

ending its nuclear program, is taken by leading diplomats in Asia as a promising step forward. China and North Korea are now discussing scheduling a new round of the six-party talks.

On the negative side, the Asian tour continued the unilateralist diplomacy of the Bush Administration, by attempting to turn the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) from its purpose as an economic discussion forum, into a security alliance, by demanding APEC's concurrence on specific military policies, such as joint operations against terrorist organizations, and a ban on production and trade in "manpads"—Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems (shoulder-held anti-aircraft weapons). Widespread Asian opposition to the "militarization" of APEC was led by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir. The final communiqué did call for common efforts to stop terrorism, but did not ban the manpads.

While in Bangkok, Bush granted Thailand "non-NATO ally" status, adding it to a list which already includes the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, and Australia, provided with special access to U.S. military assistance. This, together with Bush's attempt to militarize APEC, has brought up the ghost of SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), the anti-communist alliance created by cold-warrior John Foster Dulles in the 1950s. It was comprised of Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, Australia, and New Zealand, together with the United States, Britain, and France. SEATO kept Asia divided, and served as a platform for the American war against Indo-China, the subversion of Sukarno in Indonesia, and similar Cold War operations.

In both the Philippines and Australia, Bush addressed joint sessions of the national legislatures, but was greeted by open protest by elected officials opposed to the U.S. preemptive war policy. In the Philippines, several opposition congressmen refused to stand for the President, and walked out when he began to speak. In Australia, Bush's speech was twice interrupted by Senators from the Green Party, denouncing the Iraq war and U.S. disregard for international law. One shouted, "We are not a sheriff!" This refers to Bush's public statements, twice during the previous week, that Australia was America's "sheriff" in Asia.

The other major subject on the Bush agenda for Asia was the much-heralded American demand that China allow its currency, the yuan, to float, ending its link to the dollar. Even the U.S. Federal Reserve Board issued a report on Oct. 23 debunking the line that the undervalued yuan is to blame for America's economic demise. The Fed said such a move would harm, rather than help, the U.S. economy, but that hasn't held back the Administration. Chinese President Hu Jintao firmly rejected the demand, explaining that the policy would destabilize China, Asia, and even the West. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the Bush Administration has introduced this issue for extraneous, political reasons, rather than a real interest in its adoption. The *Australian Financial Times* wrote on Oct. 21, "With Bush facing economic and foreign-policy troubles on the home front, scapegoating China is a handy weapon of mass diversion."

Organization of Islamic Conference

Why Neo-Cons Really Hate Malaysia's Dr. Mahathir

by Mike Billington

The lords of the international financial institutions found yet another reason to spew their hatred of Malaysia's Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad this month, when he took the helm of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit on Oct. 16 in Kuala Lumpur. Only three weeks earlier, at the UN on Sept. 25, Mahathir had given a General Assembly speech, strongly suggesting a new order of fixed currency parities, capital controls, and currency controls—a form of New Bretton Woods. And a major confrontation took place between Dr. Mahathir and the western financial oligarchy, after the so-called "Asian financial crisis," in 1997-98, when he counter-attacked against mega-speculator and drug-promoter George Soros and his backers at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Mahathir not only exposed their systematic looting of the nations of Asia, but also implemented the "politically incorrect" policy of partial currency controls on the Malaysian ringgit, successfully closing the door on the thieves. He was roundly accused of scapegoating the IMF for supposed "structural failings" in the Malaysian economy, and denounced as an anti-Semite for daring to name Soros (as if the gnostic money-worshipper Soros were really Jewish!) as a "dunce" and a crook.

