

Mahathir: The British Empire and Its U.S. Minions Foment Global War

by Mike Billington

Feb. 28—The interview below with former Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was conducted on the sidelines of an extraordinary event held on Feb. 15-16 at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, in Putrajaya, the new capital city of Malaysia. Both the Foundation and the city itself were conceived of by Dr. Mahathir, who was Prime Minister from 1981-2003, during which time he established himself as one of the most courageous and creative leaders among developing-sector nations. He earned the hatred of the London-centered Empire when he stood up against the massive speculative attack against several Asian nations in 1997-98, defying the “free market” by imposing currency controls on the national currency, saving his nation from the devastation visited upon his neighbors—Indonesia, the Philippines, and others. The speculators, led by George Soros, were furious, and went to work funding “regime change” subversion through compliant stooges in their pay.

Dr. Mahathir was interviewed for [EIR](#) in Malaysia on Jan. 22, 1999, by my late wife Gail Billington, and *EIR* published detailed reports on his regular outspoken, and often quite humorous, attacks on the Western speculative policies which were destroying economies worldwide; he demanded a return to Glass-Steagall and related regulatory restraints on the ravages by the Western financial institutions.

The event where this interview took place was held in honor of the life’s work of Kassim Ahmad, a Malaysian political leader, Islamic scholar, poet, and writer, who had recently turned 80. Because Kassim has been an outspoken supporter of Lyndon LaRouche and LaRouche’s political and philosophic ideas and practice since the early 1990s, this author was invited to speak at the conference on behalf of the LaRouche organization. The more than 200 attendees at the conference were well aware of Kassim’s long-term promotion of LaRouche’s ideas and political movement, as he had re-



EIR’s Mike Billington, former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, and Kassim Ahmad. Kassim is a Malaysian political leader, Islamic scholar, poet, and writer, whose 80th birthday was celebrated at an event in Putrajaya, Malaysia in February. Kassim is also a longtime collaborator of the LaRouche movement.

peatedly referred to that fact in his autobiography, *The Road Home—From Socialism to Islam*, published in both Malay in 2009, and English in 2011.

In his presentation to the conference, Kassim said: “The LaRouche movement is the American system, seeking a way between the two failed systems, liberalism and communism, promoting humanism. The movement has provided me with much happiness and satisfaction.” He said he prayed to God that the war being stirred up over the Ukraine crisis would not occur. “The people of America need to fight hard,” he said, “and uphold their humanistic, revolutionary tradition. They

must avoid being hegemonistic.”

What made this conference so interesting, and controversial, is that on two key issues, Kassim has been persecuted by the Malaysian government, and by the religious authorities in Malaysia, who hold a position of significant power in the state. In 1976, Kassim, who was for 18 years the head of the socialist Rakyat Party, was rounded up under the Internal Security Act, and held without charge or trial for five years. Then, having spent those years in an intensive study of the Koran and other Islamic writings, he published a book arguing that many of the statements in the Hadith (the reputed acts and sayings of Mohammad, collected by others during the Prophet’s life and after his death) are contradictory to the tenets of the Koran, and should not be viewed as truthful simply because of their inclusion in the Hadith.

This caused a huge controversy and led to the banning of his book by the religious authorities in Malaysia (although it is available online in English under the title *Hadith: A Re-evaluation*). Still today, many Malays are intimidated by the ban, and refuse to read this book, or any others by Kassim.

Thus, for this conference to be held at the Foundation founded and directed by Dr. Mahathir, and co-sponsored by the JUST International (headed by the outspoken political and religious analyst Chandra Muzaffar), marked what many described as the “much delayed recognition” of the profound work and political influence of this critical thinker. Following the conference, the religious authorities immediately opened a new investigation into Kassim’s speech, while the Islamist organizations and press exploded with accusations against Dr. Mahathir for openly supporting Kassim’s right to debate these issues.

Dr. Mahathir responded to these accusations on his blog: “It is very dangerous and confusing when anyone, just because he is fluent in Arabic and has a degree in Islamic studies, is declared a religious scholar. The disunity among the Muslim community of various sects is caused by people like these. Their followers have been enemies and have been committing murder for decades. There is no tolerance among them, when the Quran clearly asks of us to not even be enemies with people of different faiths, unless they see us as enemies. Labeling people just because they do not agree with one’s point of view is the way of those who are not open to debate. [They say:] Just accept what is being alleged by those who are not thinking. Do not use your common sense bestowed by Allah because apparently it is pro-

hibited in Islam.”

