MALAY POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

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To my wife whose inspiring
support is lovingly acknowledged

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Acronyms

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia)
ALIRAN	Aliran Kesedaran Negara (National Consciousness Movement)
AMCJA	All-Malaya Council of Joint Action
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
ASA	Association of South-East Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASN	Amanah Saham Nasional (The National Trust Corporation)
BA	Barisan Alternatif
BARJASA	Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Sarawak Native Association)
BBM	Barisan Bertindak Melayu (Malay Action Front)
BERJASA	Barisan Jemaah Islamiah Se-Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Assembly Front)
BERJAYA	Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah (Sabah United People's Party)
BERSATU	United Group
Bhd./Berhad	Ltd./Limited
BISAMAH	Parti Bisamah
BMA	British Military Administration
BMF	Bumiputra Malaysia Finance
BN	Barisan Nasional (National Front)
CJA	Council of Joint Action
DAP	Democratic Action Party
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FMP	First Malaysia Plan

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERAKAN	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement)
GNP	Gross National Product
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HAMIM	Hizbullah Muslimim Malaysia (Malaysian Muslim Association)
HICOM	Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia
ICA	Industrial Coordination Act
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
IMP	Industrial Master Plan
ISA	Internal Security Act, 1960
LUTH	Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji (Islamic Pilgrims Management and Fund Board)
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat (People's Trust Council)
MAS	Malay Administrative Service
MCA	Malayan/Malaysian Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MDU	Malayan Democratic Union
MIC	Malayan/Malaysian Indian Congress
MNP	Malay Nationalist Party
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MPHB	Multi-Purpose Holdings Berhad
MSC	Malaysia Solidarity Convention
MTUC	Malaysian Trades Union Congress
NCC	National Consultative Council
NECC	National Economic Consultative Council
NEP	New Economic Policy
NIC	Newly Industrializing Country
NOC	National Operations Council
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAJAR	Parti Anak Jati Sarawak
PANAS	Parti Negara Sarawak
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam Se Malaysia (formerly Parti Aislam Sa-Melayu or Pan-Malayan Islamic Party)
PB	Parti Bumiputra (Sarawak)
PBB	Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (ex Parti Bumiputra Bersatu)
PBDS	Parti Bangsa Dayak Sarawak (Sarawak Dayak People's Party)

PBPR	Parti Bebas Progressif Rakyat (Independent People's Progressive Party)
PBS	Parti Bersatu Sabah (United Sabah Party)
PEKEMAS	Parti Keadilan Masyarakat Malaysia (Social Justice Party of Malaysia)
PENA	Malay National Writers' Association
PERKIM	Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (Islamic Welfare and Missionary Association of Malaysia)
PERMAS	Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak
PERNAS	Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (The National Trading Corporation)
PESAKA	Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak
PETRONAS	Petroliam Nasional Berhad (The National Petroleum Corporation)
PKMJ	Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Johor
PMCJA	Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PNB	Permodalan Nasional Berhad (National Equity Corporation)
PNRS	Parti Negara Rakyat Sarawak
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PROTON	Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional (The National Automobile Industry)
PSRM	Parti Socialis Rakyat Malaysia (Socialist Workers Party of Malaysia)
PUTERA	Pusat Tenaga Rakyat
RISEAP	Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific
SAPO	Sarawak People's Organization
SCCP	Sabah Chinese Consolidated Party
SDP	Socialist Democratic Party
SEDC	State Economic Development Corporation
SERU	Social and Economic Research Unit
SMP	Second Malaysia Plan
SNAP	Sarawak National Party
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
TMP	Third Malaysia Plan
UDA	Urban Development Authority
UDP	United Democratic Party
UEM	United Engineers Malaysia
UMAT	Parti Umat Sarawak

UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMNO Baru	New UMNO
UNKO	United National Kadazan Organization
USNO	United Sabah National Organization
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

