ORANG ASLI OFFICIAL-SPEAK
The doublespeak you can be doubly sure is all hog-wash

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ORANG ASLI OFFICIAL-SPEAK

The doublespeak you can be doubly sure
is all hog-wash

Government leaders have made many deceiving statements on the Orang Asli, says COLIN NICHOLAS. In this article, he takes them to task for blatantly massaging statistics whenever it suits them.

It seems that, with the Orang Asli, you can lie through your teeth and confidently get away with it.

It used to be the case when one would only dare make 'deceiving statements' if one were in the wake of a solely Orang Asli audience. But perhaps because they have frequently managed to get away with their never-ending promises (of 'development', of land titles, of compensation) that some government leaders have become more daring and gone on to make blatantly deceiving statements, not only on TV but also in that august house, Parliament.

Take for example the statement by the Director-General of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) in a TV Forum in April 1989. In reply to a question from an Orang Asli panelist, he said, among other things, that "there were 1,700 staff in the Department, of which about 1,000 are Orang Asli."

However, in a written reply to a parliamentary question by DAP's Dr. Tan Seng Giaw just one month before this, the JHEOA revealed that there were no more that 395 Orang Asli employed in the JHEOA - not 1,000 as claimed on TV.

Then again last December, the Parliamentary Secretary to the ministry now responsible for the Orang Asli, the Rural Development Ministry, disclosed that there were 1,375 'key positions' in the JHEOA. This in itself is a misleading reply as it suggests that there are many more staff in the Department in 'non-key' positions.

Nevertheless, his reply, in response to a question by DAP's Dr. Kua Kia Soong on the number of key positions held by Orang Asli in the JHEOA, was more misleading. According to him, of the 1,375 'key positions' in the JHEOA, 58.9 per cent were held by Orang Asli.

This is something extremely hard to believe because it is common knowledge that there is not a single Orang Asli in the 20-odd Category A positions in the Department, and no more than two in Category B. The majority are in Categories C and D (drivers, clerical staff, labourers, medics, field assistants). And yet we are told in Parliament that more than half of 'key positions' in the JHEOA are held by Orang Asli!

Further questions on the Orang Asli by the Member for Petaling Jaya during the December session exposed more deceiving responses from the Parliamentary Secretary. For example, when asked for the number of Orang Asli who had completed higher education, the latter replied that to date only 14 Orang Asli had achieved this. And to think that it was none other than the Deputy Director-General of the JHEOA himself who had stated, in a seminar paper a year before, that at least 51 Orang Asli had as of then completed higher education. The figure today must be more than 51. How the figure of 14 was obtained is anybody's guess.

The question, then, would be: why would the government want to give a lower figure when in
smaller if the total claims of the Orang Asli to their traditional lands were considered, and not just the claims which the authorities feel are just.

The figures may seem a lot. Or at least they seem to suggest that the government is actively working towards granting Orang Asli some rights to their lands. Perhaps for this reason, when asked subsequently as to the number of Orang Asli settlements that had been gazetted in the last ten years, the Parliamentary Secretary answered obliquely (or nonsensically, if you wish) that "what are gazetted are Orang Asli areas and not Orang Asli kampungs." And that was it.

This was an obvious evasion of the fact: in the last ten years, no more than 50 hectares have been gazetted as Orang Asli reserves!

The truth is, most of the moves at gazetting Orang Asli lands, and their actual gazetting, were done during the time of the British Colonialists. On the contrary, field observations today suggest that a number of Orang Asli areas are being re-classified for non-Orang Asli purposes, sometimes without Orang Asli knowledge, let alone consent or compensation.

Misleading statistics about land 'owned' by Orang Asli are not only made in Parliament. Recently, the Pahang Menteri Besar invited Orang Asli from other states to settle in Pahang. There is plenty of land in the state, he said, adding that each Orang Asli in Pahang owned an average of 16 hectares of land compared to 3 hectares for other families.
The facts, again according to official JHEOA statistics: 6,625.75 hectares in Pahang are gazetted as Orang Asli reserves, with the Orang Asli population there being 28,269. This works out to 0.23 hectares per Orang Asli, not 16 hectares.

Even if the total area approved (16,609.95 hectares) and applied (23,392.36 hectares) for gazetting were taken into account, the area per Orang Asli would be 1.65 hectares, not 16 hectares. But more importantly, it should be stressed that, even if the land is gazetted as Orang Asli reserve, the Orang Asli do not hold permanent title to it, whether individually or as a community. As such, the Orang Asli do not legally 'own' their land as claimed.

If by now you conclude that whenever it comes to matters concerning the Orang Asli, figures are just plucked from the air and tossed about, you are not far away from the truth. Figures do seem to be thrown about to suit any argument wanted. Sometimes this is done to make Orang Asli take the blame for some wrong done by others. The most common instance is when scapegoats are needed to divert the public eye from the true cause of forest destruction.

From the Prime Minister down, the Orang Asli and the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak have had to take the brunt of baseless accusations against shifting cultivation being the cause of forest destruction.

Take the Perak Forestry Department, for example. In 1989, they claimed that the Orang Asli in Perak had up till then destroyed 25,000 hectares of forests (with a total revenue loss of 22.2 million ringgit). In 1991, they brandished a figure of 22,000 hectares (with a revenue loss to date of 93.4 million ringgit).

Any thinking person would be quick to point to the preposterous increase in lost revenue to the tune of 71.2 million ringgit despite a drop (this, in itself is an impossibility) of 3,000 hectares from 1989 to 1991. Absurd, yes. But only possible if you resort to stewing up figures to substantiate a non-truth.

A recent Harvard/UPM study in fact revealed that rotational (or shifting) cultivation affected less than 0.1 per cent of Peninsular Malaysia, and that deforestation had been caused primarily by expansion of tree-crop plantations like rubber and oil palm as well as logging.

But it is not always that we are given deceiving statistics. Sometimes we are refused them altogether. In Parliament last May, the Member for Petaling Jaya requested statistics on the population (with a breakdown) for the Orang Asli. In Parliament last May, the Member for Petaling Jaya requested statistics on the population (with a breakdown) of the indigenous minorities in Malaysia. The question was rejected by the House Secretary on the grounds that it contravened section 23(2) of the Standing Orders. We are thus led to think that an accurate and truthful reply to the question could 'promote feelings of ill will or hostility between communities in the Federation or infringe a provision of the Constitution or Sedition Act.' This boggles the mind.

Official statistics, it appears, is a prerogative of the government. It can choose not to give it out, or if it does, it can choose to doctor it. They have lied when it came to the Orang Asli, about the various scandals, and, you can be sure, in most official statistics too. It's about time we took our leaders to task for their blatant deceit. There are sufficient provisions in the various legislations and standing orders to do so. A more vigilant and concerned public is necessary to check this.
CONSULT ORANG ASLI FIRST ON LAND MATTERS

The Perak State Land and Rural Development Committee has plans up its sleeves to help Orang Asli better themselves (NST, 8 October). The plans, according to Committee Chairman, Datuk Azman Mahalan, hinge on relocating the Orang Asli on more productive lands. For this, the State Government may have to "repossess" land which is "useless" at certain settlements and relocate the Orang Asli to more fertile areas.

This was said in the context of a fear expressed by 1,200 Orang Asli at the foot of Cameron Highlands that there are plans to set up a 400-hectare durian plantation on their land. Datuk Azman had said that the Orang Asli affected would be given alternative land and titles if the Government goes ahead with the project.

Such rhetoric is not enough to convince the Orang Asli of the state’s good intentions, as our discussions with them reveal.

First, to talk of "repossessing" the land reveals a gross misconception that the state “gave” the land to the Orang Asli and as such have a right to repossess it. On the contrary, the Orang Asli have always regarded their traditional lands to be theirs, a heritage bestowed to them by past generations. The question of "repossessing" Orang Asli land, as such, does not arise.

Further, to classify Orang Asli lands as "useless" in some settlements seems to us to be an attempt to justify "repossession” of such lands by the state. No Orang Asli would defend their rights to "useless" lands if there were truly better alternative sites offered. The truth of the matter is that alternative sites that are offered are invariably inferior to their current sites.

In the case of the proposed state-sponsored 400-hectare durian plantation in Cameron Highlands, the land is certainly choice land, not "useless" land.

Datuk Azman also brandished the carrot of land titles in the alternative lands. Why must land titles be given only if the Orang Asli opt for state-defined alternative lands? Why are no titles given to their current lands? Why has the state sat on the gazetting of Orang Asli reserves for the last thirty years?

Semai boy on Cameron Highlands

The question of land titles remains a sore issue with the Orang Asli. For we know from experience that even in the cases where Orang Asli have been relocated for state projects or projects meant for others, no land title has been issued in the name of the Orang Asli.

If the state government is genuinely interested in uplifting the condition of the Orang Asli, then it should at the very least involve the Orang Asli in discussions and decision-making on their own fate. Without doubt, the Orang Asli’s participation and involvement, from the very beginning, in plans for their own future would go a long way in ensuring Datuk Azman’s desire to "help them better themselves."

BAH TONY WILLIAMS-HUNT
Center for Orang Asli Concerns
8 October 1992
SUPPORT ORANG ASLI ALSO

We congratulate Zahar for sensitively highlighting the suffering of indigenous peoples in the Americas following Columbus’s “discovery” of the new world (The Star 13.10.92).

Zahar provides a timely reminder that “genocide and extinction of native populations worldwide occurred under the hands of every major European government.”

As such he correctly surmises that Columbus’s arrival on an island in the Bahamas should not be a cause for celebration. If at all, it should be a reminder to all that the rights of indigenous peoples throughout the world should be restored and respected.

The most positive point in Zahar’s letter is the fact that indigenous peoples such as native Americans, the Kanaqs, the Maoris, and the (Australian) Aborigines, have “begun to stand united and claim their civil and political rights and, most important of all, their land.”

Zahar exhorts us to support them morally and materially. In this connection we wish to suggest that Zahar’s exhortation be extended to include support for Peninsular Malaysia’s own indigenous people, the Orang Asli.

From our work, we know that Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia have begun to reassert their birthright - to land, identity and life.

In particular, the Orang Asli have been making numerous calls to the authorities to recognise their right to their lands. As it is, the majority of the 83,000 Orang Asli do not legally own the land that they occupy. They remain tenants-at-will in a land in which they are clearly, as their name implies, the first peoples on it.

This is an unacceptable situation and efforts must be speeded up to provide security of tenure to the Orang Asli.

As concerned Malaysians, we should, at the very least, support their effort by acknowledging this right of the Orang Asli.

In this regard, we should add that the same can be said for the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak.

HENRY LOH

Center for Orang Asli Concerns

15 October 1992

The Orang Asli is a tenant-at-will in his own land.
"Unconditional Friendship"

A. J. S.

Last Saturday I walked over to Chong Tat's house at 7.30 pm as arranged in order to accompany John and him to the cinema. Chong Tat let me into the house but as John had not yet arrived, he excused himself and went to the toilet. Just as I sat down in an armchair in the living room, I heard John arriving in his car outside the gate of Chong Tat's house. John immediately hooted the car-horn twice.

I got up from my armchair, put on my shoes and went out to tell John to hold on a minute. When I got to the gate John had been hooting his car-horn loudly quite a few times. Some of Chong Tat's neighbours came out to their front drive to see who was making the row in the neighbourhood. John appeared oblivious of them and hooted again. They looked and stared at John who then became embarrassed and stopped hooting. The whole process had taken about five minutes in all.

Just then Chong Tat came out of his house and the three of us proceeded to the cinema in John's car.

A few days later I spoke to Chong Tat about the incident because I knew that was not the first time it had occurred. Chong Tat said he had noticed this habit of John's some time ago but none of his neighbours had complained about it. However he did not wish to bring this matter up with John saying that it was not an important matter. I told him I was annoyed by John's spoilt behaviour especially as I knew John would often keep us waiting at his house in similar circumstances. Chong Tat replied that this was part of the give and take in personal relations. In any case he said friendship should be regarded as unconditional. Such incidents could best be avoided by us making sure that we were ready and, if possible, waiting by the front gate at the appointed time.

I marvelled at Chong Tat's attitude. Apparently he was prepared to go more than halfway in order to avoid hurting the feelings of a friend. On the other hand I could not quite agree that this was a trivial matter which need not be brought up with John.

A few weeks later John and his wife organized a 'laksa' lunch at their home for a group of his friends. I went together with Chong Tat and his new girlfriend. It was the first time that the girlfriend was meeting his close friends in a group. She turned out to be a teacher with decided views on the Malaysian education system which she had no hesitation in expressing. It soon became clear that she regarded herself as a victim of the New Economic Policy. Unfortunately her remarks were taking on a controversial, even racist, overtone. The conversation became rather offensive to several of Chong Tat's friends who, like him, belong to a social action movement with a multi-ethnic perspective. I mentally wished that Chong Tat would shut her up but he was paralyzed with embarrassment. It was then that the host stepped in. Skilfully John went about placating the woman while steering the conversation to another subject.

I could sense a collective sigh of relief among the company and could not but feel thankful to John for his tactful handling of the situation. He had shown sensitivity and presence of mind in a difficult situation. Chong Tat above all would have reason to appreciate his intervention in the controversy. It was then I remembered his faith in give and take among friends. I decided that the hooting of a car-horn outside one's front gate was not a serious annoyance after all.

Imagine that you are confined within four walls, and that you have nothing left to eat or drink, and then a hand, unknown to you but generous, offers you a piece of bread and a glass of water.

Letter to Amnesty International from a former prisoner of conscience.
Why East Asia Does Not Need A US Military Presence

US intervention in affairs outside its own boundaries in the name of global security has caused suffering and death of millions says FAN YEW TENG in his very persuasive argument of why East Asian security should be looked after by East Asians.

Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has called for a continued US military presence in East Asia (New Sunday Times, December 15, 1991). There is nothing new or surprising in this as Lee has been saying more or less the same thing for at least the last two decades.

However, there was of course a time when Lee had an entirely different view of the Americans and their military presence in this part of the world. Shortly after Singapore had obtained independence by way of separation from Malaysia, Lee warned that if Tunku Abdul Rahman ever called in American forces to replace the British in Malaysia, then he would consider offering Singapore as a base to the Russians. An angry Tunku responded: "Lee is talking through his hat. He has not got a head."

On August 30, 1965, three weeks after Singapore's attainment of sovereignty, in an interview he gave to some Commonwealth correspondents, Lee said: "Now, I want to be quite frank with you here. If the British withdraw I am prepared to go on with the Australians and the New Zealanders. But, I am not prepared to go on with the Americans."