This author’s presentation to the conference is reflected in the questions presented to Dr. Mahathir in the following interview, focused on a warning of the current rush to thermonuclear war by President Obama and his British/Wall Street controllers, in the context of the ongoing collapse of the trans-Atlantic financial system, and the necessary solutions as developed by Lyndon LaRouche.

Interview: Dr. Mahathir Mohamad

The British have caused more damage in this world than anybody else.

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, former Prime Minister of Malaysia (1981-2003), was interviewed by EIR’s Mike Billington in Putrajaya on Feb. 15.

EIR: Let me start with your role in the 1997-98 so-called Asia crisis. From the beginning of that crisis, you insisted that the measures you took to protect Malaysia were only defensive, and there wouldn’t be any real change until the world financial system were reformed along the necessary lines of ending financial speculation and the return to investments into the real economy. Clearly that has not happened.

Dr. Mahathir: Yes.

EIR: I wonder if you can tell me what you think has happened in these last 15 years, in Malaysia, and globally.

Dr. Mahathir: There is a state of denial among the developed countries’ leadership, in that they still believe that what they did was the right thing to do. What happened, of course, was that after they lost their market, in terms of manufactured goods, in Eastern nations, they retreated into financial markets, and they invented all kinds of [financial] products, and these products were all about gambling—they were not about manufacturing anything, they had no spin-offs for anybody, nobody shared in the wealth. All they did was to bet on whether the price of shares goes up or down, whether the currencies appreciate or depreciate.

And once they knew the mechanism, they made use of this mechanism to create the situation which was beneficial and profitable to them: short-selling of shares, short-selling of currencies. These things cannot last. Once you lose, you are going to lose a lot. For instance,



UN Photo

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad addressing the UN, September 2003.

leveraging—once you leverage by about 20 times in the invested amount, of course, when you make a profit, you make about 20 times more; but when you lose, you also lose 20 times more. When that happens, everybody goes bankrupt—the hedge funds go bankrupt, the banks go bankrupt, the investor goes bankrupt, and the whole society has to pay a price. This is cheating.

A Divided World

EIR: This is cheating; this is what we are experiencing today. In fact, what you see is that the world is now divided between a trans-Atlantic empire which is crumbling...

Dr. Mahathir: Yes.

EIR: Nations in Europe are being subjected to death—disease, taking away pensions, taking away wages, 40-50% unemployment, horrendous conditions, which is rapidly taking place in the US as well. On the other hand, you have the trans-Eurasian nations, largely Russia and China, but also Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, which are still committed to progress, to science, to development, to infrastructure. And yet, as you see in Ukraine, when a nation chooses to go with Eurasia rather than the trans-Atlantic powers, it is treated as a pariah. Even Thailand, a nation that has been close to China and the rest of Southeast Asia, is now being torn apart. A similar thing in Cambodia, too. What do you

America's view is that there must be confrontation—everything should be resolved through war. We do not want any war here. We do not want any fighting here, because the destruction would be horrible. So we will try our best to work with China, to find out how we can settle these claims made by China, not through confrontation, but through friendly negotiation.

think has to be done?

Dr. Mahathir: This open declaration by the US, in particular, that they want to achieve regime change in order to install in all the countries of this world, governments which favor them—this is totally wrong. Because you may try to influence through ideology, but using wars, killing, massacres, and providing weapons and money to people who rise against the government—and actually instigating them to bring down the government, in order to install governments which favor the US—this is what is causing a problem now. In the Ukraine it is the same. In Syria it is the same.

Only last night, I was listening to the Al-Jazeera report on the conference on Syria. They were not interested in anything but regime change. They don't care about peace. They don't care about the suffering of the people, about the refugees and all that. All they want to do is to achieve regime change. This is their sole agenda. And towards this end, they do not care what method they use.

EIR: You met with Chinese President Xi Jinping when he was here [October 2013], right after he made his announcement in Indonesia of the Maritime Silk Road, and you formed the Cheng He Association, named after Adm. Cheng He, who led the armada of the huge Chinese treasure ships, in the 15th Century. Could you tell us what you have in mind for this Association?

Dr. Mahathir: Well, we call him Ching Ho—the Malay name is Ching Ho. He is a remarkable leader, a remarkable man. He came with very powerful forces—not to conquer, but to establish diplomatic relations with countries. China never attempted to conquer countries. They wanted to establish diplomatic relations and

trade with these countries. This contrasts with the first Portuguese—with Vasco da Gama, Afonso de Albuquerque, and Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, who came here in order to conquer. The Portuguese arrived in Malacca in 1509. Two years later, they conquered Malacca.