Chapter 1
Introduction

This book proposes certain notions of the evolution and modernization of Malaysia's Malay political leadership and they are explained in terms of historical and political experiences. The account of such experiences, far from any entrapment of nostalgic romanticism, is a progression of ideas and practices not unlike that experienced in other societies. What is different about Malay political leadership is that there is no leadership of its kind anywhere that has been able to maintain indigenous primacy in a fairly even multi-racial environment and one that subscribes to western democracy for its governance while retaining conservative Islamic values. In describing leadership notions, the author argues that there is an intrinsic value in the way we perceive certain things in life and much of it is innate. That value translates into a pseudo perceptual knowledge that gives rise to such impressions as predestination, illusion, etc., elements that are applied to prophetic beliefs and in the revelation and inspiration of leadership. These philosophical arguments that are offered in the author's doctoral thesis from which this book is drawn and expanded, have been left out for brevity and a more general readership.

The book hopes to show that despite its adherence to *adat* (custom and traditions) and religious practices, Malay leadership is generally speaking not traditionalist in its outlook. Indeed, an important part of the Malay cultural ethos is its pre-occupation with modernization. The Malaysian bureaucracy and its social institutions are decidedly one of the most modern of post-colonial societies moulded arguably from considerable western influence. Successive Malaysian leaders had striven hard to project themselves as progressive and innovative as any leader of the modern era while still maintaining their own distinct cultural identity and embracing traditional values. This view portends a duality of modernism and tradition that will be examined in this

book but suffice to say, Malay leadership has been remarkably successful in harmonizing a variety of idiosyncrasies in its path to modernization.

Why study leadership?

To begin with, leadership is a bewitching subject as it conjures imagery of power, supremacy, pre-eminence and all those elements that give one the dominance or advantage over others. Leadership is important to society when we consider that it has to do with a few powerful people who have great influences on the outcomes of our lives. As a study it poses an enigmatic challenge since – as unpredictable as human nature – we never seem to know enough about it. As a subject leadership has been written about, researched and discussed possibly more than any other single topic. Leadership is a self-perpetuating social phenomenon and hard to quantify as there is no matrix upon which we can ascribe a universal prescription. It is probably not very well understood despite the mass of literature on it. What do we seek in a leader? Inspiration? Guidance? Can society not exist without a leader? Broadly speaking no – this has certainly not been the experience of history.

Collective human behaviour and its views of leadership obviously vary from society to society. For example, Fidel Castro is alright for the Cubans but quite a different matter with the USA. What about Hitler or Stalin? How did the rest of the world see the disgraced Nixon and the vindicated Clinton? And what of Marcos, Suharto, Estrada, Abdurrahman Wahid or even the steely magnetism of Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamad, would they have survived had they been in the west with their brand of leadership? History has more contradictions than simplistic generalizations of great visionaries and wise men. In the absence of defining leadership in some measurable terms, we can hypothesize that a perception of leadership is moulded by cultural or ideological experiences. As has been suggested, perception is innate too. This is the thrust of leadership concepts that are offered in this book.

At this point it would be useful to address briefly some contextual issues. A question could be asked if leadership theories in the context of history and politics have any relevance to religious or corporate leadership. In general terms, leadership theories have a commonality; the difference is only in the application and the method of appointment. The qualities of a corporate leader could well be similar to that

of a prime minister. In addition, corporate leaders, like religious and military leaders, have shown themselves to be able leaders in the political realm. The tendency to fashion prime ministers as 'chairmen of the board', points to the more business-like and corporate quality that is demanded of political leaders these days. Governments are 'corporatized' and 'meeting the needs of the market' and the functions of government too are modelled along 'rules of accountability' of the private sector. The distinctions it seems are small. But a corporate chief is anything but a 'leader' in the real sense of politics.

There is a difference. Bennis says 'To survive in the twenty-first century, we are going to need a new generation of leaders – leaders, not managers . . . Leaders conquer the context – the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that sometimes seem to conspire against us and will surely suffocate us if we let them – while managers surrender to it.'[1] 'Leader' is ambiguously used in business and rarely used to refer to the boss of a company. A prime minister too is functionally quite a different person from a chief executive of a corporation. It would serve little purpose to argue this point. What is important is the interpretation of leadership within the specific theory. The author maintains that the term 'leadership' in this book is specially bound on a theory within the realm of history and politics. A corporate leader therefore is not a leader for the purpose of this theory.