When asked to explain, Lee said that although the Americans were "a highly intelligent, often well-meaning, people," they lacked judgement or wisdom. He elaborated: "But judgement or wisdom comes out of an accumulation of knowledge of human beings and human situations over a long period of time; that is lacking, and it is not their fault. What have they got? Three, four hundred years of history, and they have become a nation just recently."

After relating an incident in which the CIA tried, unsuccessfully, to subvert a Singaporean officer, Lee said: "The British have 400 years of Empire, and I will come to that. This is crucial to the whole of my thinking on this. Four hundred years of Empire, and they know this place, and they know human beings. If it had been the Americans in charge, I think today I would not be here, and you would not be interviewing me. Because, they lack what one calls wisdom, that is, a computer fed with data, judgement which comes out of long experience."

Further on, Lee reiterated: "Now let me explain this to you. It is fundamental. If the British bases go, there will be no American bases in Singapore. This is a matter of the utmost importance for Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and for America to understand that."

Contradictions

However, as Dr. Chan Heng Chee points out in her book, Singapore: The Politics of Survival (Oxford University Press, 1971), this stance soon changed. "The greatest shift occurred in Singapore's attitude towards the
United States’ involvement in South-East Asia in general and Vietnam in particular.” According to The Straits Times of March 9, 1966, William Bundy, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, visited Singapore where he held ‘frank talks’ with Lee on the Vietnam War and negotiated for the use of Singapore as a rest and recreation centre for American troops stationed in Vietnam. The Straits Times of April 6, 1966, reported that the first batch of American soldiers had arrived on the island the day before.

According to the New York Times, in March 1967, at a meeting of socialist politicians in Japan, Lee said: “Rather than face a Communist threat to their national integrity sensitive former colonial countries of Southeast Asia may very well prefer a permanent American military presence.”

In October 1967, Lee paid an official visit to the United States. As James Minchin points out in his No Man is an Island: A Study of Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986), Lee took the opportunity “to air his conviction that precipitate disengagement from Indo-China would be disastrous. Having previously addressed himself to the folly of the US involvement in the first place, he could not strictly be accused of changing his tune - only singing a different portion of it.”

In mid-1990, it was announced that Singapore and the US had reached a tentative agreement which would give the US Navy access to repair and storage facilities in Singapore, while four US Air Force F16 fighters would rotate through Paya Lebar airbase.

Lee, in his interview with Nathan Gardels of the Los Angeles Times in November 1991 (published in the New Sunday Times as mentioned at the beginning), said: “The US presence has maintained peace on the high seas of the Pacific since 1945. The American presence, in my view, is essential for the continuation of international law and order in East Asia.”

East Asians are therefore entitled to ask: What kind of peace, and at what price? Whose international law? Whose order?

In the Korean War (1950-53), civilian deaths in both North and South Korea exceeded 3 million. At least 1.5 million North Korean, Chinese, South Korean and American soldiers were killed in the conflict. US President Harry Truman even threatened to use the atomic bomb.

Biological & Chemical Warfare
China and North Korea had accused the US of using germ warfare. In February and March 1952, they accused the US of dropping a large number of diseases from the air, including plague, anthrax, cholera and encephalitis. In July and August of the same year, an international commission of scientists, all except one from the West, investigated the issue extensively. Subsequently, it published a 665-page report which agreed with the Chinese and North Korean charges.

In a massive air raid against Pyongyang on August 29, 1952, US bombers, along with Australian, South African and South Korean planes, carried out 1,403 sorties; the official communique said that 10,000 litres of napalm were dropped “with excellent results”. Napalm was, in Winston Churchill’s phraseology, “splashed” over houses, farms, people, animals and stores.

Were these actions essentially for the continuation of international law and order in East Asia? Or, were they not simply and cruelly war crimes?

American intervention in Vietnam resulted in millions of Vietnamese being killed. A terrible toll on human lives was also exacted upon the Laotian and Cambodian people. An exercise in international law and order from which they are still struggling hard to recover to this very day.

Before the French were defeated by the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the former were using napalm extensively against both military and civilian targets. The French had also been equipped with new American ‘Lazy Dog’ anti-personnel bombs, with thousands of razor-sharp splinters which had a deadly effect on unprotected human beings caught in the open by them. These LDs, as they were called, were later used by the US in its air operations in Vietnam.

There was widespread use of chemical weapons by the Americans in Vietnam - 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D and Agent Orange dropped as a

It is estimated that at least a million Vietnamese are suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. In 1983, American veterans who had been inadvertently sprayed with the herbicide in Vietnam received an out-of-court settlement of US$180 million as compensation. Of course, because of the US respect for international law and order and human rights, the Vietnamese victims received nothing.

Significantly, Telford Taylor, Professor of Law at Columbia University in New York and the US Chief Counsel at the Nuremberg trials against the Nazis in 1945, concluded, in his book, Nuremberg and Vietnam: An American Tragedy (Bantam, 1971): "Somehow we failed ourselves to learn the lessons we undertook to teach at Nuremberg, and that failure is today's American tragedy."

Trigger-Happy

And by what principles and doctrines of international law and order did the US use, to quote Professor Stephen E. Ambrose, "military force to intervene in Indochina, Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Central America, and the Persian Gulf, supported an invasion of Cuba ..."?

Which piece of international law permitted US troops to kill between 2,000 and 4,000 civilians in the invasion of Panama at the end of 1989? Which human rights charter allowed US troops to reduce El Chorillo, a Panama City squatter settlement, “to little more than a graveyard strewn with smouldering rubble and charred body parts,” as put by Gerry O’Sullivan in the October 1990 issue of The Humanist, an American magazine?

What diabolical international law and order permitted the US and its allies to kill more than a hundred Iraqi civilians in the Gulf War, and to destroy thousands of homes, hospitals, schools, shops, water and electricity installations, mosques, churches, roads, bridges and other civilian amenities and facilities there? Which standard of morality demands that millions of children in Iraq must die by economic sanctions in an already devastated land?

What kind of moralising impelled the US to go to war against Iraq in less than six months after its invasion of Kuwait and yet allowed it to tolerate the illegal occupation of the Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights by Israel since 1967, the illegal occupation of one-third of Cyprus by Turkey since July 1974, and the illegal occupation of East Timor since December 1975 by Indonesia, despite all the high-sounding United Nations resolutions?

New Wild West

Talking about the present world situation, Lee said in the interview: "This is a different Wild West. The 'Lone Ranger' approach is no longer the way you conquer the world. What is needed instead is a regularly constituted cavalry instead of ad hoc lone rangers."

Who are those in the new Wild West? Who are the civilising crusaders? Why should the world be conquered by anybody? By what right and whose permission should it be conquered?

We should remember that in the so-called old Wild West, it was precisely “a regularly constituted cavalry instead of ad hoc lone rangers” who decimated the Native Americans (American Indians). The remaining ones were consigned and confined by force to so-called reservations because of the so-called “Manifest Destiny” doctrine of the supposedly superior white men. As a matter of fact, racist apartheid in America predated racist apartheid in South Africa by a good number of decades.

Dee Brown’s Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, Vine Deloria Jr’s Ouster Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto, and James Wilson’s The Original Americans: US Indians, published by the London-based Minority Rights Group, give us a horrific picture of the meticulous extent the US violated international law and order.

Vine Deloria, Jr., who is a former director of the National Congress of American Indians, has this to say in his book:

-America has yet to keep one Indian treaty or agreement despite the fact that the United States government signed over four hundred such treaties and agreements with Indian tribes. The Indian wars of the past should rightly be regarded as the first foreign wars of American history. As the United States marched across this continent, it was creating an empire by wars of foreign conquest just as England and France were doing in India and Africa. Certainly the war with Mexico was imperialistic, no more or less than the wars against the Sioux, Apache, Utes, and the Yakimas.

When one examines the history of American society one notices the great weakness inherent in it. The country was founded on violence. It worships violence and it will continue to live violently.'
Even the highly respected and widely read *National Geographic* Magazine has not spared words in indicting the US record against the American Indians. In introducing the lead feature ‘1491: America Before Columbus’ in its October 1991 issue, its editor William Graves says that “the Apache ancestral homeland and distinctive culture had been decimated by the impact of European civilization.” He adds:

To Native Americans the European concept of “discovery of the New World” is both ludicrous and insulting. “We were here for about 15,000 years before you showed up,” an Algonquin friend in Massachusetts once chided me. He is right, of course.

**Hypocrisy**

Has the US respected international law and order in the second half of the 20th century? Of course not. Consider the time when the US trampled upon international law over the *Nicaragua v United States of America* case at the World Court (International Court of Justice). The US scandalised the World Court, the international community and itself, when it rejected the World Court’s preliminary findings against it and announced that it would not participate further in the proceedings.

Despite that, the World Court continued with the proceedings and on June 27, 1986, gave its final judgement on the case. The World Court established that

- it had jurisdiction over the case;
- US President Ronald Reagan had authorised the CIA to lay mines in Nicaraguan ports;
- the laying of mines in the waters of another State without any warning or notification was not only an unlawful act but also a breach of the principles of humanitarian law under the Hague Convention of 1907;
- the US training, arming, equipping, financing and supplying of the Contra forces against Nicaragua had broken international law on non-intervention in the affairs of another State;
- the argument by the US of collective self-defence in connection with the military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua was unjustified;
- the US should immediately stop and refrain from all acts of aggression against Nicaragua; and
- the US should make reparation to Nicaragua for all injury caused to Nicaragua.

As might be expected, the then US Secretary of State George Shultz was not persuaded. For as Richard Falk, Professor of International Law and Politics at Princeton University, tells us, “With animistic fury he rejects any legal result contrary to US foreign policy.”

And, yet, 12 out of the 15 World Court judges had rejected the US claims that Nicaragua was helping the rebels in El Salvador “in a lengthy, carefully reasoned judicial opinion,” as Professor Falk puts it. Professor Falk further points out: “In actuality, no European judge supported the United States on substantive grounds; the Japanese and British judges based their dissents on jurisdictional and procedural arguments, leaving only Stephen Schwebel, the US judge, to support the self-defence rationale for aiding the Contras.”

Hypocrisy and double-standards? Undoubtedly. But, perhaps more pertinent is the arrogant display of raw power, as former US Attorney-General Ramsey Clark had put it in his talks at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysi and University of Malaya in early September 1991.

It was precisely by this display of raw power that former US President Ronald Reagan launched aerial attacks on Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya on April 15, 1986 which killed Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi’s fifteen-month-old adopted daughter and more than one hundred other persons. These attacks were censured by a United Nations General Assembly resolution that rejected the factual and legal bases of the US action.

The excuse for the attacks was an alleged Libyan involvement in the bombing of a West German discotheque frequented by US servicemen in which one American was killed. As Professor Falk points out, “... at the time, the US government claimed that it possessed hard evidence of Libya’s role in the incident. Later a Jordanian with Syrian connections was arrested and evidently confessed. The US government has never released its evidence nor done much subsequently to justify the general damage caused by the raids.”

Was it also in pursuit of international law and order that a US warship shot down an Iranian passenger airliner on July 3, 1988 in the Persian Gulf, killing all 290 civilians on board? When President Bush said, in regard to this massacre, that he would “never apologise for the United States of America. I don’t care what the facts are”, was he contributing his wisdom and humanity to international law and order or adding arrogant and cruel insult to death?

**Warrior Culture**

No wonder Barbara Ehrenreich of *TIME* argued in the magazine’s October 15, 1990 issue that American society spawns a warrior culture.
Lee talked approvingly of "the global system that America built up since World War II". The Pacific: Nuclear Testing and Minorities, a Minority Rights Group report tells us what the people in the Marshall Islands and other islands in the Pacific think and feel about this great "global system". And, if we should still want to know more about the great respect given to international law and order in this "global system" by successive US governments since 1945, we should refer to John Prado's Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II through Iranscam (Quill, New York, 1988), and Bob Woodward's VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987 (Simon & Schuster, New York 1987).

The US talks a lot about the rule of law; it also talks a great deal against the proliferation of nuclear arms. However, as Richard H. Ullman, Professor of International Affairs at Princeton University, has revealed in an article in the Summer 1989 issue of Foreign Policy, a prestigious publication, "For a decade and a half the United States has provided substantial covert assistance to the nuclear forces of France. This assistance almost certainly has violated US law." Professor Ullman wrote the article after more than 100 interviews in Washington and Paris. Newsweek called this covert US-French nuclear connection "one of modern Washington's rare well-kept secrets."

In his book The Samson Option, published in October 1991, Seymour M. Hersh documents that the United States and France had allowed Israel to build up its nuclear weapons arsenal. And yet, the US claims to be worried about the prospect of Iraq, North Korea, Pakistan and Brazil going nuclear!

The Cold War has ended. The Soviet Union is no more. But, according to Hugh Gusterson (New Scientist, London, October 12, 1991), scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory see no reason to stop making America's nuclear weapons. So much for the American quest for peace and nuclear disarmament.

From Wounded Knee to Baghdad and beyond, the US is after territorial, economic, political and cultural hegemony. The ending of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union do not and will not alter or end that quest. If anything, these developments are likely to make the US more arrogant, bolder and more ruthless. Unable to compete freely in the economic arena, and yet unwilling to tolerate competition seen as inimical to its geopolitical domination, the US has relentlessly opposed the EAEC, arrogantly not allowing East Asians even to call themselves East Asians.

Edward Gibbon tells us that the decline of the Roman Empire was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. And one of the causes of its immoderate greatness was the disorders of military despotism. American society today has many socio-economic disorders and many despots, not the least of which are in its psychology and its culture. The urge for the 'quick fix' and 'instant gratification' only point to the fact that it is not a civilization and that its Peter Pan immaturity contains the fatal element of suicide. The decline may be slow, but it is sure and inexorable.

But before the fall, however, the US will, as it already has shown in some cases, exhibit its spasms and its kicks. The Gulf War is only the latest in this edifying exhibition. After all, we must not forget that even as the once powerful British Empire was fading, it still let off a few kicks over the Suez affair in 1956. About ten years before its final fall, the Soviet Union sent its sons to kill and be killed in Afghanistan.

Finally, the security of East Asia should be looked after by East Asians, not by the American godfather. For we remember, among other things, what happened to the Filipinos in their relationship with the Americans. When the Filipinos revolted against Spanish rule, they welcomed American troops as liberators. However, they discovered to their regret that when the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, the United States had bought the Philippines from Spain for US$20 million. Rightly feeling betrayed, the Filipinos waged a war of liberation against the Americans. In the three-year war, more than 200,000 Filipinos were killed, and another 900,000 died of starvation.

According to the Asian Wall Street Journal, US troops sometimes burned entire villages; they also seized vast tracts of land for military use, including the site of the Subic Naval Base. It was a peace of death and robbery.

