

Sarawak Can Become Malaysia's Rice Field

Sarawak, one of the provinces on the northern coast of Borneo, which is separated from the Malaysian peninsula by the South China Sea (see map), has vast undeveloped agricultural potential. It is also the site of the Bakun Dam, which will be completed within the next four years, providing adequate energy supplies to the region for agro-industrial development.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi,

after meeting with the chief minister of Sarawak, YAB Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, said: "If other countries don't want to export to us, this will create problems for our people.... We want to ensure food security, so ... Sarawak can become the 'rice field' for Malaysia." The chief minister noted that rice growers elsewhere had turned to cereals for biofuels production, and said big rice plantations were needed to meet the rice national-sufficiency goal. Transportation and irrigation infrastructure investment will be required to make this possible. A committee composed of high-level figures from both the public and the private sectors was established to oversee the implementation of the program.

Mohd Peter Davis, a scientist at Universiti Putra Malaysia and a representative of the LaRouche movement in

the country, has long warned that the intentional dependence on food imports in Malaysia could result in disaster as the impending world food crisis left the nation in the same conditions it faced during the Japanese occupation during World War II, cut off from imports. Davis praised the government's initiative, and was encouraged that the government may also adopt his unique proposals for expanding animal production in tropical climates as part of the emergency food program (see *EIR*, April 25, 2008).

Malaysia

