strengthen themselves. To achieve this, the important thing is to ensure that a fair and efficient administration be established so that our achievement is at par with that of other developed countries. Only after we have developed, can we undertake preparation to strengthen our defense capability to be on the same level with that of other developed nations in all fields. . . . If today certain countries and races, such as the Serbs and the Jews, dare and are able to suppress and terrorize, the reason is because the Islamic countries are all weak. . . . Hence, before we Muslims blame others, we should question ourselves on our Islamic practice, especially in respect of ensuring fair administration. If Islamic justice is not evident and is difficult to be accepted by all, then we are partly to be blamed. . . .

I hope this conference will succeed in clarifying the concept and principles of justice in Islam so that any misconceptions and negative image can be corrected, and that the world can learn and gain from the wisdom of Islamic justice which can overcome the prevailing injustices caused by the arrogance of the present world powers.

Africa

German media hear of Sudan conference

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

On April 26-30, an extraordinary conference took place in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, drawing Muslim and Christian leaders from 31 countries to deliberate on the ways of thwarting scenarios for religious confrontation and hammering out programs for fruitful ecumenical dialogue. In an attempt to bring the news of the initiative to public opinion, the Sudanese embassy in Bonn, convoked a press conference on June 9, inviting members of the German delegation to report back on their findings. From Khartoum, former Foreign Minister Hashim Osman was also on hand.

The brief remarks of Minister Osman, who had previously served as cultural attaché in Bonn, provided background on the Khartoum government's economic success since it took power in 1989, in bringing the country to food self-sufficiency and even surplus agricultural production. He reported on the government's position in the ongoing peace talks in Abuja, reiterating that the civil war in the south, a vestige of British colonial rule, was political, not religious. He repeatedly invited the press representatives to "visit Sudan and see for yourselves" what is really going on.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who had headed up a Schiller Institute delegation to the Khartoum interreligious dialogue, stated that "religious tolerance is a reality" in Sudan, much to the consternation of the journalists. She identified three principal grounds for the British-inspired anti-Sudan press campaign: first, that the Sudanese government, cognizant of International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies to write off Africa, has decided to seek economic development independent of such institutions, a course which, if successful, would make it into a breadbasket for the continent, and set an example for the rest of Africa and the developing sector; second, that Sudan has rejected the negative aspects of western "culture," seeking in its own cultural roots the means to bring the economic development into coherence with a moral ordering of society; and finally, that it has launched an effort to end the civil war in the south, a war stoked by British interests eager to seize the raw materials and agricultural potential of the region.

If Sudan succeeds in its economic and political experiment, she said, it would thwart the plans of certain Anglo-American think-tanks to portray "Islam" as the new enemy image.