The peoples and governments of ASEAN should give priority to the realisation of ZOPFAN, which should eventually be extended to cover the whole of Southeast Asia and ultimately be made to include the whole of East Asia. The time has come to turn swords into ploughshares by East Asians for East Asians. It is not often that I agree with Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir, but his EAEC proposal is worthy and timely of support by all East Asians. That is, without the bullying US military presence.
LETTERS

We welcome letters from readers. These letters may be edited for purposes of space and clarity. The views may not be those of Aliran Monthly. Pseudonyms are accepted but all letters should include the writer’s name and address. Letters should preferably be typewritten with double spacing; if handwritten they should be legible. Letters should be addressed to:

THE EDITOR
ALIRAN MONTHLY
P O BOX 1040
10830 PENANG
MALAYSIA

Violence in East Timor: RTM apologises for screening the truth.

DILI MASSACRE: RIDICULOUS FOR TOK MAT TO APOLOGISE

I was appalled to hear that Information Minister Mohamed Rahmat had to go to Jakarta to apologise for the screening of the Dili massacre over RTM.

The 10 pm news on TV1 recently had shown film footage of the Dili massacre in which Indonesian soldiers opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators in the East Timor capital, killing 50 people.

I do not understand why Rahmat has to apologise to the Indonesian government over RTM’s screening of the news clip.

The Dili massacre made news headlines throughout the world. A horrible massacre took place in East Timor. Indonesian soldiers fired on demonstrators. Dozens were killed. These are facts.

So what is there for RTM or the Information Ministry to apologise for? That it made a mistake by screening the truth (for a change)? "... the film footage and news report was a mistake ... This will not happen again. We do not want such incidents to disrupt the strong and cordial relations we enjoy with Indonesia,” said Rahmat.

So, that’s the game! For the sake of “strong and cordial relations”, we are prepared to suppress the truth and turn a blind eye to injustice. If we can take a stand on the barbaric killings in Bosnia and screen explicit documentaries on the “ethnic cleansing” going on there, surely we can do likewise for the shooting of demonstrators by soldiers in Burma, Thailand, Tiananmen Square and Dili. Surely, we can also take a stand on these.

Or do you value “strong and cordial relations” more than human life, Tok Mat?

No Dilly Dallying
PENANG

COMPENSATION FOR DISMANTLING PARABOLIC ANTENNAE?

The information Minister has acknowledged (The Malay Mail 20 September) that the parabolic antenna pictured in the Malay Mail report on 18 September belonged to him, that he had been permitted to use it since 1988 and that he had been issued a licence by the Telecommunications Department. He also warned that those who use the device unlawfully can be charged under the Telecommunications Act 1950 (Amended 1991).

Under the Telecommunications Act 1950, all that is required for the legal reception of television is a Television Receiving Licence issued by the Department of Broadcasting. Nowhere in the Telecommunications Act 1950 nor in the Licence is the mode of reception specified e.g. via radio, cable or satellite.

Perhaps this has now been incorporated in the amendment to the Act (1991) although this has not been spelt out in the mass media so far. Unless this amendment is back-dated to the year 1950, the question arises whether those who installed parabolic antennae prior to 1991 have, in fact, committed an offence. Also, if they are now required to dismantle their antennae, they may be legally eligible for adequate compensation.

Apart from these technicalities, the furore regarding broadcast reception via satellite is difficult to understand. The Information Ministry must surely be aware of the latest development in broadcasting viz. HDTV i.e. High Definition Television which can only be received directly via satellite. While this will be readily available to
our neighbouring countries in the near future, we will be denied this on our road to Vision 2020.

DD Devan
KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA: THE EAST-WEST CONTROVERSY

Having lived in Sabah for about 12 years, I feel I have adapted to the social environment here. In fact, I feel more welcome in Sabah than in my hometown in Penang. I feel compelled by my conscience to write and say what I feel of the political controversy surrounding the issue of integration.

The words East and West within the context of geographical and constitutional jurisdiction have only brought diversity and terror in international politics e.g., the split of East and West Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Although there is no basis for the belief that any other country calling itself East and West will ultimately split, the taboo of the split and the possible repercussions make us fearful even to think about it.

We have been warned time and again that Sabah by itself would not be able to defend its people and its territory from being invaded by a foreign power. The Sabah claim by Manila still dangles over the head of every Malaysian. History shows that it did not take Indonesia more than three days to take East Timor and Irian Jaya when the Dutch left. China has control of islands crossing over the Terumbu Layang-Layang. There are no assurances by anyone that the expansionist policy of Vietnam is restricted to Laos and Cambodia only.

The Prime Minister might be more than right or merely speculating in his speech at Tawau recently that if Sabah had not gained independence within Malaysia, then it would be in no better position than Bosnia or perhaps Lebanon. We dread even to imagine Sabah turning into a crucible of violence.

To some people of Sabah origin (I loath the use of the word Sabahan just as I hate to call myself a Penangite), Malaysia does not exist anymore. To them, once Singapore dropped out the Malaysia Agreement became obsolete. Sabah is not one of the 13 states of Malaysia but one of the three integral parts of Malaysia.

As a man of law my understanding of the concept of Malaysia comes from the works of legal luminaries like Tun Suffian (I have been many times told off by senior ‘Sabahans’ that, in 1963, I was still a young kid running around in my underpants). Suffian says that Malaya initially consisted of 11 states and the federation was enlarged in 1963 by the admission of three new members. Article 2 of the Federal Constitution is cited which provides that ‘Parliament may by law admit other states to the Federation’. The challenge by PAS-led Kelantan in 1963 in the Government of the State of Kelantan v the Government of the Federation of Malaya and Tanku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj did not deter the formation of Malaysia. Under Article 139 of the Malaysia Act, Parliament had the power to admit the new states and it did not require prior consultation with any state.

Others feel that the Cobbald Commission was wrong as, they say, it did not carry out a proper referendum in Sabah.

If my history is correct, on 9 July 1963 the governments of the Federation of Malaya, UK, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore signed the Malaysia Agreement whereby Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo would federate with the existing states of the Federation of Malaya and thereafter the Federation would be called Malaysia.

There are five Sabahans arrested under the ISA. It is because they think that Sabahans were tricked into forming the alleged Federation of Malaysia that they are in a different place altogether. By stating this, I am no supporter of the ISA.

In a press statement by Dr Jeffrey Kitingan prior to his arrest which was not published and which was distributed widely to the public, the 20 points issue was put on a pedestal and highlighted. One of the issues in the 20 points is the entry of peninsular Malaysians into Sabah. The Immigration Act confers upon Sabah the right and power to exclude non-East Malaysians from entering, residing and working freely in the state.

In the words of Jeffrey when he met the PM in May 1990, the advise the PM gave to Jeffrey on the 20 points was: “Jeffrey, if these rights and 20 points are not known by the kampung people, why should we tell them?” I can assure everyone reading this that I have not come across anyone in Sabah who pleads ignorance of the 20 points.

I personally do not know what is so ambiguous of the Malaysia Agreement.

N S Sivam
KOTA KINABALU

THE MOST UNPOPULAR CABINET MINISTER

In the interest of the Indian Malaysian community, the nation and our international image, Samy Vellu should take the cue from Elyas Omar and quit his present position in the Cabinet.

Besides the Maika issue, Samy Vellu is also the main person responsible for the pathetic state of the Indian community which held only 17 per cent of the ownership of share capital of limited companies in 1990. Since the days of Manickavasagam in the 1970s, the socioeconomic state of Indian Malaysians has been stagnant.

Today, educated, professional and intellectual Indian Malaysians have totally lost confidence in Samy Vellu’s leadership. Only Indian Malaysians who are less educated and come from the lower income group support him, partly due to their ignorance and due to Samy’s very emotional and fiery speeches just like we see in the Tamil movies.

It would not be wrong to say that if Samy Vellu was working with any of the US multinational corporations, he would have been sacked a long time ago for producing more noise than results both in the Cabinet and in his capacity as leader of the Indian
Malaysian community. Hence I would advise Samy to quit the scene and not be a burden on Dr Mahathir who has had to protect him each time. Indian Malaysians and the whole nation have had enough of your arrogance and haughty antics which probably make you the most unpopular Cabinet Minister in Malaysia today. Please quit, Samy!!

Nabrah
TAMPIN, NEGRI SEMBILAN

PM'S STAND ON BOSNIA HYPOCRITICAL

I find the outbursts by our PM over the Western powers handling of the Bosnian conflict hypocritical. My mind can't help going back to the sad incidents surrounding the removal of the previous Lord President and the two Supreme Court judges. Wasn't this also an abuse of power, a refusal to let justice take its course?

But I do take my hat off to the PM for at least having the guts to stand up to Big Brother, though (paradox the cynicism) I can't help thinking the show's more for local consumption.

Loyal Malaysian
PENANG

THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations in Malaysia, wish to express our grave concern at the plight of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina who are daily being killed, maimed, incarcerated, terrorized and driven out of their homes by the Serbian militia and army. The human toll in innocent civilians, particularly women, children and the elderly has already been particularly heavy, but with the siege and blockade of Sarajevo continuing, the prospect of a large scale mass civilian massacre of its inhabitants is real and grim.

In our view, Serbia must be held fully responsible and accountable for the present state of affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without its covert and overt assistance, it would have been impossible for the Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces to carry out their barbaric policy of "ethnic cleansing". It was Serbia which initiated the process of "ethnic cleansing" and it is quite clear this policy is at present being merely executed by its proxies in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Serbia is one of the two republics which constitute the rump Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, currently chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. As the UN has clearly abdicated its responsibilities in respect of this matter and as the West appears to be offering only the feeblest response to Serbian terrorism, we believe that it is incumbent upon the Non-Aligned Movement to take whatever measures that may be at its disposal to protect the people of Bosnia and the integrity of their state.

In this respect, we urge the Non-Aligned Movement to:
1. expel the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the Movement;
2. persuade its member states to withdraw diplomatic recognition of the Federal Republic and sever all relations with it.
3. give financial, military and relief aid to the people and government of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

(This letter carries 156 signatures)

WEST MALAYSIAN TEACHERS UNFAIRLY TREATED IN SARAWAK

The unluckiest teachers in Malaysia are those who have been posted to Sabah and Sarawak after graduation rather than in their home state or neighbouring states. We were posted to a place which is very new to us in many aspects. I was posted to a district in the interior of the Third Division in Sarawak. After four years of teaching in Sarawak, I found out that there was a lot of discrimination against West Malaysian teachers here. These are the problems that we faced:

* We are not recommended and sent for any major courses held by the local Education Department. The reason is very simple: "Dia orang Semenanjung, Tak guna bagi dia kur-
sus. Dia akan balik Semenanjung." (He is from the Peninsula. No use sending him for courses; he will be returning to the Peninsula). So how are we going to be more knowledgeable when we are not being sent for courses. When we complete our contract and go back, we have to start all over again. The worst part is our service in these two states is not counted.

* The attitude of some local education officers, headmasters, teachers and residents is very disheartening. 'Anti-Semananjung' sentiment still prevails here and this gives a very bad impression and discourages us from teaching here. They should know that most of us did not ask to be sent to Sarawak. We were sent here to educate children. They dislike us because we grab their job opportunities. But they must remember that there are only very few Sarawakians who are qualified to become teachers.

* West Malaysian teachers in Sarawak and Sabah are only given free air passage once every two years. This is very unfair because normally we go back to our home towns twice a year. A return air ticket from Kuching to KL costs us more than $400. So in a year we are spending almost $1,500 just on our air tickets excluding other travelling expenses. We are not given any extra allowances. We are only eligible for the Elauan Kawasan (Area Allowance) which is also enjoyed by local teachers. This is very unfair because we spend a lot of our money on travelling. I would like to suggest that West Malaysian teachers be given free air passage every year.

* The physical condition of most of the schools in the interior is very bad. There are hundreds of primary schools in Sarawak that have no electricity and water supply. This shouldn't be a problem because Sarawak has its own well-known Batang Ai hydroelectric dam in the Second Division. But I am sad to say that there is politicking involved in the provision of basic facilities to schools depending on the ethnic composition of the population in that place. Schools without basic facilities are left far behind compared to towns. However, students in rural areas are not exposed to all the development which is taking place in the country.

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The UPSR results are very poor in these schools. How are we going to upgrade the standard of education when we, teachers, are not being fairly treated. Most of us are given gotong-royong quarters that are all covered with zinc and can be considered as chicken coops. Imagine the condition during a hot afternoon.

Teachers in rural areas are going through a tougher life than soldiers (at least they have a camp where basic facilities are provided) and other government servants from Jabatan Pertanian, Salcre, Sensco etc. The policy of building schools wherever there are a few school going children should be reviewed by the Ministry. There is no point in having a two-classroom school in every corner of where the Ministry can't provide facilities for education such as proper school buildings, equipment, sports facilities, proper classrooms and teachers quarters. How are we going to achieve our Vision 2020 goal when we still lack basic needs in rural schools.

Lastly, I hope the Ministry will look into this matter very seriously. Steps should be taken to completely stop sending West Malaysian teachers to Sabah and Sarawak because generally the East Malaysian people still consider people from Semenanjung as outsiders or foreigners. This causes a lot of tension and problems for those posted deep in the interior and who have to live without basic facilities such as water and electricity.

Frustrated West Malaysian Teacher SARIEI, SARAWAK

END OF THE ROAD FOR SAMY VELLU?

Nobody can deny that Malaysia is famous for its financial scandals and money politics. Despite political protection and favouritism, quite a few politicians have been knocked out quietly or openly as a result of various scandals. Tan Koon Swan was doomed by the Pan-EI scandal and so were some of those involved in the Cooperative scandal. Samy Vellu has been surviving well so far despite the exposure of various scandals that he was alleged to be involved in. In 1987, he was alleged to have received USM to acquire MIEI lottery tickets after UEM had been awarded the controversial contract for the North-South Highway project. Just last year, a group of Tenaga engineers allegedly exposed that they were irregularities in the awarding of contracts for additional generators. And now, he is onto another one, the Maika-Telekom shares fiasco. Will he be able to survive another round? We are all anxiously waiting to see.

He must be having more sleepless nights this time around. He is definitely not getting much support from the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers this time. The situation is bad enough for any wise man not to get involved. Very soon we may be hearing the same statement that was made by former MIC stalwart D P Vijandran during the pornographic videotape scandal. “Now I know who my friends are”.

From the very beginning, Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim did not offer much help to Samy Vellu with his reply to Lim Kit Siang in Parliament. He was quoted as saying that as far as he was concerned 10 million shares had been allocated and he left the explanation for Maika to do. This may be understandable as the Finance Minister was never known to be a buddy of Samy Vellu. Later on Samy Vellu thought that he could lean a bit on Dr Mahathir by claiming that he had briefed the PM before he left for holiday. Unfortunately, the PM did not give encouraging answers when questioned by reporters. This may be worrisome for Samy Vellu, who is regarded as a strong supporter of the Prime Minister rain or shine. He is the one who is famous for standing up to sokong (support) the PM in Parliament, even before the latter can sit down.

