

global operations.

The Jan. 11 London *Financial Times* printed a full-page diatribe against this "Miyazawa Doctrine," titled "Japan Covets Lead in Asia." Says author Robert Thomson: "Mr. Miyazawa will show due deference to the U.S.—but, between the lines, the speech will suggest that Asians should settle their own disputes and that Japan will gradually move closer to center stage." Thomson hits Miyazawa's report for stating that "The Japanese people must assume a heavy responsibility" for leadership in Asia.

Western press speculation around Miyazawa's trip to Malaysia focused on whether the Japanese would take a clear stand on Dr. Mahathir's East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), which has been a "hot potato" since Mahathir first proposed the idea on Dec. 10, 1990. Japan has consistently punted on the subject, because the United States opposes it vehemently. The EAEC, as it was initially envisioned, was to include not only the six ASEAN countries and the three Indochinese countries, but also Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. According to Malaysian press reports, during the two-hour meeting he had with Miyazawa, Mahathir never brought up the subject, nor did Miyazawa. But, probably because Miyazawa, in a Jan. 17 interview with Malaysia's *Business Times*, had referred to the EAEC as a "trade bloc," Dr. Mahathir decided not to leave the matter unaddressed. During his dinner speech on Jan. 18, he noted that there was a tendency to think of regional groupings as trade blocs, but that ASEAN itself, one of the most successful regional groupings, had been around for 25 years without becoming a trade bloc. Mahathir said that, as had been the case in ASEAN, the wider grouping of countries belonging to the EAEC were bound to learn from each other the right approach to economic development.

The Malaysian prime minister welcomed the practice of Japanese prime ministers to consult with leaders of East Asian countries prior to attending G-7 meetings. But, he added, since the views were given without prior consultation between the East Asian countries themselves, it was likely that conflicting views would be expressed. To overcome this, he suggested that East Asian countries meet to identify the common problems and arrive at a common stand to enable more effective representation of the grouping by Japan.

Miyazawa, in his speech, avoided mentioning the EAEC. He spoke of Malaysia as an economic success under Mahathir, whom he described as dynamic and courageous.

Transcripts of a seminar on the EAEC held in Kuala Lumpur in September with representation from Japan, Hong Kong, and ASEAN nations, make clear that the "divisions" on this issue are not real. A political grouping is coming into being. The plan is not to "ice" out America. But it is recognized that the U.S. economy is collapsing. What must end, the participants agreed, was "America's divide and rule policy," not American involvement in the region, which is seen as essential.

Interview: Franck Mességué

We need systematic testing for AIDS

With a scandal raging in France over AIDS-contaminated blood and the irresponsibility of government and medical officials, individual citizens are beginning to take spectacular initiatives to force public health measures vis-à-vis AIDS. That is what Franck Mességué, a plant specialist and record-breaking diver, is doing. As of Christmas, he had spent more than two months in a hunger strike to demand that the authorities implement an AIDS testing policy.

Camping out in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Mességué distributed a document to the public, explaining the reason for his action. He writes: "Prevention also means testing, which is frequently counseled, but would it not be objectively desirable . . . if this were systematically prescribed? The person who has the earliest understanding of his seropositivity could benefit early on from treatments that would assuredly retard the progression of the disease," and could act with "responsibility toward those close to him and his partners."

Mességué's hunger strike is taking place amid a brawl among government and medical institutions over systematic testing, and at a time when Social Affairs Minister Georgina Dufoix is drawing the lessons of the "contaminated blood affair" and publicly calling for testing. The scandal was exposed last summer when the head of France's National Center for Blood Transfusions (CNTS), Dr. Garretta, was tried for his 1984-85 decision not to withdraw untested blood products from circulation after testing became available. CNTS also refused to use a heat-disinfectant method on blood products that are used by hemophiliacs, which would protect them from blood-transmitted AIDS.

Ultimately, 1,200 people, mostly hemophiliacs, were infected, and by the time the case came to trial, 250 had died. To add to the horror, a special study was run on approximately 420 hemophiliacs without their knowledge: Half were treated with contaminated blood products and half with heat-treated blood products. CNTS's Dr. Garretta and his associates were convicted, receiving maximum sentences of four years. The highest compensation meted out to the victims and their survivors was only a few thousand dollars. *EIR* covered the case and interviewed one of the experimental victims—who has tested seropositive—in our Aug. 21, 1992

issue.