There is ample literature on leadership studies but it is sufficient to say that in its simplest form, leadership can be seen as a partnership or a state of co-existence between a person and a group of people. This group of people, we can safely assume, looks to their leader for some *corporeal* economic benefit. It would be fair to say too that until the leader delivers this expectation, the people only believe *intuitively* that their leader can satisfy their needs. It would follow that a continuing leadership therefore rests on a partnership of mutual benefit where the leader will have the right to power so long as the needs of the people are satisfied. In some political systems this leader-people partnership can continue indefinitely so long as mutual expectations are satisfied.

We can agree that it would be unimaginable to have certain types of leaders of the past in our midst but if one should emerge, as it could possibly do, it belies the assumption that the masses know everything there is to know about leadership. In the same way, leaders of some countries today whom we find totally unacceptable to our way of life are hugely popular and revered almost divinely in their own countries.

Call it cultural variance or idiosyncratic perception but that is not to say there is no universality in definition as nearly all societies would generally describe and regard leadership in nearly the same way. History has shown us many types of leaders and while each has a uniqueness of its own, they also share certain common patterns. In the case of Malaysia, the subject of this book, the author argues there is a certain psychological virtue, one that *innately* imbues society with a mindset of a predestined leader. It also has a sociological aspect, one that expresses the *corporeal* functions of leadership. These two aspects, the psychological and the sociological, are the primary concomitant imperatives for the perpetuation of leadership. As society's expectations grow, so also will its demands on the leadership which then evolves and adapts to the new challenges for its survival. The equilibrium that is required in the leader-people partnership poses an interesting insight, if not more challenging, in the case of Malaysia where the modern and relatively young Malay leadership is surrounded by the complexities of race politics, *kampung* nationalism, Islamic zeal and non-Malay patronage. An analysis of Malay leadership within these aspects and its path towards maturity is a contribution to what is now a limited pool of relevant scholarly literature.

The Malays and the Malay World

Who are the 'Malays'? The Malays as we generally know are the indigenous people of Malaysia. In the historical sense when national boundaries were undefined and with freer maritime movements, there was probably some logic in calling these areas the Malay World in the collective sense but apart from this, there seems little relevance today. Anthropology has tended to define ethnicity along cultural traits and 'concentrated on areas of major social interaction or sense of identity'.[2] However, it is the intention of this book to show that Malay leadership concepts took root at the very cradle of the traditional Malay World; and for this purpose a simplified demarcation of the Malay World will be suggested according to historical origins. Before we come to any agreement on the location of the Malay World, a set of parameters is presented for argument. The Malay World can be defined in three ways namely linguistically, geographically (ethno-culturally) and historically/politically.

Linguistically means all those areas where the Malay language is linguistically common and adopted as the National Language such as Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Indonesia and identified by such

terms as *Bahasa Melayu*, *Bahasa Malaysia*, *Bahasa Kebangsaan* (Singapore's National Language) and *Bahasa Indonesia*. The Malay language spoken and written in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei is almost common. Some variation of Malay is also found among the peoples of Okinawa and Ryukyu islands, the Philippines, the Alishan of Taiwan, the Cape Malays of South Africa and among a Javanese/Malay community in Sri Lanka, Surinam and Madagascar. Because they are not common to the 'mainstream' Malay language, they have not been identified as part of the Malay World in this discussion.

Geographically and more accurately ethno-culturally, the peoples of Southeast Asia are collectively classified as Malayo-Polynesian of the Austronesian group but this description is too diverse to be useful. It is only in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei where the word 'Malay' or *Melayu* is used officially. In Malaysia it refers to the local-born native *bumiputra* (literally son of the soil) specifically the Malays but not the aboriginal *bumiputras* or *orang asli* or proto-Malays e.g. Sakais, Negritos, Ibans, Dayaks, Kadazans, etc., who are not considered Malay primarily because they are not Malay-speaking people. Since Javanese is the mother tongue of the greatest number of Indonesians and *Bahasa Indonesia* adopted wholly from Malay, the National Language of Indonesia, it begs the question if Indonesia can be appropriately categorized as a constituent of the Malay World.