Samy Vellu made another attempt when he briefed the Cabinet but unfortunately the results were not encouraging. The PM made it clear that the matter is now in the hands of the ACA. On 5 July, Samy Vellu was quoted as saying “The Barisan Nasional is not a corrupt government. Nobody is above the law.” Why involve the Barisan Nasional? This is a personal matter. Is he trying to rally the whole of the Barisan Nasional behind him? May his dream come true!

The hypothesis that Samy Vellu is having more sleepless nights has lately become apparent from his actions and behaviour to cover up his insecurity. He has been trying hard to turn Lim into the enemy of the MIC and Indian Malaysians by constantly accusing him of attempting to bring down the MIC. No doubt he realizes that Margaret Thatcher was most popular when Britain was involved in the Falklands war. But it may not work for him. The enemy here is not Lim but rather human weakness and greed.

Samy Vellu went on to provide more names. Among those listed were the so-called “ungrateful ex-MIC members” and a newspaper editor. According to him, the editor of a Tamil daily newspaper “has neither written one constructive piece to help the community nor raised a single sen for TAFE college.” Well, it doesn’t need too much brains to appreciate that writing on issues like the Maika-Telekom shares scandal is a very constructive way of helping the community.

Lim was told to “shut up until the investigations were over.” As a taxpayer, I find this remark outrageous. If Lim was to shut up on such a serious matter, he should not collect his pay as an MP and Opposition Leader. He should be given the right to perform his duty. If Samy Vellu has nothing to hide, he should be the one who has to “shut up until the investigation is over.” The point is, if you have nothing to hide, no matter how much noise Lim makes, you will end up clean. So take it easy! Samy Vellu also hit out at Lim saying, “Lim should be happy now that his desire has been fulfilled.” All Malaysians should be happy even though we do not derive any personal gain from such investigations. It is reassuring to see the ACA investigating a matter involving a national leader. To achieve the country’s goal of Vision 2020, an accountable and clean government is essential.

Malaysians are eager to know the result of the investigation. This is one of the most outrageous scandals. If proven, it is a case of someone who abused his position to hijack not 10 per cent, not 20 per cent, not 50 per
cent but 90 per cent of a huge sum of money allocated to those in need. It is an issue not to be taken lightly. Malaysians who know the plight of the Indian Malaysian community, especially those who live in the estates, should not remain silent but ensure that justice is done. The sight of our fellow Malaysians walking around estates without shoes or slippers and proper clothing should not be forgotten. The sight of those who take a bite of nothing else but raw chilli after every spoonful of rice should remain clear in our mind. Let not the colourful ties and swanky suits of our leaders influence our concern for the poor. Let us witness fair play for once.

Dang Tai Luk
PETALING JAYA

MALAYSIAN MALAISE

Over the years I have written several letters to the Press but to no avail. Hence I am writing to Aliran Monthly.

* Why is it that the quality of our roads and bridges especially in the rural areas has deteriorated? Is the quality of our engineering graduates falling or is it due to corruption and poor administration?

* In the pursuit of Vision 2020, one of the greatest obstacles is the poor service of the Civil Service. The government must recognize this and take action immediately. Favouritism, ethnic discrimination and nepotism must take a back seat.

* How are logging licences in Malaysia given? Is it true that it is the domain of corrupt politicians? If so, how can we tell the world that our environment is being preserved through sustainable logging?

* The Customs and the JPJ departments are said to be among the most corrupt government departments in Malaysia. Of late, my research shows that district offices are gaining ground in this area (corruption). District officers are so heavily involved in business that one wonders whether they have the time to administer the affairs of their districts. Perhaps these district officers are only emulating their big brothers, ie, the national leaders.

* While Petronas may be a ‘cash cow’ for the government, it is only fair that the government reviews the relevant legislation and makes its accounts available to the public. We hear a lot about inconsistencies and malpractices in Petronas that one wonders if it can bail out Bank Bumiputra for the third time should the need arise.

* With the introduction of ambitious privatization laws, the government should evaluate whether the efficiency of Tenaga Nasional and Telekom has improved.

**WORK-OUT**

KOTA TINGGI, JOHOR

SAMY VELLU MUST STEP DOWN

In the past 13 years, we have seen Samy Vellu making a lot of noise, mostly unwarranted and irrelevant to his position or the situation. The Mafa-Telekom shares issue is the last nail in Samy Vellu’s coffin. Yet he refuses to step down. Has he lost his sense of shame (perhaps he didn’t have any)? Samy must step down from his position as Cabinet Minister, MIC President and MP.

India survived the death of Indira Gandhi and it has survived the death of Rajiv Gandhi too. Singapore survived the vacuum left by Lee Kuan Yew. Therefore Malaysians in general and ethnic Indians in particular will survive the dismissal of Samy Vellu.

To put it bluntly Samy Vellu has betrayed his own community and the country. (Perhaps a lot of heads will roll soon - perhaps from UMNO Baru).

Towards an accountable leadership.

Suren
PENANG

WESTERN MOVES IN IRAQ - CHALLENGE TO INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

We, the undersigned individuals and organisations from Malaysia are deeply concerned about developments affecting Iraq, a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

It is obvious that the United States, Britain and France are making a concerted attempt to undermine the political sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. The so-called ‘No-Fly Zone’ which they intend to impose upon Southern Iraq in the name of protecting Shite Muslims in the marshlands is nothing but an excuse to partition Iraq. It is a blatant example of how neo-colonial powers use human rights as a camouflage to further their own diabolical interests.

"...neo-colonial powers use human rights as a camouflage to further their own diabolical interests."

NAM members should express strong opposition to this neo-colonial plot to weaken Iraq in order to perpetuate Western and Israeli dominance of West Asia. They should defend Iraq’s sovereignty in the interest of protecting the freedom, independence and integrity of all nations and peoples. They should use this occasion to re-assert the right of all nations and peoples to resolve their own problems and shape their own destinies without the interference and intervention of external powers.

At the same time, NAM should, in unequivocal terms, call for the immediate lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq, imposed by the US-controlled UN Security Council. The sanctions constitute yet another endeavour to destroy Iraq’s integrity and to de-stabilize the country. It has nothing to do with the Gulf War as such. It is simply part of a long-term plan to ensure continued US and Israeli hegemony over West Asia. This is why NAM must also adopt a principled stand against economic sanctions.

(This letter carries 60 signatures)
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THE DISH CALLING THE POT AND THE KETTLE BLACK

Poor Mohamed Rahmat. He was trying to deal with illegal radio broadcasts by a certain party on the east coast when it came to his attention that several campus groups including one in ITM had also been committing the same crime for years under his very nose.

The revelation was embarrassing to say the least and before the Minister could even recover from the shock of subversive elements among the student population, he found himself knee-deep in illegal satellite dishes which it seems are a normal household appliance in elite Sarawakian homes especially those of politicalbigwigs.

But Rahmat said only the King, the Prime Minister, Rulers and foreign missions could install such parabolic antennas. Even Samy of the Act-of-God fame cannot have one at home although he approves the licences for the dishes.

Mr RTM's transmission on the satellite dishes was going full-blast until a newspaper, the same busybody who blew the whistle on Tan Sri Volvo, featured a photograph of a real fancy dish perched on the balcony of a real fancy bungalow in a real fancy neighbourhood.

As things turned out, the fancy dish belonged to none other than the Minister of Information. It seems the poor man and his family have been put through all those nasty foreign, yellow, western, negative, corruptive culture that none of us want polluting our airwaves and our heads. After all, we are moral, upright and holier-than-thou Malaysians who can't even stand the sight of men with shoulder-length hair, tight blue jeans or ladies in short skirts or even sleeveless blouses.

Anyway, it seems the Minister's household has been sullied by all these vile foreign programmes since 1988 for that was when the dish was installed. Surely he must have kept silent about his own dish all this time because he felt it would not be fair to share his burden with us.

You could also say he was man enough not to want to wash dirty dishes in public. What a man! (This is the man whom that actress what's-her-name should consider campaigning for.) I can imagine her running about the next general election crying: "R for Rahmat! T for The! M for Man! RTM! Rahmat The Man is my man!") Just think ... if we could have been so upset at the sight of a pair of bared female shoulders or tattered blue jeans stretched tight over a male crotch, how much more upsetting it must have been for the Minister to have to view foreign programmes showing crotchles without even the questionable benefit of tight jeans and female areas bared well below the shoulders. Or worse, a lewd combination of both entwined in acts too abominable to describe.

For four years, he sat through all this indecency, obscenity, depravity, profanity, corruption and vulgarity in silence, without a single word of complaint. Not even a moan, gron or sigh. That man is a living saint! If all that had happened to any of us Malaysians, we have turned into indecent, obscene, depraved, profane, corrupted and vulgar maniacs.

Moreover, His Holiness' sense of charity and public duty runneth over. The saint of a man has even offered to personally cut the evil locks of members of the rock groups Search and Wings whose songs have been banned from our hallowed airwaves and who have been barred from appearing on our virtuous television. Oh Holy One, pray continue to guide us along the path of pure and uncontaminated entertainment.

KL STRIKES BACK

The Cold War may have ended, but there are many still infatuated with images of nuclear warfare. This seems to be the case of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre project, the new showcase project of our national cash-cow, Petronas. Petronas has a 51% stake in this twin-tower project which Lat has aptly likened to a pair of missile heads that may take off into nowhere at the press of a button.

The $3 billion scheme was designed by an American architect and many people (especially local architects who felt they could have designed prettier weapons and phallic
symbols) felt that Kuala Lumpur could have done with something less hostile on its skyline. Moreover, we could have been able to deal with one ugly missile, but two side-by-side - that is really testing our patience for the repulsive. We are not living saints like Mr RTM, you know.

The PM who attended its unveiling, said he wished to see KL grow into a metropolis that reflected a Malaysian cultural outlook so that we could attract tourists. If these two missile heads go up, KL will be on the way to a Star Wars outlook which, on second thought, may not be such a bad idea in terms of attracting tourists whom I am sure would include sci-fi fans, retired generals and other hawks frustrated with nothing to do now that the Cold War has defrosted.

* * *

**ANOTHER ACT OF GOD**

For days, last month, the newspapers tantalised Malaysians with detailed accounts of the advance of the oil slick spilled from the unhappy collision of two ships not quite passing one another in the night. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, namely through its Department of Environment, could be heard commenting daily on how the "chocolate mousse" had crept one inch this way or two inches that way along the straits. Then one happy morning, we read that the stick had dispersed and the threat was no more.

The impression given was that DOE had done everything possible to prevent the slick from despoiling the tourist waters around Langkawi and Penang (we all know how important tourists are). But barely a few days later, we read that blobs of "chocolate mousse", said to have dispersed in sea, had instead dispersed onto the beaches of Langkawi. And what sort of high-tech did the DOE, which had been keeping its devoted sea virgins all these weeks, have to deal with? Spades and plastic bags.

There must have been as many red faces at the Ministry as there were black faces among the those in Langkawi's tourism industry. The latter has blamed the DOE for not taking more effective measures when the "chocolate mousse" landed on their shores. The Minister could have blamed it on the communists in the past, but since the Great Surrender we have lost an important scapegoat, so I suggest that the Ministry take a cue from Samy and classify the fiasco as an act of God.

* * *

**TUN SALLEH: DON'T FRAME ME AGAIN!**

According to the legal grapevine, the hanging of Tun Salleh Abas ... oops! I mean the hanging of his framed portrait, may have to be delayed because of some artistic problems. It seems the artist commissioned to do the portrait had been reading the wrong sort of literature on the judiciary (probably K. Das' Judicial Misconduct) and had painted Tun Salleh Abas with a long knife sticking from his back. The knife even had some fingerprints painted on its handle though forensic experts have not had time to trace the owner.

The artist has been asked to paint out the knife, particularly the fingerprints since there is nothing to suggest that Tun Salleh had been stabbed in the back. In fact, the lawyers (with the exception of a number of toadies) think he was stabbed cold-blooded in broad daylight. But then again, it would have been much too gruesome to draw a bloody knife sticking from the front of Tun Salleh's body. So perhaps the artist was not so silly after all.

As usual, the sour grapes in the legal grapevine claim that the authorities had a motive in wanting Tun Salleh's portrait put up in the Supreme Court Chamber. It would be most unseemly, not to mention embarrassing, said one grape sourly, to leave a glaring gap between the portraits of Raja Azlan Shah (the Lord President before Tun Salleh) and Tun Hamid (the Lord President after Tun Salleh).

How are court officials to explain the gap? That we ran out of paint? That Tun Salleh is canvas-shy? Or that Tun Salleh did not wish to be "framed" again? (Ha! Ha! The last is a rather good one, if I may say so). But seriously, trying to explain the pictorial gap to visitors to the Supreme Court would only raise the whole sordid episode of how Tun Salleh became the sacrificial lamb before the altar of Umno. Let's hope that when the time comes for the artist to do Tun Hamid's portrait, he (the artist) will not go and do something silly like paint him clutching something sharp.

* * *
LIGHTNING DOES STRIKE TWICE

Poor Samy. The old proverb that lightning does not strike twice no longer holds true. He seems to have been struck more than once. First there was the Case Of The No Longer Missing Videotapes, then came the Case Of The Missing College Permit and finally the Case Of The Missing Shares. Even the fat, but clever, Hercule Poirot would have torn out his treasured moustache in despair.

The latest bolt of lightning to hit Samy has been the challenge to his leadership of the MIC by two contenders whose names I cannot even remember. But the fact that two blokes have dared to stand against the Great One says something about the degree of the discontent with his leadership style.

The contest has created such a great deal of tension that the police are requesting all chairs and tables at the party general assembly to be screwed to the floor so that they do not go flying as temperatures rise. They are also requesting that delegates be disallowed from carrying in anything that can be misused as projectiles.

Meanwhile, it is clear that being struck by lightning is bad for the head because the president has instructed the MIC Youth to recruit as members, youths who were involved in criminal activities so that they could be rehabilitated through party activities.

As if he does not have enough on his hands with the allegedly existing gangsters and criminals within the party. Samy also confirmed that many party leaders were former gangsters until they joined the party. Now we know why MIC gatherings are usually so lively. But as far as I know, leopards rarely change their spots. And I do fear for the future of criminals who join the party. They may end up hardened criminals.

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MUCH A BOOM ABOUT NOTHING

The mysterious “boom” over the Klang Valley recently tilliated the starved-for-excitement valley folks for days. Among the speculation that deserve mention were:

• another Pinatubo explosion.
• another act of God.
• a terrorist bomb.
• someone with a bad stomach gas problem (gross!).