The Chinese had been in Malacca for many, many years before that, and never conquered Malacca, although they had so many Chinese in this country who could have formed a fifth-column for them. But they never tried to conquer. So there is this difference between Cheng He and the Portuguese and the other Europeans. Cheng He established friendships.

So this Association that we are going to form is in order to celebrate friendship between nations. There will be an award for the people who work most to bring about friendship between countries.

‘We Do Not Want Any War Here’

EIR: As in the Cold War, the Obama Administration, and its backers in London and Wall Street, are now demanding that the nations of Asia take sides with the US, both in the conflict in the South China Sea, and related strategic issues of conflict with China, and also with the TPP [Trans Pacific Partnership], which is clearly also an economic confrontation with China. What do you see as the result of this process?

Dr. Mahathir: As for Malaysia—I can not say for the other ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] countries—but we do not want the US to come here and settle our problems. Our problems with China are our problems, and we will settle them *with* China—both parties should be involved. Of course, some of the countries have already invited the US to come here. America’s view is that there must be confrontation—everything should be resolved through war. We do not want any war here. We do not want any fighting here, because the destruction would be horrible. So we will try our best to work with China, to find out how we can settle these claims made by China, not through confrontation, but through friendly negotiation.

We believe here in Malaysia—we are trying to promote the idea that war is a crime, and the only way to settle conflicts between nations, is through negotiation, arbitration, or court of law—not through war. But the US is saying that we must side with them against China. We do not see why we should be with them against China. China has been there, and cannot be removed—you cannot wish it away. We need to live with China, whether China is poor or rich, or advanced, we have to

live with China, and we have to find ways and means to settle any problems we have with China through negotiation, arbitration, or a court of law.

EIR: You founded the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal, which found Tony Blair and George W. Bush guilty of crimes against the peace, for the illegal war in Iraq. President Obama has carried this war policy forward, in Libya first, and now in Syria, where full-scale war was only stopped because Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of the US military, told Obama by-and-large that it must not happen, and also because our organization mobilized popular support against it. But it is very fragile, and ready to blow apart again. It was narrowly avoided, but it is still on the table. We are facing a similar thing in Ukraine, threatening a full-scale war with Russia. Do you think it is time for the War Crimes Tribunal to take up the case of Mr. Obama?

Dr. Mahathir: Normally, the War Crimes Tribunal works when there is a complaint from the affected people. Of course, if there is a complaint, they will take it up, but it is up to the Tribunal to decide on this. But our view is that people who wage war must be punished, because war is not a way for civilized men to settle disputes—by killing each other. In civilian society, if you have a quarrel with another person, you cannot go and kill him, as a solution. Yet, in the case of quarrels among nations, one nation can go and destroy and kill as many of their so-called enemies as possible, and they are not guilty. This is a contradiction over how conflicts can be settled. So if we find there are complaints, then of course we will take it up.

EIR: When the war with Syria was temporarily postponed, and at the same time, the P5+1 talks began with Iran, this looked rather promising, but perhaps the Syria situation is falling apart. There are also those who would like to see the Iran talks fall apart. As a leading Islamic nation, and one in which you personally have often taken courageous stands on international matters, what role do you think Malaysia can play in this attempt to provoke such crises in the Islamic world?

Dr. Mahathir: Well, Islam actually is about peace. If there are divisions from this, it is the wrong interpretation of the teachings of the religion. So we are for peace because that is what Islam teaches us. It’s not just because these are Muslim countries or Muslim people who are involved—anywhere that peace is broken, we

will take the side of those who want peace and settlement through negotiations in order to solve their conflicts.

As far as Malaysia is concerned, if we have the strength, of course we will try to help, but otherwise, our opinion is that everything should be settled through peace. We don't condemn any party—at the moment, we cannot condemn either the Syrian government or the rebels, because we need to know what are their grievances; but whatever may be their feelings about these things, they should not resort to war. Those who resort to war are ultimately against peace, and those who finance these wars are not doing any good for anyone because it is not going to settle the problem.

The US must know—they went into Iraq, and they thought it was going to settle this problem within three months, and they were there for ten years; and the same thing in Afghanistan. But the US has never learned anything about war. They have been defeated in Vietnam, they have been defeated everywhere they go. Even in Somalia they could not end it. But they still believe that they can solve the problem with war, but they will not. Not these days. Because even if you “win” and occupy a country, there will be resistance until they leave the country.

Britain's 'Great Game'

EIR: Part of the reason this region has become a cockpit for war, and become a focus of a conflict between East and West, is because of the enflaming of the Sunni-Shi'a conflict. We have documented that the British, through the Saudis, have been deeply involved, fomenting that kind of division. Do you want to comment on that?

