

Australia Dossier by Lydia Cherry

Knives are out for Asian trade bloc

The attacks on Malaysia's prime minister have all the pawprints of the Anglo-Americans.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke termed Australia's current relations with Malaysia "delicate" on April 15. Addressing delegates to an Asian-Pacific conference in Canberra, Hawke said he expected to hold talks with his Malaysian counterpart, Mahathir Mohammed, at a special Commonwealth heads of state meeting in London in June.

Hawke cited as the divisive issue "Malaysia's unhappiness" over an Australian Broadcasting Corporation television series entitled "Embassy," which he said the Malaysian government claims is derogatory toward Malaysia and to the Islamic religion. Hawke said he hoped that Malaysia understood that a characteristic of Australian democracy was that the government did not control the media. This is a somewhat debatable claim in that his friend Rupert Murdoch, who is part of the Anglo-American elite, controls 80% of the print media.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed said the same week that the relationship between the two countries will not improve unless the Hawke government "adopts a more friendly attitude" toward Malaysia. Though he didn't go into detail, he said there were "certain elements" in Australia that did not like Malaysia and were trying to destroy its image. He claimed that the situation seemed to be heating up but that dissension between the two sides, based on the activities of these "certain elements," had been in existence for "quite a long time."

Among Australians who have been most critical of Dr. Mahathir historically, are individuals closely tied into Anglo-American intelligence

agencies. Australian newspaper archives, for example, reveal a virulent attack unleashed on Mahathir several years ago by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith (ADL). Printed in mid-1987 by the weekly *Australia-Israel Review*, whose current editor Michael Danby is thought by many to be an operative of the Israeli Mossad, author Abe Foxman, of the ADL's New York office, railed that "Under Mahathir Mohammed, Malaysia has become a racist nation, patterning its actions literally after Nazi Germany. . . . Malaysia is following the same doctrine as Nazi Germany in the '30s. . . . To be sure, Mahathir Mohammed has not gone as far as to write a Malay equivalent of *Mein Kampf* or projected a 'final solution' but . . ."

In recent months, ADL fellow-traveler Henry Kissinger has been organizing against Dr. Mahathir's initiative for an East Asian Economic Group (EAEG). Australia is clearly acting as an Anglo-American junior partner in keeping this bloc initiative from being realized. One of Mahathir's provisos was that the United States, Canada, and Australia were not to be included in the grouping.

In their counter-organizing against this initiative, both the United States and Australia have been a bit obvious. For example, in late March, the Australian newspaper *The Weekend* totally distorted remarks made by Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew in an interview. The Australian paper quoted Lee Kuan Yew as totally rejecting Dr. Mahathir's proposal for the EAEG; in fact, Singapore has consistently supported the

plan.

Following the publication of the interview, Lee requested that the full text of the interview be made available for circulation in Singapore newspapers. This, according to Malaysian and Singapore press accounts, revealed the Australian coverage to be in error.

The Malaysian Foreign Ministry on March 26 expressed regret over the publication's "report aimed at damaging the existing good relations between Malaysia and Singapore."

Australia was instrumental in the formation of the Asia-Pacific grouping through which the U.S. and its junior partners plan to wield control over one of the few regions of the world where economies are still growing. This group, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group (APEC), was constituted several years ago.

An editorial that appeared in Malaysia's *Business Times* last February reveals that for Dr. Mahathir, however, it is also a North-South question. "It no doubt unsettles the U.S. that its influence could very well be whittled down in the Asia-Pacific area, deemed to be the center of world economic growth for the 1990s and beyond. It had earlier set into motion its own strategy for dominating the region through its strenuous promotion of the concept of APEC, which meant that the North will still hold sway in this part of the world through the U.S., Canada, Japan, and Australia. ASEAN in fact has ventured only tentatively into APEC, and with its eyes wide open."

Clearly the knives are out for Dr. Mahathir, and this is not just coming from Australia. The prime minister is quoted by Malaysian press April 13: "They can go on attacking, but I will continue to defend myself. If it is time for me to fall, I will fall, but if it is not yet time, I will not."