Finally the Defence Minister, who obviously has nothing more important to do and who is probably as starved for publicity as the valley folks are starved for excitement, held a press conference to announce that it was a sonic boom caused by a fighter airplane that left Butterworth at 1.35pm and flew over the Klang Valley 12 minutes later, and broke the sound barrier in the process. Actually, I do not know why there should be so much excitement over a simple sonic boom. There have been numerous occasions when politicians have broken the sound barrier without even having to take to the air.

• • •

DISCARDS OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

One thing about these rich and famous people - they do things in great style. Even their hand-me-downs can get into the news day after day when no one would even come within a foot of ours. The Jumble Sale Of The Rich And Famous will go towards the worthy cause of the suffering humanity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia.

Among the famous discards are the PM’s neck-ties, an almost brand new sequinned jacket belonging to some woman married to someone famous, a definitely-not-brand-new sweatshirt belonging to a limp-wristed actor and a whole lot of other items donated by claimants to the rich and famous clique none of whom I know - obviously.

It seems lots others are still trying to make up their minds what to part with. For instance, Ling Liong Sik may decide to donate the oil-splattered apron which he has worn to raise thousands of ringgit for TAR College. Vijandran may donate some of those underthings that Malaysians have of late grown so intimate with (don’t turn your nose at these - girls used to kill for Elvis’ underthings), while Samy cannot decide whether to donate his Italian suit or shoes.

Rafidah may give away a whole collection of leotards she had purchased during more optimistic days. Meanwhile, I shall try to refrain from speculating on what “International Woman of the Year” Datin Seri Indrani Samy Vellu may part with lest I am again accused of jealousy though I cannot imagine anyone being jealous of her position as the wife of that man.

As for the writer who criticised this column for double standards, I could not agree more with him that the Nobel
Politicians will be embarrassed regarding the airport fire, the Straits Times reported recently. Such as the FEER and the AWSJ journals mentioned certainly cannot go to Singapore, Bangkok is too congested, Manila too unstable so that leaves the last frontier of civilised society - Kuala Lumpur.

The implications of such a move are great - not only in terms of downstream activities generated, but in terms of the more crucial issue such as press freedom. For those who have been puzzled over the government’s generosity in issuing a string of publishing licences lately, including licences for five new English newspapers, things are beginning to make sense.

**LESS CENSORSHIP IN THE AIR?**

As Lat pointed out, each time the PM is away from the country something terrible happens. He was in England when the Samy-declared Act of God occurred, plunging half the country into a power blackout. He was also not in when two ships collided in the Straits of Malacca, resulting in one of the most threatening oil slicks in years. The latest while-the-PM-is-not-in-disaster is the fire at the Subang International Airport. All these only go to confirm a sneaky suspicion that we have had for some time. The PM is indispensable. We cannot do without him. He must stay on forever!

Actually Mahathir is said to be all hot under the collar regarding the airport fire, the second in months. He had been trying his darnest to woo the HK tycoons to dump all their excess money in Malaysia before the Reds get their hands on it. Thus, you can imagine his embarrassment to have his audience read in the newspapers that the Subang control tower was merrily burning away while he is fiddling with ways to get them there.

The rumour mill here also has it that Mahathir, after years of lambasting the foreign press such as the FEER and the AWSJ to name a few, is now romancing them to relocate their regional headquarters from Hong Kong to Kuala Lumpur. Thus, his highly-publicised meetings with the foreign press legion in Hong Kong and Tokyo. The two journals mentioned certainly cannot go to Singapore, Bangkok is too congested, Manila too unstable so that leaves the last frontier of civilised society - Kuala Lumpur.

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**SNOOTY SPORTS**

Elitism has crept even onto the field of sports. The government is now encouraging the elite outdoors such as equestrian sports. In fact, the Deputy Prime Minister has even suggested that a professional golf academy be set up to improve the standard of golf among countries in the region. Where a golf club membership used to be the mark that one had arrived in the materialistic world, now it seems a horse may have to be an additional mark of the new arrivee in materialism.

Among the rich and famous who have rushed to climb (and often fallen) off the horses are politicians of no less than Ministerial rank. One Minister is even said to have met his singer mistress while horseing around that horse farm or whatever you call it near Templar Park some time ago though it is not known whether they still ride together.

The DPM, in a token reference to the poor masses, also urged the golfing industry to “create new strategies and further develop the game to benefit those in the lower income group”. Whatever could he mean except that the poor chaps should be employed as gardeners and caddies on the golf course.

**PLANTING RICE CAN BE FUN**

I know I am going to bore all of you silly by repeating this, but I shall anyway - politicians will do anything for publicity. The latest stunt involved the MB of Kedah who was seen thrashing padi in, of all places, the Holiday Inn. He was dressed in a silk batik shirt and well-tailored pants that no farmer worth his padi grain would be caught dead in on harvesting day unless they wished to be the laughing stalk of the padi field.

It was obvious that the MB, who was promoting his state’s tourism programme, has not thrashed any padi in a long time or worse, has never thrashed any padi before. A newly-arrived tourist in the hotel would probably think he was trying to kill a crocodile with a bunch of grasses. Kedah farmers who read about his farming efforts at the Holiday Inn shuddered and prayed that he would not volunteer his services on their field the next harvest.

by NNP
Whitewashing Racism
UN revokes Zionism-is-racism label

It is alleged that much bullying, blackmailing and bribery went on behind the scenes to get the overwhelming revocation on the 1975 UN resolution equating Zionism with racism says CHANDRA MUZAFFAR in explaining why the racism label should remain.

On 16 December 1991, the United Nations General Assembly voted to revoke its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. A total of 111 countries voted in favour of the motion to revoke the earlier resolution; 25 voted against; 13 abstained and another 17 were either absent or did not take part in the vote.

Malaysia was one of the 25 countries which voted against the motion. Was Malaysia right in insisting that Zionism should continue to be equated with racism?

Zionism which began as a cultural and spiritual movement developed in the late nineteenth century into a political ideology which had, as its primary aim, the quest for a homeland for the Jews. At that point, Zionism was not a racist ideology as such. It was basically an attempt to address the sufferings of Jews in various parts of Europe who felt that a homeland would provide them with the peace and security they were denied by Christian persecution and discrimination.

However as Zionism gained momentum, an influential segment within the movement became increasingly racist in its orientation. It wanted an exclusive Jewish state in the territory where Jerusalem was located, namely Palestine, and justified the eventual eviction and expulsion of Palestinians “because they were barbarians”.

These Zionists whose leader was an Austrian Jew, Theodor Herzl, despised other communities and races. They regarded them as groups that could be bought or bribed, manipulated or manoeuvred to serve the Zionist cause of establishing an exclusive Jewish state. While they had so much contempt for most non-Jews, they adopted a highly chauvinistic view of their own community’s greatness. Jews and Jewish culture, in the eyes of these Zionists, represented the acme of human civilization.

When Israel was created in 1948, many of these racist, chauvinistic elements and attitudes became embodied in the new state structure. The Zionism preached and practised by Israel since 1948 - which should be distinguished from the ideology of dispossessed, dispersed Jews in history - is indisputably, undeniably racist. In this regard, it is a pity that the 1975 resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly which condemned “Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination” did not specify that it was referring to Zionism as the official ideology of the state of Israel.

Land Discrimination

The racism of Israel manifests itself in many ways. There is, to start with, legal discrimination against non-Jews living in Israel which is sometimes quite blatant, at other times quite subtle. The ‘Redemption (geula) of land’ doctrine for instance states that, “if a plot of land anywhere in the whole Land of Israel is either collectively or individually owned by Jews it is ‘redeemed’ and if it is not, it is ‘unredeemed’”. What this means in reality is that “to redeem land”, that is, “to transfer it from non-Jewish to Jewish ownership is a foremost national obligation, whereas failure to do so is calamitious.”

Under this doctrine which is taught to every Jewish child in every school in Israel and to the children of staunch Zionists living elsewhere, it does not matter who the non-Jewish owner of so-called ‘unredeemed’ land is. It may be an indigenous Palestinian whose link to the land goes back to centuries but a Zionist would regard it as his national obligation, nay, his religious duty, to acquire it. By the same token, land occupied by a Jew, perhaps someone who has just migrated from the former Soviet Union or some other country, would be considered ‘redeemed’.

The ‘Redemption of land’ doctrine is not the only form of legal discrimination in Zionist Israel. The Israeli Lands Authority (ILA) has a rule which allows anyone registered as a
Jew to lease a plot of land or house or apartment in a housing project in most parts of the country. A non-Jew, on the other hand, is barred from occupying real estate in most places. The area where this and other similar “racist restrictions apply amounts to 92 per cent of the land of pre-1967 Israel.” It is a situation which parallels South Africa!

Right To Settle

Discriminatory laws pertaining to land and housing may not be that well known outside Israel. But the Law of Return has acquired some notoriety. Under this law, any Jew from any part of the world has the right to settle in Israel. Jews do not need official permission from the authorities. In fact, the Minister of Interior does not have the authority to deny any Jew this right of return and, by implication, the right to settle in Israel.

According to one source, “Jews arriving in Israel from abroad almost immediately receive an immigration certificate which provides them with citizenship by virtue of having returned as though they had been citizens of the country for generations. They also immediately acquire the right to vote in elections and to be elected to the Knesset [Parliament]”.

Contrast the treatment accorded to returning Jews with the cruel, inhuman discrimination of Palestinian Arabs living in their own land - a land whose very name, history and culture bear their birthmark. And yet Palestinians do not enjoy the most basic legal rights which any citizen in any civilized society would be entitled to. It just goes to show how racist the Israeli regime has been towards the non-Jewish population.

Its racism becomes even more blatant when we turn from laws to actual policies and practices that the regime pursues. Take for instance its water policy. Water from the West Bank where the majority of the population is Palestinian is diverted for use by the Israelis. It has been observed that, “of the 807 million cubic metres of water originating in the West Bank in 1990, 510 million cubic metres were diverted for use in Israel.

Another 160 million cubic metres were allotted to Jewish settlers in the West Bank (who number about 100,000) while only 137 million cubic metres were allowed to the 1.2 million Palestinians. This means that the settlers get almost 12 times as much water per person as do the Palestinians.” The irony however is that, “Palestinians must pay twice as much for water as do neighbouring settlers. West Bank towns, where the water originates, pay 60 per cent more than households in Tel Aviv.”

Poisoned Water

On top of this, is the problem of overfluoridation and poisoning of drinking water. The public water supply in Gaza where there is a huge Palestinian community, is allegedly treated with “dangerously high levels of fluoride”. Worse, according to a 1986 World Health Organization (WHO) report, “the Occupation (Israeli) authorities put certain chemicals in the drinking water that have adverse effects on the fertility of the Arab population.”

The Zionist policy of controlling and weakening the Palestinian population through its discriminatory water policy should be viewed in conjunction with its attempt to destroy Palestinian agriculture. In the last four or five years, the Zionists have destroyed thousands of citrus and guava fruit trees belonging to Palestinians in the Gaza strip and the West Bank. Thousands of acres of agricultural land in the Gaza strip have been “confiscated from [Arab] owners and transferred to Israeli settlers.” Even when the Palestinians produce some fruits and vegetables, all sorts of restrictions are imposed to thwart the marketing of their crops.

Medical Care

Like agriculture, medical care is another area where there is stark discrimination. Although a sizeable portion of their small incomes go for health insurance, Palestinians receive only marginal benefits. As the writer, Donald Werner points out, “When a [Arab] worker from Gaza is injured in Tel Aviv, he usually receives only provisional emergency care, then is sent back to Gaza.

In Gaza City the government hospitals are crowded, dirty, understaffed, and ill-equipped compared to the facilities in Israel proper. The situation reminds me of South Africa with its stark contrast between the elegant hospitals for whites and the sorry hospitals for blacks. In truth, the brutal and pervasive discrimination against Palestinians in Israel is nothing less than apartheid.”

Education

Discrimination also extends to education. From the seventies onwards, Zionist leaders, sensing that young Palestinians were eager to pursue education to the highest levels possible, began to place all sorts of obstacles in their path. Government budgetary allocations for Palestinian schools were much less than what was given to Israeli schools. Official approval for Palestinian colleges took a long while. Curricula in both Palestinian schools and colleges were subjected to tight control. How-

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ever, in spite of all these restrictions Palestinians continued to study hard.

Then, the Palestinian uprising (the Intifada) - essentially a youth revolt - began in December 1987. It provided the Zionist authorities with the big opportunity they were waiting for. Shortly after the Intifada, they closed down all schools, colleges and universities in the West Bank. Though many schools and some colleges have started to function again, education remains one of the most effective weapons of the oppression of, and discrimination against, the Palestinians.

It is because discrimination against the Palestinians is so obvious, it is because Zionist racism is so transparent that a number of honest, unbiased writers and scholars have compared Israel to South Africa. In the words of Professor Uzi Ornan, "It is impossible to deny that Israel is an apartheid state. This apartheid has been entrenched in a system of laws, regulations and practices which govern the operation of state institutions."

Professor Israel Shahak, a Jew and Chairperson of the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights has been equally explicit about Israel's and Zionism's racism. He says, "It is my considered opinion that the State of Israel is a racist state in the full meaning of the term. In this state people are discriminated against, in the most permanent and legal way and in the most important areas of life, only because of their origin. This racist discrimination began in Zionism and is carried out today mainly in cooperation with the institutions of the Zionist Movement."

American Bullies

Unfortunately, all the incontrovertible evidence, all the unassailable data which prove beyond doubt that Israel's Zionist ideology is racism could not persuade 111 countries to acknowledge the equation. This was due in no small measure to the role played by the United States in the 16 December UN General Assembly vote. The US, it is alleged, bribed and blackmailed, bullied and bludgeoned various nations into supporting its move to get the earlier anti-Zionist resolution rescinded.

In a very real sense, the recent vote is a reflection of the US's expanding power and influence within the comity of nations in the post-Cold War era. So great is its influence that even some Arab states like Egypt, Tunisia and Kuwait - states which are witnesses to the suffering and sorrow caused by Zionism - decided not to participate in the vote.

But it is more than the power and influence of the US. Other Western governments, for reasons which have very little to do with US power, also refuse to admit that Zionism is racism. It is significant, in this connection, that every country in the European and North American continents, without exception, voted to revoke the 1975 resolution. Many European states were, in fact, co-sponsors of the resolution initiated by the US.

Indeed, like the US, Western Europe, as a whole, has always been very protective towards Israel. This explains why no West European government, even when the Zionist regime is committing unspeakable atrocities against the Palestinians, has ever criticized Israel as a racist state. On the contrary, they have gone out of their way to conceal and camouflage Zionist racism.