Strong Advice to Muslims

Dr. Mahathir was proven correct by history, as Malaysia succeeded, without IMF "assistance," in surviving the crisis far better than its several neighbors, who were placed under IMF tutelage—and without the collapse of living standards which accompanies every IMF program. The controllers of the dying IMF-based financial system have never forgiven him. It was thus no surprise, after Oct. 16, to see Western leaders and their press respond to Mahathir's dramatic keynote speech to the OIC with a deafening chorus of denunciations, calling it the "crudest and most vile anti-Semitism in history" (American Jewish Committee chief David Harris), and comparing him to Osama bin Laden (Australian Labor Party official Kevin Rudd)! For those who actually *read* the speech, however, it is self-evident that Dr. Mahathir:

- reprimanded Muslims for deserting their historical dedication to science and ecumenicism in favor of a literalist and fundamentalist interpretation of the Quran;
- called on Muslims to renounce suicide bombings, as a totally impotent response to Israeli oppression and the occu-



Malaysia's outgoing Prime Minister and statesman Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who on Sept. 25 at the UN proposed a return to a Bretton Woods-like system of fixed currency parties and controls, further infuriated the "Washington consensus" with his Oct. 16 call for a new Islamic renaissance, in his summit speech as chairman of the OIC.

pation of Palestinian lands, one which only plays into the hands of their enemies;

- praised the Jews for withstanding centuries of hideous persecution across Europe, culminating in the slaughter of six out of the 12 million European Jews under the Nazis, but surviving through the use of *reason*, not reaction, to become the powerful force they are in today's world; and

- called on Islam to follow that path of *reason* today, in league with well-meaning people from all cultures, to realize the great potential of the 1.3 billion Islamic people of the world.

One could certainly say that Dr. Mahathir was imprecise, in confusing the fascist Jabotinskyite leadership of Israel, and their supporters internationally, with "Jews." But this is a lawful part of the effect of the way in which Muslims have been treated over the recent period. Look at the toleration of the wave of attacks on Islamic peoples, at the acceptance of the fascist Sharon government, and its genocidal policies against the Palestinian people. Look at the way in which mega-speculator George Soros is permitted, by Jews and others, to pawn himself off as a leading "Jewish" philanthropist. If it appears to Muslims that "Jews" run the world, that may be, in part, because the likes of Sharon and Soros have been permitted by cowards, to usurp the name.

The Western press, especially those supporting the neo-conservatives' drive for "perpetual war" with Islamic-majority countries, were equally incensed at the standing ovation

Mahathir received, and the public defense of him from across the Islamic world—including from those counted as the allies of the U.S. war on terrorism, such as Afghanistan's interim President Hamid Karzai and Pakistan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The imperial tone was clearest in the *New York Times* editorial of Oct. 18, which denounced Mahathir's "toxic statement of hatred of Jews," and then proceeded, unashamed, to berate Muslims for holding "feckless summit meetings."

Defense By Egypt

A strong defense of Dr. Mahathir came from Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher, who said on Oct. 21, that accusing the Malaysian Prime Minister of anti-Semitism served to "deflect attention from Israeli acts" against the Palestinians. "What is said about this speech shows bad faith," Maher said. "These are lying allegations aimed at protecting Israel and deflecting attention from Israeli acts. We hope that those who condemned Dr. Mahathir's speech lend more attention to the words of the American general . . . who demonstrated hostility toward Islam."

Maher was referring to Gen. William Boykin, who in June, was named U.S. Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, and who has ranted to Christian fundamentalist audiences that Muslims are idol worshipers, and repeatedly boasted, "My god is bigger than his god." When challenged on Boykin's role in appraising intelligence in the Islamic world with such a view of Islam, his boss, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, called him a great general, and said that "we're a free people."

In his Oct. 21 interview with the *Bangkok Post*, Dr. Mahathir noted that "The greatest Jewish philosopher [Moses] Maimonides wrote his works in Arabic. There was no quarrel between Jews and Muslims, and Jews and Arabs. Until, of course, you take away Palestinian land to solve the European-Jewish problem, by creating the State of Israel. Since then, there seems to be no more peace in the Middle East. . . . It would seem that these people do not appreciate my suggesting that we should stop acts of terror. They would like to see acts of terror go on. Perhaps, this would give them an excuse to take pre-emptive action."

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'If We Are To Recover Our Dignity'

Excerpts from Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad's keynote speech to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on Oct. 16.