Catherine Brannan interviewed Franck Mességué 19 days into his hunger strike. The interview is translated from French.

EIR: Mr. Mességué, you are a simple citizen. You do not represent any political party. Moreover, you hold a diving record—if you wished you could be lying around on the beaches in the Bahamas! Why are you here holding a hunger strike at the European Parliament in Strasbourg?

Mességué: I am simply here as support for public opinion. A poll in the journal *Impact Médecin* showed that 83% of Frenchmen favor mandatory testing . . . or let's say systematic AIDS testing. Obviously, this opinion has not been heard by the government, and the government always lacks authority. Once more, as in the contaminated blood case, it has forgotten how to act . . . or even how to follow public opinion on this question. . . . With the indifference I've faced after 19 days [since the beginning of the hunger strike], I am completely dismayed to state that we are led by officials who have no sense of responsibility. This is becoming terribly serious.

Every day I meet with journalists. I give them my document. The next day, they come to tell me that they agree with me, but that is not why they are coming to interview me (I don't mean you), to ask me for the basis for this story. Everyone agrees in general, but you know that whenever one *does* something, people aren't used to it—this makes them a bit upset. This is taking an open position. In the beginning, one is always going to be somewhat alone, but you see, gradually people are coming together to solicit support for this thing which they deeply desire.

EIR: Why are you taking this problem so much to heart? What made you decide to address this particular problem, as opposed to all the other problems in the world?

Mességué: It is true, there are very many problems in the world! But I think we all have human kinship, and at some point or other, one expresses it. This problem touches me, perhaps, more personally than others, because I remember very well what happened during [the student uprisings in] May 1968, when there was a "sexual liberation." We all "profited" from it.

There were some problems with sexually transmitted diseases, especially blennorrhagia. Everyone had this little annoyance, but it was noticed after three days and taken care of in the same amount of time. When I think that an illness that can be detected as quickly as blennorrhagia, that can be cured just as quickly, nonetheless spread so widely, then you can understand that the ravages that seropositivity could cause—just think, for 10 years you could be a "healthy carrier"!

The disease spreads just because the individual does not know he is seropositive, and thus does not protect himself

and passes on infection.

EIR: Are you familiar with the present situation in France and how it developed?

Mességué: According to the present statistics—and it may be that the count is far off—three seropositives out of four are aware of their seropositivity, and there are about 300 new seropositives every day in France. How many deaths must there be from AIDS? There has been an AIDS increase of about 30% every six months, which means a doubling every two years. So, how many deaths will it take before the government thinks it's time to act? How long before [Minister for Humanitarian Affairs] Bernard Kouchner, whom we always see with a tear in the corner of his eye, acts? Frenchmen are capable of saying yes or no, so at least let them be asked directly, and let's not have a situation where they have to tear down the walls in order to get into testing centers. The testing centers are visited by about 60,000 people per year, which means for each testing center, two people a day dare to come through the door.

EIR: What do you think of the "Garretta affair" and the willful distribution of contaminated blood?

Mességué: Concerning Dr. Garretta, it seems there were at least 200 people all equally involved, both in the ministries and elsewhere. [Prime Minister] Mr. Fabius, Mme. Dufoix, [Health Minister] Mr. Hervé . . . I cannot understand how roughly 100 people were informed that people were being poisoned, and yet there was not one person who revolted and contacted the press, saying: "We are in the process of killing people with contaminated blood." There was no one. "Nobody here but us chickens." There were people who loved money, loved power, but there was no one who had ideals. There were only people who betrayed themselves and betrayed others.

EIR: Do you think there are others who are ready to bring their actions into conformity with their ideas, as you are doing now?

Mességué: The problem is that 8 out of 10 Frenchmen live with their little comforts; they are quite cozy with their little auto, their little hearth, their little VCR, etc. They may all be in agreement with me—I think 90% of Frenchmen are—but, well and good, we have to act. I have the opportunity to act alone, since I have no family to take care of—I am an adventurer and I've had the occasion to show it, to act in conformity with what public opinion, in fact, is demanding.

EIR: What result has your action had?

Mességué: The results are that I've warned all the press. I've written all the humanitarian associations. I've written many deputies in Parliament. This encourages me, because it means that they have no more arguments to contradict the reasons for my action.