There are sufficient grounds to argue otherwise: language alone does not pre-qualify; for instance English has persisted in former colonies but they can hardly be called part of the 'English World' or 'Spanish World' for the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, since, in the main, these countries are not culturally 'English' or 'Spaniard'. Indonesia is a country of many different ethnic groups of both Polynesian and Melanesian origins and they are as distinct as the Achenese in the north of Sumatra and to the frizzy-haired Papuans of Irian Jaya. Given that, the Indonesians have fewer cultural similarities than the largely homogeneous Malays of Malaysia.

Still it has to be acknowledged that there was great cultural exchange between the coastal communities of Java, Sumatra and the Riau Archipelago and the Malaysian islands where Malay had since time immemorial been the main language and should likewise be recognized as part of the Malay World. And due to their close proximity to Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia, the peoples of these coastal communities have a striking resemblance in their cuisine, arts, music, attire, custom and traditions to that of their Malay neighbours.

There are aspects of Javanese history especially with regard to the Majapahit-Sri Vijayan kingship that was the precursor to the Melakan-Malay Sultanate which should be similarly acknowledged for their contribution to the legacy of the Malay World. Southeast Sumatra is regarded as the 'original' home of Malay kingship if we look at its historical origins as being from the Palembang-based Sri Vijayan kings according to the Malay Annals. A point of debate is Singapore whether it can be properly said to be a constituent of the Malay World. While it is well within it as far as geography goes, it has a minority Malay population and Malay is less spoken though it is its National Language. The same can be said of the Patani Malays of southern Thailand. Writers such as Young, Wolters, Andaya, Winstedt and Hall have all made similar assumptions about the Malay World but they have tended to confine the 'proper' Malay World to Malaysia, the eastern coast of Sumatra and Brunei.

In the final analysis the Malay World would be – linguistically, geographically, historically and politically – demarcated along the coast of Sumatra, Riau-Lingga Islands, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, the Sulu Islands and peninsular Malaysia. By today's reckoning there is no question that the ideal home and heart of the Malay World is Malaysia populated in the main by people who are recognized internationally as Malays. Malay identity has always been a question – ever since the time of the early Melakan rulers with their *masuk Melayu* meaning really someone who had converted to Islam rather than the literal translation of 'becoming Malay' – over who really is a 'Malay'. Islamic conversion, it seemed, was a traditional pre-qualification to being accepted as Malay. But the practice is followed even now. A *bumiputra* who is not a Muslim is not regarded Malay. Folklore puts the origins of the Malays from Palembang, Sumatra and the Riau-Lingga archipelago.

Whatever it is, Malay was a convenient holistic term applied to all those migrants from neighbouring states into peninsular Malaya. However, the Malays were not content and sought to clarify (finally) just what constituted the Malay identity. At the turn of the twentieth century the issue took on a more nationalistic stance. Emotive terms such as *Melayu jati* (true Malay) and *perasaan kebangsaan* (nationalist feeling) added a qualitative dimension to the question of identification. In 1940, a 'Malay Blood Purity Campaign' backed by Malay associations all over the country including Singapore resolved that a Malay 'is a man whose male parent is a native of this Malay Peninsula or any of the neighbouring islands of the Malay Archipelago [thus

excluding Malays of patrilineal Indian or Arab descent and Javanese or Balinese]'.[3] This was obviously quite problematic for many. The Malaysian Constitution identifies a Malay as one who embraces Islam, speaks Malay and practises Malay culture. Soon after Singapore's separation from Malaysia, Singaporean Malays were encouraged by their relatives, friends and Malaysian political leaders to immigrate to mainland Malaysia. But many were upset as they were not allowed entry because they could not be properly identified as Malays. Singapore Arabs were the most vociferous among them who had, for the most part, thought they were indistinguishable from the Malays. Many of Indonesian origin especially Javanese and Boyanese too were upset because they believed the Malaysian government ought to let them in since they were Muslims, spoke the Malay language and in all respects Malay even though not *Melayu jati* or of Malay ancestry. As one's race was noted in the Singapore identity cards, such as Javanese, Boyanese, Batak, Arab, etc, the Malaysian authorities refused to accept them as Malays and declined them entry as new migrants.