The whole world is looking at us. Certainly 1.3 billion Muslims—one-sixth of the world's population—are placing their hopes in us, in this meeting, even though they may be cynical about our will and capacity to even decide to restore the honour of Islam and the Muslims, much less to free their brothers and sisters from the oppression and humiliation from which they suffer today. If we are to recover our dignity, and that of Islam, our religion, it is we who must decide, it is we who must act. . . .

We are enjoined to “read, *Iqraq*”; i.e., to acquire knowledge. The early Muslims took this to mean translating and studying the works of the Greeks and other scholars before Islam. And these Muslim scholars added to the body of knowledge through their own studies. The early Muslims produced great mathematicians and scientists, scholars, physicians, and astronomers, etc.; and they excelled in all the fields of knowledge of their times, besides studying and practicing their own religion of Islam. As a result, the Muslims were able to develop and extract wealth from their lands; and through their world trade, able to strengthen their defenses, protect their people and give them the Islamic way of life—*Addin*—as prescribed by Islam. At the time the Europeans of the Middle Ages were still superstitious and backward, the enlightened Muslims had already built a great Muslim civilization, respected and powerful, more than able to compete with the rest of the world, and able to protect the *ummah* from foreign aggression. The Europeans had to kneel at the feet of Muslim scholars in order to access their own scholastic heritage. . . .

'Fundamentalism' and Regression

But halfway through the building of the great Islamic civilization came new interpreters of Islam, who taught that acquisition of knowledge by Muslims meant only the study of Islamic theology. The study of science, medicine, etc., was discouraged. Intellectually, the Muslims began to regress. With intellectual regression, the great Muslim civilization began to falter and wither. . . . With all these developments over the centuries the *ummah* and the Muslim civilization became so weak that, at one time, there was not a single Muslim country which was not colonized or hegemonized by

the Europeans. . . .

Some would have us believe that, despite all this, our life is better than that of our detractors. Some believe that poverty is Islamic; sufferings, and being oppressed are Islamic. This world is not for us. Ours are the joys of heaven in the afterlife. All that we have to do is to perform certain rituals, wear certain garments, and put up a certain appearance. Our weakness, our backwardness, and our inability to help our brothers and sisters who are being oppressed, are part of the “Will of Allah,” the sufferings that we must endure before enjoying heaven in the hereafter. We must accept this fate that befalls us. We need not do anything. We can do nothing against the Will of Allah.

But, is it true that it is the Will of Allah and that we can and should do nothing? Allah has said in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 11, that He will not change the fate of a community until the community has tried to change its fate itself. . . .

But, because we discouraged the learning of science and mathematics, etc., as giving no merit for the *akhirat*, today we have no capacity to produce our own weapons for our defense. We have to buy our weapons from our detractors and enemies. This is what comes from the superficial interpretation of the Quran, stressing not the substance of the Prophet's *sunnah* and the Quran's injunctions but rather the form, the manner and the means used in the 1st Century of the *Hijrah*. And it is the same with the other teachings of Islam. We are more concerned with the forms rather than the substance of the words of Allah, and adhering only to the literal interpretation of the traditions of the Prophet. . . .

Today we, the whole Muslim *ummah*, are treated with contempt and dishonor. Our religion is denigrated; our holy places desecrated. Our countries are occupied, our people starved and killed. None of our countries are truly independent. . . . Today if they want to raid our country, kill our people, destroy our villages and towns, there is nothing substantial that we can do. Is it Islam which has caused all these? Or is it that we have failed to do our duty according to our religion?

Our only reaction is to become more and more angry. Angry people cannot think properly. And so, we find some of our people reacting irrationally. . . . Every attempt at a peaceful solution is sabotaged by more indiscriminate attacks calculated to anger the enemy and prevent any peaceful settlement. But the attacks solve nothing. The Muslims simply get more oppressed. . . . Can they only lash back blindly in anger? Is there no other way than to ask our young people to blow themselves up and kill people, and invite the massacre of more of our own people? It cannot be that there is no other way. 1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews. There must be a way. . . .