Media Clamp-up

In this, they have received generous assistance from the mainstream Western media. Not a single major Western newspaper or radio station or television network has made it its mission to expose Zionist racism. No human rights organization of importance in the West has condemned Zionism as racism. And yet, the mainstream Western media and certain Western human rights organizations are only too eager to chastise non-Western societies for alleged racial discrimination against their minorities.

The Zionism-racism episode shows how dominant elements in the West who, at this point in time, determine the direction of global politics, have succeeded through the instrument of the UN to convert right into wrong. In other words, the truth that was recognized in 1975 has been denounced in 1991 simply because of the power that the US and its allies command.

But they forget that truth is not a matter of a UN vote. Right and wrong, truth and falsehood are not decided by the number of hands raised at a meeting. Votes cannot vanquish the truth.
In this article, Dr. C. K. Chan, a lecturer in Development Studies in the School of Social Sciences at Universiti Sains Malaysia, elucidates on the new notion of "sustainable development". He discusses the on-going debate between the technological optimists and the ecologists but also reminds us that the question of equity between and within nations should not be overlooked.

The term development has undergone significant shifts in meaning in mainstream discourse over the last few decades. In the 1950s, the heyday of growth-oriented strategies, development was synonymous with economic growth. All-out economic growth, coupled with the assumption of automatic, trickle-down benefits was the conventional recipe for rapid social and economic advancement. When the trickle-down effect didn't materialise at a pace fast enough to stave off social unrest, policymakers conceded that conscious effort and attention to the distributional effects of economic growth was necessary. Growth-with-redistribution became the new watchword, there-by adding a new dimension to development. The logical extension of this was the basic needs philosophy of development which insisted on an overriding concern for satisfying the basic human needs of entire populations.

Sustainable Development
Robert Goodland, Herman Daly and their colleagues now present us with a 1990s re-definition of development which tries to bridge the divide between ecology and economics. They proceed from the premise that environmental limits to growth, on a global level, have already been reached, and that the traditional concept of growth — throughput growth — with its reliance on an ever-increasing throughput of energy and natural materials, is no longer sustainable. To highlight the contrast between growth and development, they define sustainable development as "development without growth in throughput beyond environmental carrying capacity". The immediate virtue of this distinction is that it forces one to keep in mind material balances in human economic activity. The potential drawback is that by emphasising what is proclaimed as a more pressing issue, global sustainability, it may shortchange a previous concern with equity in development.

Herman Daly, who is Senior Economist at the World Bank's Environment Department, is a leading proponent for a paradigm shift from "empty-world economics" to "full-world economics". Ecology may not have mattered as much in a relatively empty world, but economics in the late 20th century can no longer ignore the finiteness of ecosystems. In practice however, economists (and businessmen) by and large continue to do so.

"The evolution of the human economy has passed from an era in which manmade capital was the limiting factor in economic development to an era in which remaining natural capital has become the limiting factor... Why has this transformation to a [relatively full] world not been noticed by economists?"

One reason he suggests is the deceptive acceleration of exponential growth of human activity. Humans currently appropriate directly or indirectly 40% of terrestrial net primary production (NPP), i.e. almost half the ongoing biomass accretion from terrestrial photosynthesis which goes to support other heterotrophs via the food chain. At a constant growth rate of 2% per annum, we have gone from 10% to 40% of NPP in two doubling periods (about 70 years), and will reach 80% in another 35 years. Daly notes that this has been faster than the speed with which fundamental economic paradigms shift. According to physicist Max Planck, a new scientific paradigm triumphs not by convincing the majority of its opponents, but
because its opponents eventually die.

There has not yet been time for the empty-world economists to die, but meanwhile they have been cloning themselves faster than they are dying by maintaining tight control over their guild.

On a less morbid note, he suggests that an additional reason economists fail to note the changing pattern of scarcity is their uncritical acceptance of the substitutability of natural capital by manmade capital. He argues that these two factors should more properly be considered as complementary factors: "the complementary nature of natural and man made capital is made obvious by asking what good is a saw-mill without a forest? a refinery without petroleum deposits? a fishing boat without populations of fish? ... the limiting factor determining the fish catch is the reproductive capacity of fish populations, not the number of fishing boats; for gasoline the limiting factor is petroleum deposits, not refinery capacity; and for many types of wood it is remaining forests, not saw-mill capacity. Costa Rica and Peninsular Malaysia, for example, now must import logs to keep their saw mills employed."

Certainly, one resource can substitute for another (e.g. aluminium for tinplate), but he argues that the substitute material also requires its corresponding natural capital as a complementary input. This issue is contentious, and essentially comes down to the degree one keeps faith with the technological optimists.

Technological Optimists

From the time of Malthus, optimists have emphasised the unpredictable potential of technological advances in pushing back limits to growth. It is not difficult to be impressed by the adaptive ingenuity of humanity over the ages, first in agriculture, then in energy, and now in an increasing array of key technologies which sustain modern civilisation. The energy scare in 1973 galvanised a spate of intense oil exploration which gave us the additional reserves in Alaska, Mexico and the North Sea. Oil and gas reserves today amount to eight times the estimates of the 1950s. Indeed, it has been pointed out that estimates of oil reserves at any time correspond approximately to the order of magnitudes pertinent to the planning horizons of oil companies, perhaps not coincidental given that oil exploration is costly business and oil companies have little incentive exploring much beyond the proven reserves relevant to their planning horizons.

The optimists further remind us of the potential for energy conservation. Economic growth and energy consumption, it seems, could be decoupled within limits. Japan's GNP for instance grew by 81% between 1973 and 1990 with no increase in energy consumption over that period. Sweden, already one of the most energy-efficient of nations, managed to double the efficiency of its electric power generation, reduce its CO₂ emissions by 34%, phase out its nuclear-powered generators which hitherto had supplied half the country's electricity, and actually lowered consumer bills by US$ 1 billion a year! More generally, this lessening of resource intensity in mature economies may extend to non-energy materials as well.

A Biological Upper Limit?

How well grounded is the contention that human activities have gone beyond the planet's sustaining capacity? The net primary production (NPP) provides a convenient yardstick to gauge the degree to which we are approaching a biological upper limit. We do not know how inflexible that upper limit is, whether it could be significantly raised by improving the efficiencies of photosynthesis and energy exchanges within the system. Peter Vitousek, a biologist at Stanford University, has estimated that human activity already consumes roughly 40% of terrestrial NPP (25% if net primary production of the oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are also taken into account). Such estimates however are subject to large margins of error, of the order of 50%.

Goodland et al. however emphasise that sink constraints of the global ecological system (greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, air and water pollution, etc.) are at least as pressing as the source limits to growth (depletion of limited or non-renewable natural resources such as fossil fuels) which had been the focus of earlier attention.

We can expect continuing debate on these issues, over the reliability of models, accuracy of projections, nature and extent of likely damage, etc. New findings will be reported periodically, either reinforcing or casting doubt on the gravity of the problems. No one disputes however that the dynamics of such systems require us to be prudent and anticipatory rather than to delay action while awaiting definitive answers. We know for instance that CFCs take six to eight years to drift up to the stratosphere where they do their damage to the ozone layer. Such lag effects are by no means unusual in complex ecosystems.

All sides also agree on the urgency for technologies aimed at reducing natural resource content of given economic activities.
There is furthermore an emerging climate of opinion that even if the limits of sustainable activity have not been breached already, visions for an accelerated and greatly expanded exploitation of the natural resource base are no longer tenable. Global throughput growth has to taper off quite rapidly, and in certain areas may even need to be reversed.

**Equity Between and Within Nations**

Such a position immediately raises questions of equity between and within nations. Some western European countries and Japan have announced unilaterally measures to reduce carbon emissions from within their borders. But the questions still remain as to how growth allowances are to be established between peoples having widely-disparate baseline levels of well-being. What are to be the criteria for deciding on such growth targets? Most importantly, what are to be the institutional mechanisms for deciding on and implementing these decisions (de facto or otherwise)? Will they be filtered through existing arrangements which incorporate the existing power imbalances, or will new, more equitable arrangements emerge?

The sharp debates we have witnessed over the attempts at global conventions on greenhouse gases, ozone depletion, conservation of biodiversity and tropical rainforests, exports of toxic wastes and hazardous technologies, give a foretaste of the battles to come at the international level.

Closer to home, we have seen disputes over storage sites for radioactive and other toxic wastes at Papan, Bukit Merah and Pantai Remis in Perak. Under the banner of our sovereign right to national development, Orang Asli of Sarawak have been dispossessed of their traditional rights to land by a rapacious logging industry. Some of our most appealing and scenic spots in Malaysia have been targeted by the "eco"-tourism industry for massive resort projects (Pulau Redang, Gunung Mulu and Santubong just to name three). If the attitudes towards turtle protection in Terengganu (The Star, 10 and 12 August) are any indication of prevailing policy on conservation, it won’t be long before “eco"- tourism itself joins the list of endangered species.

Three billion years ago, primitive photosynthesizing organisms began releasing oxygen into an atmosphere hitherto devoid of this reactive gas. The ozone layer which subsequently formed made possible terrestrial life. Nonetheless, the oxygen-rich atmosphere which allowed the emergence of aerobic (oxygen-dependent) life, including the human species, was an unmitigated disaster for much of pre-existing anaerobic life, which perished. Is there any moral to this tale? We don’t expect moral accountability of green slime, but humans, with their consciousness, are not so easily excused. If our collective wisdom is not up to our ever-growing capacity to affect the environment, we may well end up in the manner darkly hinted at by James Lovelock, inventor of the Gaia hypothesis that the earth is a self-regulating entity.

"People sometimes have the attitude that Gaia will look after us.

But that’s wrong. If the concept means anything at all, Gaia will look after herself. And the best way for her to do that might well be to get rid of us."
Islamic banking is a controversial growth area in the financial services sector, says PETER TEMPLE.

The importance of Islamic banking has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. The main difference between western and Islamic-style banking is the concentration on people and their businesses, rather than on accounts - it is a much more ‘grass roots’ banking, according to one expert.

All true Islamic banking is shaped by the Koran’s forbiddance of usury. For strict believers, this means all payment or receipt of interest (riba) is banned, as well as any speculative transactions and financial instruments or ones that have an inherent interest content.

Islamic doctrine also forbids hoarding money, hence holding classic stores of value such as gold is not allowed (although, paradoxically, gold and jewellery dealing is widespread in many Islamic countries). Investment in companies and businesses involved in alcohol, pork, gambling, arms, illicit drugs and pornographic material, is forbidden, as, of course, are conventional banking and insurance. Options and futures fall foul of the proscription on gambling. Forward foreign exchange transactions are un-Islamic because rates are determined by interest rate differentials.

But to concentrate solely on what Islamic banking and investment forbids is being unduly negative. The essence of Islamic finance is that money should be used to some productive purpose, and that investment activity should be in the form of a partnership in which the provider of capital, as well as the entrepreneur, shares in the risks and rewards of a venture.

For day to day banking activity, a number of financial instruments have been developed that satisfy Islamic doctrine and provide acceptable financial returns for investors. Broadly speaking, the areas in which Islamic banks are most active are in trade and commodity finance, property and leasing.

Even here, though, there are no hard and fast rules. According to Melvyn Mott, senior manager of Albaraka International, a leading Saudi-owned Islamic bank: ‘Islamic finance is not a strict science; it’s open to interpretation.’ The consequence of this is that all Islamic banks have religious advisers who may disagree among themselves as to whether or not particular practices are acceptable.

Among some of the problems faced by Islamic banks is the provision of an overdraft. Even this is difficult unless the money is required for a specific purpose. However, the short-term finance of a business with seasonal swings in cash flow can be accommodated under a system of compensating balances.

Measuring the growth of Islamic banking is not easy. Should the banking activity of purely Islamic banks be measured, or should the growing number of western banks providing services to Islamic financial institutions on the basis of strict Islamic principles also be included? And how can conventional transactions in, say, the property market be separated from those structured from an Islamic viewpoint?

Some western banks, such as Citibank and ANZ Grindlays have had a particular involvement in the development of Islamic banking. They normally act as wholesale service providers for Islamic financial institutions, offering guarantees that money managed on their behalf is ring-fenced and invested on an Islamically-acceptable basis. Merchant banks such as Kleinwort Benson also have sizeable Islamic fund management activities.

However, it must be stressed that in the Middle East and elsewhere, Islamic banks represent only a part of the banking system of those nations and that conventional, interest-based banking is often the dominant force in the system. This is true even in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, where the necessity of dealing in western markets has forced a pragmatic approach on strict Islamic regimes. There is, for example, widespread scepticism that the Shari’a (Islamic court) decision in Pakistan to expunge all forms of interest from...
the banking system is capable of being enforced in a country with extensive foreign debt.

Nevertheless, all Saudi banks, for instance, offer Islamic banking services alongside their more conventional activities. According to David Hightower, a Citibank vice-president, Islamic banking is set to become increasingly competitive as more participants enter the field. 'The Islamic institutions are becoming much more outward-looking and are seeking to develop their own investment skills. The Middle Eastern market is therefore becoming much more competitive and sophisticated.'

Melvyn Mott also sees growth in the overall size of the Islamic banking 'cake'. 'I think it will grow, because, in general terms, it is a much fairer method of dealing with customers. You aren't just making money out of money for its own sake. There is something there which is for the good of the community.'

Optimists even believe there is a potential for the creation of a network of Islamic stock exchanges for the trading of participation certificates in Islamically-financed projects - with speculation, of course, strictly prohibited.

In the UK, thorny regulatory issues have arisen as a result of the development of Islamic banking. One is that since true Islamic banks are not regarded as deposit-taking institutions by the Bank of England, they fall on the peripheries of its regulatory remit. That said, Albaraka, for example, entered the UK market via the takeover of an ailing licensed deposit-taker in 1983, and has since had very open and harmonious relations with the Bank.

In tax terms, the treatment of returns from Islamic financial instruments is relatively straightforward, with such profits regarded as straight investment income, taxed at source by the bank itself.

The most controversial aspect of Islamic banking is, particularly post BCCI, the fear that some Islamic institutions may unwittingly become a channel for the laundering of profits from illicit drugs trafficking, not only because the system operates to some degree on trust, but because of the areas from which some Islamic institutions originate. The sheer growth potential of Islamic banking and increased competition could result, in less strictly-regulated banking areas, in 'dirty cash' seeping into the system.

It is worth stressing at this point that BCCI itself was not an Islamic bank as such, although certain of its funds were supposedly managed under Islamic banking principles. As far as money laundering is concerned, since the Koran specifically prohibits intoxicants of any description, true Islamic banks have sophisticated systems and rigorous scrutiny of customers and transactions, designed to avoid the problem, and to protect their own image and integrity.