Singapore now refers to all these people collectively as *Malay-Muslims* ostensibly to distinguish them from the many people of Indonesian origin in Singapore who are not Muslims. A moot point is that one supposedly cannot be Malay if not a Muslim and the description of a *Malay-Muslim* would suggest that they are Malays who are not Muslims – an issue that has moved neighbouring Malaysia to consider the Apostasy Bill with ramifications for Singapore Malays and we can only guess how they would feel being described differently from their kith and kin across the causeway. Ironically, there are many Malaysians of Arabic ancestry who regard themselves nothing less than Malays notably the late Syed Dato Ja'afar Albar, one-time UMNO secretary-general who was not even Malaysian-born. Equally, there are many local-born Arabs and other *peranakan* who, in fact, never properly regarded themselves as Malays.[4]

This is an issue particularly with the *peranakan* Indian/Malay mix. Indian Tamils especially those who were part Malay often described themselves as *peranakan* or *DKK* or *Darah Keturunan Keling* or the Melakan *Chitty*. They did not, especially during the colonial days, seem to readily declare themselves as Malays although many had Malay blood. One of the problems was the unfortunate image of the Malay in colonial times – he was often perceived to be lazy, poorly educated, a peon, a *wak kebun* (gardener) or a chauffeur.[5] Even if one was only mildly mixed and looked more Malay, it was somehow more fashionable to be regarded as 'mixed' rather than Malay especially if

one was English-educated and an anglophile at that. There was therefore this reluctance of these people of mixed ancestry to carry the Malay identity tag. A Malay was teased as *orang ulu* if he did not know English. This sort of stereotyping was not only confined to the Malays: the Chinese had their *sinkehs* and the Indians their *mamaks*.[6] Cultural identification is not always definable, for instance, the *peranakan* Chinese or Indian or the Eurasians cannot be accurately grouped within their own ethnic origins.[7] People of mixed parentage especially the English-educated tended to identify themselves with the image of the westernized person or the anglophile usually with anglicized names that were freely adopted. In a climate of strong colonial and Christian environment, indigenous passions were sometimes forgotten. Malays too were affected as traditional names such as Hassan, Ali, or Salleh were less favoured for more exotic-sounding names. Royal behaviour also contributed to changes in traditional Malay norms during the colonial period. Many sultans were unashamedly anglophiles and some like Sultan Ibrahim spoke more English than Malay.[8] Somehow there was a perception that the ability to speak English identified one with the English-speaking upper class.

Hindu-Buddhism

An animistic belief system preceded the coming of Hinduism. Much of the Hindu rituals fitted with indigenous custom and in time Sanskrit terminology was adopted for local custom. Hinduism was practised as a ritualistic religion of the royal court in the Malay World and because it was not a proselytizing religion, it imparted little or no religious teachings in the way Islam did. Buddhism found easy acceptance in the Hinduized Malay World partly because it was Indian in character and shared many of Hinduism's basic doctrines. The Malay World practised Buddhism while keeping Hindu rituals and mythologies. This was possible since Buddhism is atheistic and did not conflict with the spirit belief system of Hinduism. The symbiosis between these two Indian-based religions is described as Hindu-Buddhist in the period before Islam. For simplicity 'Hindu' or 'Hinduism' will be used in this book to mean Hindu-Buddhism.

Gender

The male gender will be used throughout in this book since rulers and leading political leaders of Malaysia have been males. The author

acknowledges that there were and still are several female monarchical and political leaders but none are subjects in this book. The theories and suppositions that are used to describe male leaders apply equally to female leaders.

Structure of the research

Chapter 1 begins with an introduction of the objective and theory this book offers and defines the different terms used. Material on traditions and concepts of leadership are analyzed principally from primary writings in Malay literature, pre-history, modern history, religion and politics. The book spans chronologically from the Indianization period from about 1 AD to about early 2001.