Dr. Mahathir: Yes. Well, the involvement of Saudis—I wouldn't like to comment upon it, because we have good relations with them. But at the back of this all is the British. The British have caused more damage in this world than anybody else, through their colonial policies in the past, and through the conclusion of their decolonization process—all these things have left behind a legacy that leads to war. You know, their creation of Islamic states, like Syria, Lebanon, Iraq—these were created by the British. They were just one people before. There were no divisions of Syria and the rest, but the British drew a line, with the French...

EIR: Sykes-Picot...

Dr. Mahathir: ...so that this half went to the French, and this half to the British: This was the Great Game

that they played. And what is the result? The result is now, you find enmity between people who are of the same race, the same religion, because of these destroying borders and lines. The same thing in Africa.

EIR: On the economic issue—when you were

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waging your fight on behalf of Malaysia, but really on behalf of the world, against the IMF and the Soros network, and those who were running the “Asia crisis,” so-called, which was really the beginning of the world crisis, you, even at that time, said that the Glass-Steagall solution, dividing the investment bankers off, letting them collapse if they collapse—no government support for that...

Dr. Mahathir: Yes.

EIR: ...and saving our commercial banking system, as Roosevelt did. You supported this at that time. We now have bills in both the US House and Senate, some courageous leaders taking it up, others signing on but not taking leadership. I assume you still strongly support that policy. Do you have a message for those who need a little kick in the appropriate place to get them to take action?

Dr. Mahathir: I think there is a trend towards retreating—retreating from the principle that they adhered to before, because of the wealth involved, the power of Wall Street for example, which has invariably been a part of the government in the US, and so anything that stands in the way of the immoral activities of Wall Street would be pushed out and neutralized. This is the plan that we see, because they don't want anything to stop them from amassing as much wealth as possible.

That's why even the anti-trust laws are now ignored. Before, what Rockefeller did was only confined to the US. Now, US companies are spreading to the rest of the world, and they want to monopolize all the business activities in the whole world, world domination—just as Rockefeller would have control over the oil business in the US, now the American businesses want to control

all business in the rest of the world. They don't care about anti-trust laws, or the Glass-Steagall Act. This stands in the way.

EIR: This stands in the way, so they have thrown it out, and the results are now clear.

Would you like to say anything about Mr. [Lyndon] LaRouche and our movement?

Dr. Mahathir: You are sometimes the lone voice against the trends, and that is something that has to be continued. Someone has to come up and say something against the present trend of letting markets go wild. You know, there is no more control—the idea that the market will regulate itself is so much nonsense, because the market is about making money, making profit. They are not interested in regulating themselves. This is where the government abdicated their role. We think the government must come back. The government are representatives of the people. The business people are *not* representatives of the people. To let them loose like that, and tell them that they can make the laws for themselves, and for the world, is for the government to abdicate their role. Government must come back, and set limits to the things that the market can do. If you leave it to the market, this world will never recover.

A Global Development Project

EIR: We're now in the midst of a project, working with friends in Japan, Korea, Russia, and elsewhere, a global development project, but focused on what we call the trans-Pacific, from the Mississippi River, developing the NAWAPA water project—the huge project to bring water down from the north to double the agricultural land in America, a tunnel under the Bering Strait, rail and water development projects in Central Asia—so that this whole trans-Pacific region can be the new frontier for all mankind. We're going to be developing this over the next few months and putting it out globally, as the basis for peace—peace through development.

Do you wish to comment?



Kassim of Bernama

The LaRouche movement is "sometimes the lone voice against the trends, and that is something that has to be continued," Dr. Mahathir said. Here, Prime Minister Mahathir meets with EIR's Gail Billington in January 1999.

Dr. Mahathir: Well, obviously the world needs re-thinking about how this world should be structured and managed. Obviously, much of the thinking now is done in the East. In the West, they are so busy trying to extricate themselves from the mess that they are in, that they have no time to think what is right and what is wrong. The only thing they can think of is more domination. And they are foisting on the world all kinds of agreements, supposedly to be free trade, but actually to regulate trade through various treaties. You cannot do anything outside the treaty—so you are being regulated. It's not about free trade, it's about regulated trade, but it is posed as free trade—free-trade agreements, TPP, etc.,—all these things are attempts, through the economy, to control the world, to keep the world from developing, especially in the trans-Pacific area from developing as a counter-balance to the power of the traditional West.

EIR: What would you like to see your legacy to be?

Dr. Mahathir: I would be very happy to see just very small things for my country—that it should stay neutral, that it should continue to say what is right and what is wrong, that it should always hold to principles, and not be swayed by outside powers who want to make use of them.

EIR: I thank you very much.