Putting this issue on one side, market participants foresee the continuing development of bona fide Islamic banking to the point where it represents a significant, albeit perhaps not a majority, share in the banking markets of most Islamic countries.

If for no other reason than this, bankers are realistic enough to recognize that offering Islamic banking services is a way of generating additional business. Citibank's David Hightower comments: 'For banks it represents a point of differentiation. It is a way for conventional institutions to produce incremental growth, by attracting new depositors. And it is a way of mobilizing part of the money supply which has in the past been relatively inert.'

Source: Accountancy, July 1992
Islamic Financial Instruments

Although complex risk management techniques can in theory be structured into Islamic transactions of the types described below, the vast majority retain their innate simplicity.

It should also be noted that banks' religious advisers will have to approve not only an individual transaction's structure, but also the type of business being financed. Nonetheless, these instruments allow Islamic banks to offer a broad spread of services, including domestic and international trade finance; agricultural finance; letters of credit; leasing; long-term property purchase plans akin to conventional mortgages; short-term property development finance; project finance; and personal loans for the purchase of specific assets.

Murabaha

This is the most common form of Islamic banking transaction and is normally related to short-term finance. An importer wanting to buy raw materials for manufacturing will ask a bank to buy the materials on his behalf. These are delivered to the importer immediately but payment is made at a later date. The payment is on a cost-plus basis, with the additional fee covering handling charges, transaction costs, and a risk premium.

The essence is that both parties are aware of the original cost of the goods, and the profit margin earned by the bank. Murabaha transactions typically last three months and, less commonly, six months, although some are known to have stretched over several years.

Mudaraba

This is a partnership between parties with money and a party with investment skills. Lenders supply capital to borrowers as agents (mudarib) for investment and trading purposes. Profits are divided in a ratio specified in the original agreement; losses are borne by lenders to the extent of their investment, in this eventuality the borrower/fund manager receives no reward for his efforts. Normally, the agreement will be of unlimited duration and most operate as either closed or open-ended investment funds, with tradeable units. Clearly, mudaraba investments must be in Islamically acceptable securities and businesses.

Musharaka

This is a partnership, normally of limited duration, formed to carry out a specific project. It is therefore similar to a western-style joint venture, and is also regarded by some as the purest form of Islamic financial instrument, since it conforms to the underlying partnership principles of sharing in, and benefiting from, risk.

Participation in a musharaka can either be in a new project, or by providing additional funds for an existing one. Profits are divided on a pre-determined basis, and any losses shared in proportion to the capital contribution. It is used on a comparatively infrequent basis since it normally entails unlimited liability over a long period.

Ijara

This is the Islamic equivalent of leasing, and there is no effective difference between the Islamic and conventional operation of the concept. Lease-purchase is also effectively available under the variant known as ijara was istina.

Bel bi salam, Musqat, Muzara'a

These and other analogous terms essentially describe forward transactions covering payment in advance for production, and are used to provide working capital. Musqat and Muzara'a are most commonly used in an agricultural context via the advance purchase of part of a crop, in order to finance irrigation, cultivation of land, and the purchase of seeds and fertiliser. The Islamic code demands that no risk must attach for the provider of finance in transactions of this type.

Quard hassan

A so-called 'benevolent loan' without payment of fees or interest may be made to customers who are facing difficulties or unexpected expenditure.
HEALTH FOR NO ONE
BY THE YEAR 2000

In the following article DAVID WERNER argues that present health strategies are failing and that the major determinants of health are not medical or technological but social and political. Health and democracy are inseparable.

In the last few years, as we all know, the overall health of our planet and its people has been deteriorating. The steady improvement in health statistics that took place during most of the 20th century ground to a halt in the 1980s. As UNICEF points out in its 1990 State of the World's Children report, "... great change is needed if a century of unprecedented progress is not to end in a decade of decline and despair for half the nations of the world. In many countries poverty, child malnutrition, and ill health are advancing again after decades of steady retreat."

UNICEF has accurately called the last ten years “the Decade of Despair”. Both in underdeveloped countries and in the United States, the gap between rich and poor has been widening. For the world’s poorest people, average incomes have dropped 10%-25%. Today a billion people, or one of every five, live in a state of absolute poverty. In the 37 poorest countries, spending on health has been reduced by 50% and on education by 25%.

In nearly half of the 103 Third World nations from which recent information is available, the proportion of six to eleven-year-olds enrolled in primary school is falling (UNICEF, 1988). This latter finding is of special concern, since recent studies show that female education is a key determinant of child health and survival.

Of the 14 million children under age five who die each year, 99% are in poor countries. Most die from preventable infectious diseases like diarrhoea and measles. One million die directly from hunger.

What Went Wrong?

Our present strategies for health and development are failing miserably. Not only does the survival of millions of children remain in jeopardy, but also the survival of the ecosystem and of the human race. This reversal in progress, in spite of the much-celebrated global campaign to arrive at health for all and child survival, makes us ask if our international health and development strategies are working. And if not, why not?

One reason for failure seems to be that health planners tend to impose technological solutions for problems that are fundamentally social and political. And when they do look at the human causes of poor health, too often they focus on the behaviour and attitudes of the poor, rather than of the privileged.

UNICEF (as far as it dares go) has done well in analysing the human causes of widespread poverty and poor health, including the debt crisis, adjustment mandates, unfair trade policies, and inflated military expenditures. But throughout most of the 1980s, instead of demanding socio-political action to correct these human-made causes, UNICEF concluded that the adverse economic climate was inevitable and unchangeable.

Thus the programmes it promoted focused on stop-gap technological measures. Rather than trying to change the underlying causes of poverty and poor health, it advocated a safety net to help those at highest risk weather the present dark times.

Current Situation

Today it is popular to focus on the survival of children, and to pretend that it depends primarily on a few simple interventions.

But the health and survival of children depends on many, many factors: on the health of their fathers and mothers, on the survival skills of their families, on the relative peace or violence in their communities, on the economic and political status of their nations, on whether the wages people earn or the land they till provides enough to eat; on the availability, quality, and cost of education, health services, water, shelter, and transportation; on the ability of people to organise and defend their rights; on local consum-
tion of alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics; on who has power over whom, on war, on the nine lives of the Cold War, on military expenditures relative to public service expenditures, on international trade relations, on the preservation or destruction of the environment, on how far mother has to walk to get firewood or cow manure for cooking, on covert mining of harbours and undermining of grass-roots movements, on whether the US President can get away with lying to Congress, and on whether the banks will be permitted to continue protecting their billions by taking food from the mouths of millions of children.

Although it is easy to blame 'natural causes' such as bacteria, viruses, earthquakes, drought, and an 'inhospitable environment' for high rates of illness and death, man-made causes play an increasingly prominent role. Many of these causes relate to human greed: the efforts of some to prosper at the expense of others.

In today's world there are a number of giant profit-making ventures that are taking an extraordinary toll on the health and lives of billions of people and that have an enormous negative impact on the well-being and survival of children. These health-destroying multinational industries include:

* Alcoholic beverages
* Tobacco
* Illicit narcotics
* Pesticides
* Infant formula
* Unnecessary, dangerous, overpriced pharmaceuticals
* Arms and military equipment
* International money lending

Each of these represents a huge, powerful, enormously profitable multi-billion-dollar industry. Their cost in terms of human life and health is inestimable. The weakened physical resistance and the economic, mental, and social problems provoked by these unscrupulous businesses add enormously to the impact of infection and malnutrition.

**The Causes of Good Health**

In order to design strategies for improving overall health, it is important to first have a clear picture of firstly what causes widespread illness and early death, and secondly what causes far-reaching improvements in levels of health.

A wealth of evidence shows that the major determinants of health are not medical or technological, but rather social and political. Historically, far-reaching improvements in the health of populations have not coincided with medical or technological breakthroughs.

Rather, they are equated with gradual improvements in the basic standard of living: every-thing from fairer wages and working conditions to better water supply, public education, and social guarantees to meet people's basic needs.

There is clearly a close relationship between poverty and poor health. But a wealthy nation is not necessarily a healthy nation, nor is a poor nation necessarily unhealthy.

In recent decades, global planners made the unfortunate assumption that the solution to widespread poverty and poor health was economic development. The strategy imposed on poor countries by the foreign aid agencies and Northern banks was to foster national growth through large scale industry and agribusiness. While they realised this would mostly benefit big land holders, industrialists, and bureaucrats, they theorised that by stimulating the growth of a poor nation's total gross national product (GNP), benefits would 'trickle down' to the poor.

But in many countries, this did not happen. As the economy
and production grew, the gap between rich and poor got wider. More trickled up than trickled down, and in the process the problems of poverty, undernutrition, underemployment, homelessness, and the diseases of poverty got worse.

If neither medical technology nor economic growth guarantee better health, what does determine the health of a population? In 1985 the Rockefeller Foundation sponsored a study called 'Good Health at Low Cost'. Its purpose was to explore the reasons why certain poor countries have achieved acceptable health statistics in spite of very low national incomes, and specifically, "to verify whether China, Kerala State of India, Sri Lanka, and Costa Rica did indeed attain life expectancies of 65-70 years with gross national products per capita of $300-$1,300."

The investigators concluded that "the four states did achieve good health at low cost." Furthermore they concurred that "[four] intersecteral factors appear to have played a major role in the marked decline in infant and child mortality", commensurate with life expectancy approaching that of wealthy nations. The four determinants of this Southern paradigm for "good health at low cost" proved to be:

* Political and social commitment to equity.
* Equitable distribution and access to public health and health care, beginning at the primary level and reinforced by secondary and tertiary systems,
* Uniform access to the educational system with a focus on the primary level, and
* Availability of adequate nutrition at all levels of society in a manner that does not inhibit indigenous agricultural activity.

Certainly, this study provides one of the strongest arguments for an approach to meeting health needs that courageously addresses social and political issues.

It is clear that our present top-down Northern paradigm for health and development brings neither. It further entrenches inequity and perpetuates the unjust systems that decimate the health, deteriorate the living conditions, and violate the basic rights of a large and increasing proportion of the world's people. It is a model not for development and health, but for underdevelopment and disease.

Democracy and Health

As the Rockefeller study suggests, improvement in levels of health turn on what some call the 'fairness factor', that is, on the relative equality among all people in terms of distribution of resources, public services, decision making, and socio-political power.

In other words, the struggle for health is in essence a struggle for equal rights, equal opportunity, and equal representation: that is to say, for democracy.

If democracy is the precondition for world health, then shouldn't we all be celebrating? Do not our newspapers and televisions inform us that we are, on the threshold of a more democratic and healthy world? In country after country, we are told, tyrants have been overthrown and 'totalitarian' states have been routed by a free society of peoples who now elect their own leaders.

Some pontiffs of world affairs even proclaim that 'history has come to an end': that the 'free market system' has triumphed over state-controlled economies! Democracy over repressive one-party government! In short, Capitalism over Communism!

It is important that we not confuse a 'free market economy' with real freedom and democracy. For, as we have seen, improvement in levels of health depends on real democratisation: that is, on the empowerment of groups of people, at the family, community, and national level, so that everyone has a chance to participate as equals in the decisions that affect their well-being.

As we have seen, the health of the world and its people is deteriorating. The current growth-oriented model of development has not caused health to 'trickle down' to the disadvantaged. Instead, the gap between rich and poor is growing, and cruel exploitation of both people and the environment has escalated.

Many will argue that an unbridled free market system is not compatible with - and tends to suppress - genuinely democratic, egalitarian social structures. Any system that allows the strong to benefit at the expense of the weak is not conducive to health for all.

Clearly, for a world in which both children and humanity as a whole have a better chance of surviving and becoming healthy, stop-gap measures and reforms are not enough.

We need to work together toward a new economic, social and political world order with few barriers to understanding, and a few more barriers to acts of greed.

David Werner has authored numerous books on health and society; his most famous being WHERE THERE IS NO DOCTOR, which has been translated into more than 20 languages. From Third World Resurgence, No. 21.
Politics and Motives of Humanitarian Intervention

The double standards of the North in linking human rights with development aid to developing countries is evident. Selected countries are targeted while others equally guilty of human rights violations are ignored, says CLEMENT JOHN.

History of Intervention in Asia-Pacific

Interventions by strong and powerful nations have been a part of the contemporary historical process. In the Asia-Pacific region, there were four major instances of military interventions - the US intervention in Korea and Vietnam; the USSR intervention in Afghanistan and Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia. Besides, there was the Indian intervention in Kashmir, Goa, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Sri Lanka; also, China's intervention in Tibet and the Indonesian intervention in East Timor. The interventions by the superpowers were made on ideological considerations - the US, intervened to contain the 'Evil Empire' or communism; the USSR to protect Afghanistan's Marxist regime from Islamic fundamentalists. In the case of India, China and Indonesia it was largely an act of hegemonism. In the case of Cambodia and East Pakistan, it could perhaps be argued that intervention was made partly on humanitarian considerations. These interventions were made despite the sanctity afforded to the sovereignty of nations under international law. There was little the UN could do to redress the situation. Interventions by the strong and powerful nations in the affairs of the weaker ones are likely to continue irrespective of whether there exists a criteria for humanitarian intervention or not. The danger is if intervention is made acceptable and provided a cover of legitimacy under an international instrument, the strong and powerful nations are likely to become more blatant in their acts. In view of the UN's recent record, under the present unipolar system, the question is whether it is advisable to provide such cover of legitimacy to acts of intervention.

Politics of Intervention

There is an emerging trend amongst the western powers particularly the US to seek new justification for intervention in the internal affairs of Third World countries - be this on the grounds of pursuit of a nuclear programme, drug trafficking, terrorism or human rights violations. Human rights violations (mainly civil and political rights) by Third World governments have acquired top place on the agenda of international relations. The US has, in fact, made human right concerns an integral part of its foreign policy. Selected countries are targeted while others equally guilty of default are ignored. China for instance has come in for severe attacks for human rights violations both in the media as well as by the political leaders in the North, while countries like Burma and Sri Lanka with a far worse record of human rights violations are ignored. The interest being evoked in the North for human rights violations in the Third World is not because of concern for the people but for the purpose of economic and political bargaining. If the North is genuinely concerned about human rights in the Third World it should adopt a uniform standard to measure violations in all countries irrespective of economic or political considerations. The North should also give the South the right to intervene e.g. against racial discrimination in the US and Germany. Also, it should work both inside and outside the UN structures for economic justice for the South. So long as the North continues to control and dominate the decision making process in international financial as well as political institutions like the IMF, the WB, the basic question of justice between the North and South will remain unresolved. This in turn will contribute to human right violations in the South, as the root causes of these lie in the unjust structures of the North-South divide. Presently, there is also a trend in the North to link human rights with development aid. Here again the double standards of the North are evident. If the North is genuinely concerned about
human rights in the South, the linkage should not only be with development aid but also with investments and trade. There are many instances where development aid is cut off by Western countries but investments and trade with defaulting countries continue on a business as usual basis. Economic interventions by the rich and powerful nations be it through Transnational Corporations or international financial institutions also lead to human rights violations in Third World countries.