'We Must Use Our Brains'

If we use the faculty to think that Allah has given us, then we should know that we are acting irrationally. . . . For well

over half a century we have fought over Palestine. What have we achieved? Nothing. We are worse off than before. If we had paused to think, then we could have devised a plan, a strategy that can win us final victory. . . . We are actually very strong; 1.3 billion people cannot be simply wiped out. The Europeans killed 6 million Jews out of 12 million. But today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them. . . . We also know that not all non-Muslims are against us. Some are well-disposed towards us. Some even see our enemies as their enemies. Even among the Jews, there are many who do not approve of what the Israelis are doing. We must not antagonize everyone. We must win their hearts and minds. We must win them to our side, not by begging for help from them, but by the honorable way that we struggle to help ourselves. . . .

We must build up our strength in every field, not just in armed might. Our countries must be stable and well administered, must be economically and financially strong, industrially competent and technologically advanced. This will take time, but it can be done and it will be time well spent. . . .

The Quran tells us that when the enemy sues for peace we must react positively. True, the treaty offered is not favorable to us. But we can negotiate. The Prophet did, at Hudaibiyah. And in the end, he triumphed.

I am aware that all these ideas will not be popular. Those who are angry would want to reject it out of hand. They would even want to silence anyone who makes or supports this line of action. They would want to send more young men and women to make the supreme sacrifice. But where will all these lead to? Certainly not victory.

We are up against a people who think. They survived 2,000 years of pogroms not by hitting back, but by thinking. They invented and successfully promoted Socialism, Communism, human rights, and democracy, so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong; so they may enjoy equal rights with others. With these, they have now gained control of the most powerful countries and they, this tiny community, have become a world power. We cannot fight them through brawn alone. We must use our brains also.

Of late, because of their power and their apparent success, they have become arrogant. And arrogant people, like angry people, will make mistakes, will forget to think. They are already beginning to make mistakes. And they will make more mistakes. There may be windows of opportunity for us now and in the future. We must seize these opportunities.

But to do so we must get our acts right. . . . Allah has not raised us, the leaders, above the others so we may enjoy power for ourselves only. The power we wield is for our people, for the *ummah*, for Islam. We must have the will to make use of this power judiciously, prudently, concertedly. *Inshaallah* we will triumph in the end.

Blessed Mother Teresa

A Fleeting Glimpse Of the Sublime

by Nina Ogden

A once young and vigorous Pope, now hobbled by age and illness, presided over the Beatification Mass of the woman he called the “Icon of the Good Samaritan . . . who experienced harsh spiritual suffering [which] led her to identify herself ever more with those she served every day.” Thus, people around the world experienced the beatification of Mother Teresa by Pope John Paul. The press emphasized his frailness, his inability to read the homily he had written. They emphasized the letters she had written about her fears of being abandoned by a sense of God’s presence, and her “dark night of the soul.”

For all the stories the media spins out about the manufactured conflict of right to life versus right to choose, little did they know that they had just experienced a fleeting glimpse of the sublime, in a celebration organized by that true evangelizer, Pope John Paul II. When they saw 3,000 of the poorest of the poor, who have been served by Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity, sitting in the most honored reserved section of the audience, they might have gotten the hint that they were getting a lesson in what this Pope calls “the civilization of love.”

‘A Slave of All’

Pope John Paul II began his homily for the Oct. 19 Beatification Mass for Mother Teresa of Calcutta with a reading from the Gospel of Mark, “Whoever would be the first among you must be a slave of all.” “It is the way,” the Pope said, “that Christ himself followed to the cross; a journey of love and service, which goes against all human logic. To be the slave of all! This is the logic that guided Mother Teresa of Calcutta, founder of the Missionaries of Charity, whom today I have the joy of inscribing in the register of the blessed. I am personally grateful to this courageous woman, whom I always felt near to me. Icon of the Good Samaritan, she went everywhere to serve Christ in the poorest of the poor. Not even conflicts and wars could succeed in stopping her.”

Toward the end of his homily, the Pope addressed the issue which is at the center of beatification. It is what the Fourth-Century African Bishop and Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine of Hippo, called “heroic virtue”—the ability to