**Instruments of Intervention**

In recent times there has been a great deal of debate on the new found role of the UN particularly, in the West. It has been acknowledged, that during the Cold War period, the working of the UN system was caught up in the East-West divide of ideological confrontation. This rendered the UN’s decision making process often partisan and ineffective. The abdication of its role as a superpower by the Soviet Union radically changed the situation. Whether this is good or bad for the world body is debatable. The UN can become a credible and effective instrument for peace in the post Cold War period if its impartiality remains unimpeachable and it is prepared to seriously take up Third World issues on its Agenda. Early this year at a one day summit meeting, the UN Security Council took up the issues of “preventive diplomacy”, “peace making”, “collective security” and related questions of sovereignty of nations and the interference in internal affairs of member countries - e.g. in relation to the purchase of arms, nuclear programmes, human rights and ecology. There was little or no enthusiasm amongst Western leaders for the major concern of the Third World which is economic justice. So long as the UN continues to be dominated by Western powers and decisions are made in keeping with their interests, the UN cannot provide credible cover for intervention. To acquire credibility, the imbalance which presently exists between the North and the South within UN structures has to be removed. Only when this happens can there be discussion on intervention in the affairs of sovereign States, a concept sacred to the people in the South. To gain credibility the UN must restore the balance between the North and the South in relation to its decision making process and in terms of dealing with issues pertaining to justice between the two regions. Failing which any attempt to legitimize intervention or to codify the laws relating to intervention would amount to giving Western countries the right to interfere in the affairs of weak but sovereign nations of the South.

**Availability of Resources for Intervention**

Religious, ethnic and communal conflicts in Asian societies have taken a heavy toll of human life. Militants groups are a threat to the very existence of the state and are at war with it resulting in a large number of civilian casualties e.g. the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Sikhs and Muslims in Punjab and Kashmir (India). The phenomena is on the increase particularly in South Asia. The State’s power and authority is eroded to the extent it is often unable to deal with such situations. Resort therefore, is taken to emergency measures and sometimes to extra-judicial means. The root causes of these conflicts lie in the colonial past of these countries. There are no easy answers or solutions. Do such situations where human rights violations are severe warrant an intervention? How will intervention resolve the basic issue (root causes) of the conflict? What kind of mechanism is available to deal with the issue on a long term basis - beyond restoring law and order and bringing an end to human rights violations?

Intervention in the region be it in Cambodia or Afghanistan may have brought an end to the conflict and also to human rights violations but a just, meaningful and lasting peace remains a far away reality.

ACEHNES ASYLUM SEEKERS IN MALAYSIA

ALIRAN has received reports that in June 1992, 43 Acehnese sought asylum at the Kuala Lumpur offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR is reported to have acknowledged their status as refugees and issued them with Refugee Identity Cards. However, the Malaysian government refuses to recognize the 43 Acehnese as political refugees and seeks to deport them back to Sumatra. In the meantime, the Acehnese have remained in the offices of the UNHCR.

It is reported that 400 other Acehnese have been detained by the Malaysian authorities since 1991. They have been denied access to representatives of the UNHCR. The Malaysian government treats the Acehnese as illegal economic immigrants and has deported 172 of them back to Sumatra. The Indonesian authorities have now allowed independent observers to visit the area to make findings on the conditions of the Acehnese who have returned. It is feared that some returned Acehnese have been beaten, tortured and killed.

The Acehnese people have a long tradition of rebellion against central authority from Jakarta. Since 1990, the Indonesian army is reported to have cracked down on the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement) and the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front. Since the crackdown, hundreds of suspected members of these movements are reported to have been detained without trial and many severely tortured. Over 2,000 Acehnese are said to have been extra-judicially executed. As a result, hundreds of Acehnese have fled for Malaysia.

These reports paint a picture of atrocious violations of human rights in Aceh. ALIRAN calls on the Malaysian government to provide access to UNHCR representatives for all Acehnese being detained. Those who are given political refugee status should not be under any pressure to return to Sumatra. To pressure Acehnese to return to Sumatra, where there is reason to believe that they may be persecuted, would be a violation of the principle of non-refoulement, a norm of international law.

The Malaysian authorities should also call on the Indonesian government to allow an independent team of observers and foreign journalists free access into northern Sumatra so that a clear picture of the conditions of Acehnese may be obtained. No Acehnese should be returned to Indonesia until it is certain that their human rights will be respected.

Helping those who are being persecuted is a moral matter. Keeping silent in order not to displease friends is not a moral option. ALIRAN calls on the government to take a moral position on a matter close to home, where it is in a stronger position to ensure results. We should do all we can to have the plight of the Acehnese in Sumatra investigated, and to provide shelter for those Acehnese who have fled their country because of persecution.

Executive Committee
16 September 1992

FOSTERING A CARING CULTURE & SOCIETY

A forum entitled "Fostering a Caring Culture and Society: The Role and Contribution of the State" was held under the sponsorship of Aliran (Klang Valley groups) on 3 and 4 October at the Bangunan LPPKN, Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur. The forum which was open to the public was opened by Sdr Lee Lam Thye. Participants from the Government (Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat) and leading voluntary social welfare organisations such as Malaysian...
CARE, the Malaysian Association of the Blind and the Befrienders, as well as former government servants and other interested individuals were present.

At the end of its two-day session, the Forum reached the following general conclusions:

1. Care for those who are in need of care is a matter of right, not charity.

2. A caring society must be understood in the widest sense, encompassing the special needs of the whole spectrum of affected groups, with an emphasis which is not solely remedial but also preventive and developmental.

3. Marginalised groups should not only be given every opportunity to be integrated into mainstream society but also empowered so as to be able to lead more meaningful lives.

4. A partnership must be fostered between the five main relevant sectors, viz. the State, NGOs, the informal sector (i.e. families), the private sector (i.e. commercial) and the clients or recipients of the services, with the State playing an active coordinating and supporting role. While the State has made and does make a substantial contribution towards creating and maintaining a caring society, there is still need for greater political will in terms of much higher priority as well as legislation to protect the rights of specific marginalised groups like the Orang Asli and the disabled.

5. There is already a crisis in finding trained personnel for current needs in social services; the State has an important role to play in ensuring there will be sufficient numbers of trained personnel to meet the more complex needs of the future.

6. While the State already provides financial support for these services, there is much scope to increase financial subsidies to family units concerned and to NGOs in order that they may hire properly qualified social workers.

7. At the forum: Care for those in need is a matter of right.

8. The clients of a caring society, namely those who are recipients of its contributions, should be given the opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making process which affects their lives.

The fruits of the papers presented and discussion that took place are to be incorporated in a book on the caring society to be published by ALIRAN early in 1993.

Organising Committee
ALIRAN
8 October 1992

THE DILI TRAGEDY: MALAYSIA PRACTISES DOUBLE STANDARDS

ALIRAN regrets that the Information Minister, Datuk Mohd. Rahmat, reportedly under the directive of the Prime Minister, found it necessary to go to Jakarta to apologise to the Indonesian authorities over the recent "unintentional" screening by TV1 during the programme "Dunia Jam 10", of the shooting tragedy in Dili, East Timor.

It has been ascertained by the Indonesian military authorities themselves that as many as 50 people were killed on that tragic day, 12 November 1991. Indeed, a young Malaysian Kamal Bamadhaj was one of the victims involved.

The attitude and behaviour of the Malaysian government vis-a-vis this incident clearly contrasts with our principled stand condemning the atrocities currently committed by Serbia and Serbsians against the Muslims and Croatians in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It further contradicts the moral stance which we have taken with regards to the Burmese military regime's repression of Rohingyas, and the Israeli regime's oppression of the Palestinians.

The fact of the matter is that the Indonesian government acted brutally in this incident in East Timor and should be roundly condemned by all who advocate justice, freedom and human rights. At the least, our media should be given the freedom to report the truth.

Datuk Mohd. Rahmat apologised on behalf of the Malaysian government: Double standards.

By censoring the press in this instance and going out of our way to apologise to Jakarta, we stand accused not only of disvaluing the life of a fellow Malaysian, but of practising double standards as well. The Malaysian government has not acted morally at all. This is certainly not the way to behave if we seek to champion the struggles of the developing nations for a more just and equitable world.

Executive Committee
12 October 1992
employers on wages, and so on. These are all a cost to society incurred to adjust for inflation. The faster inflation rises, the higher the cost to society.

What causes inflation?

There are two types of causes of inflation: cost-push and demand-pull factors.

Cost-push factors are those that increase prices because of the higher cost of production. When workers demand higher wages that is not matched by increased productivity, the cost to manufacturers rises; they will pass this on through higher prices for the goods they produce. When the cost of fuel, e.g. oil, goes up, prices rise across the board.

Demand-pull inflation results from excessive demand. When demand is greater than supply, either prices rise or queues are formed for the scarce goods. In a free-market society, excessive demand will invariably result in inflation.

Should the government aim for zero inflation?

Though there are costs involved in living with inflation, there are also costs involved in eliminating inflation. Suppose there is another oil-price shock. If the government decides to eliminate the effect of this, it would have to subsidize local oil companies so that they can sell at the old prices. This is tax-payers money diverted from other uses.

A more serious drawback of subsidies is that it prevents people from seeking more efficient alternatives. If the price of oil is not allowed to increase, there will be little incentive for companies to come up with a more efficient fuel to substitute the higher cost oil. If the authorities hold down wages despite the shortage of labour, there will be less incentive for manufacturers to seek less labour-intensive methods of production. Holding down prices/costs caused by supply-side factors thus causes inefficiencies.

Even controlling demand-pull inflation has its costs. By reducing demand, sales of companies automatically fall off. They would then be more reluctant to expand and may in fact cut production. Unutilized capacity is potential production that is forever lost - which means less goods for society to enjoy. Worse still, this may lead to retrenchment. And if firms are reluctant to expand, then economic growth for the country will be affected.

There are costs in both keeping inflation artificially low as well as allowing rampant inflation. The ideal is not zero inflation, but controlled inflation. Many feel that in the current economic situation of our country, inflation below 5 per cent is quite acceptable.

How to cope with inflation

Inflation, it seems, is just about as unavoidable as taxes. One should thus ensure that one is financially prepared to deal with it.

Wages should be indexed to inflation to ensure that the buying power of the take-home packet is not affected. When salaries are increased only in line with inflation (currently just under 5%), it would be a mistake for an employee to feel richer and go on a spending splurge.

The tax structure should be reviewed periodically with gradually higher allowances and brackets being introduced to ensure that workers are not taxed more just because their wages have been increased in line with inflation.

Savers should keep some of their savings in assets that appreciate with inflation, like property and shares. However, these assets are less secure and generally less liquid compared to deposits with a bank. Thus, any investment in such assets should be for the long-term, avoiding what is speculative. A substantial portion of one's savings should still be kept in the bank so as to be readily accessible.

Savers should not be misled into thinking that all the interest earned on their deposits is earnings to them. Much of the interest paid is simply adjustment for the lower value of money. Only the difference between the interest rate and the prevailing inflation rate is earnings to the depositer that can be spent without affecting his net wealth.

When inflation rises, interest rates will also rise. Savers should not then place their deposits for very long maturities. If your money is kept in a shorter period deposit, then when interest rates are increased, you are able to earn the higher interest sooner.

Inflation is part of the free-market economy that operates in our country. The authorities, particularly Bank Negara, can take credit for controlling inflation at tolerable levels. Our inflation is in fact lower than most of our ASEAN neighbours, and certainly much lower than the triple-digit rates experienced in South America and Eastern Europe. However, with inflation creeping higher, wage-earners and savers will have to be careful not to be misled by numbers that are not inflation-adjusted. To get the real effect, one must always factor out inflation. With the ringgit steadily declining in buying power, such adjustments are essential when comparing ringgit amounts over time.
THE DECLINING VALUE OF THE RINGGIT

One ringgit today buys only what 39 sen could buy in 1972 - a fall of 155 per cent in buying power. AMAR GILL examines the causes and effects of Inflation and provides some tips on how to cope with it.

The average rate of inflation over the last 20 years has been 4.8 per cent. This means that one ringgit today buys only what 39 sen could buy in 1972. The buying power of the ringgit has fallen 155 per cent in this period.

Another measure of the value of the ringgit is its buying power abroad. Since 1985 the ringgit has fallen 58 per cent against the yen, 41 per cent against the pound and 11 per cent against the US dollar. Thus, the cost of buying goods from these countries has become much more expensive for Malaysians. Holidays in these foreign lands, and other places with appreciating currencies, have become much more expensive for Malaysians.

The value of a currency compared with another currency will, in the long-run, depend on the inflation rates of the two countries. Countries with higher inflation will, other things being equal, have currencies that depreciate. However, there are other factors that also affect the value of a currency. The balance of imports against exports in trade of merchandise as well as "invisibles" (e.g. education, holidays and transport) together with the flow of money in and out of a country are the other main determinants of the value of a currency. It is indeed possible that a country may have a lower inflation rate than another, but the other factors could lead to its currency depreciating against the other country's. For instance, over the last six years, inflation has averaged 2.5 per cent in Malaysia, lower than the average inflation rates of the US and the UK which were 4.2 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively; yet the ringgit actually declined against the currencies of these countries.

Within a country, the inflation rate measures the eroding buying power of money. When inflation rises, the buying power of money falls.

The buying power of the ringgit has fallen 155% in 20 years.

The effects of inflation

With inflation eating away at the value of the ringgit, those with fixed incomes will find that they are poorer. Their income can no longer buy the same amount of things it used to. This affects mainly pensioners and workers whose wages are not adjusted annually for inflation.

Even those whose incomes are adjusted for inflation may find that they are poorer. As your salary is increased, you enter a higher tax bracket. Thus, it is possible that much of the adjustment in salaries to reflect inflation is taken away by higher taxes.

When inflation rises faster than expected, those with savings may well find that the buying power of their savings, even after adding in the interest, has declined. This happens if the inflation rate turns out to be higher than the interest rate on deposits.

Conversely, borrowers gain when inflation is higher than interest rates. The amount they have to pay back on their loans, even after adding in the interest, has less value than the sum they borrowed initially.

Usually, however, interest rates are adjusted for expected inflation thus minimizing the effect of inflation on savers and borrowers. But even when inflation is fully anticipated, there are costs involved in adjusting for inflation. Banks have to send out letters informing their customers of new interest rates, customers have to search for the banks that give the best interest rates, shops have to change their price tags, unions have to haggle with

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