Chapter 2 will discuss the traditional concepts of Malay leadership with the object of providing an empirical view of contemporary leadership that will be compared with the typology of Malay leadership. Brief commentaries on western leadership theories will be offered to see their relevance to Malay leadership concepts. The chapter also discusses the hypothesis that Malay society had been conditioned by culture to perceive matters about power and authority as a phenomenon predicated by predestination. Notions of pre-Indianized Malay leadership will be drawn into the discussion to explain first how they were merged with concepts of Hindu-Buddhist kingship and second, to illustrate how ideas of divinity and the cult of spirits formed the basis of Malay society's perception of the predestined leader. Progressing along, the chapter will discuss the transition of leadership from Hinduism to Islamization. It will argue how Islamization re-emphasized historical perceptions by accommodating the symbolisms of spiritual leadership and harmonizing Hindu-Buddhist traditions despite their contradictions to Islamic orthodoxy.

In Chapter 3, the book will examine in what way have concepts that have been established in the previous chapter influenced leadership development in the periods before and after independence. This book contends that the idea of modern leadership did not evolve until colonization when the challenges of nationalism and sovereignty took root. Colonization also brought about the awareness of power outside the realm of royalty that introduced an impetus for self-determination and the emergence of a national elite. Colonialism impacted profoundly on Malay society and conditioned the Malays well for independence. It toughened the resilience of traditions in the face of *kafir* (infidel or non-muslim) British rule and united the Malays under

one nation. With a system of delegated authority and power more evenly shared among administrative levels, there was no danger of Malaya ever returning to the royal-absolutist leadership of the past. An atmosphere of consensus prevailed and power transferred to a multi-racial coalition party with a Malay leader. However, Malay anxiety about nationhood marked a symptom of more serious problems initially of regional hegemony and communalism. Independence had meant a reassertion of *bangsa* (race) and *negeri* (country) for the Malays and an assurance that there was always a Malay at the helm of leadership. But the events leading to the formation of Malaysia, Indonesia's Confrontation and Singapore's Separation, presented an awesome challenge to the leadership.

Chapter 4 will follow with a discussion on the progressive political events and leadership style of Malaysia's past prime ministers beginning with Tunku Abdul Rahman (Tunku) and following respectively in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 on the leadership of Tun Abdul Razak Hussein (Razak), Dato Hussein Onn (Hussein) and Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (Mahathir). As a means of measuring their leadership strength, these chapters will examine their leadership vision and guidance in aspects of national unity, the economy and foreign affairs.

In Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957–70) whose crowning achievement was Malaya's independence, we see qualities of charisma and the fatherly image that are described as strong features of Malay leadership. But his leadership came under attack for its reluctance to adapt to the more combative style of the 1960s that had characterized the tumultuous period leading to the Separation of Singapore and the inter-racial riots a few years later. Tunku tried to keep a tight hold on the racial differences in parliament but the Malays felt he did more for the Chinese than for them. His preference for a more consensual and accommodating style illustrates a much-misunderstood picture of the docile Malay leader who was blamed for the problems that preceded his untimely retirement.

So when Razak (1970–76) assumed the leadership there were predictably far-reaching schemes to appease Malay expectations. His ground-breaking economic reforms that sought to selectively uplift the economic development of the Malays, are now entrenched in state economic ideology. He was also credited for his diplomacy with Malaysia's neighbours but Singapore eyed him with great suspicion as he was believed to be truly the architect of Singapore's ouster from Malaysia. Razak's interventionist leadership style which did much to the economy however left the party in disarray on his death.

Razak's brother-in-law Hussein (1976–81) succeeded him. Party in-fighting dominated much of Hussein's leadership. Some say Hussein's appointment was a matter of prerogative rather than a party choice. Whatever it was, many would believe he had a weak political base. But Malaysia under Hussein had stable economic growth that saw several government initiatives in corporate relationships. He had a likeable diplomatic temperament and along with creating many important milestones in foreign relations, the government under Hussein had its best relationship with Singapore. His leadership however was coloured by a rise in Islamic extremism owed, in a way, to the lack of Islamic zeal in the government. Still Hussein had the most peaceful leadership among all Malaysia's leaders despite some minor political events and the unsettling relations with UMNO coalition partners in the *Barisan Nasional (*National Front, *Barisan*, for short).

Continuing factionalism within the party saw the re-emergence of aspiring leader, Mahathir Mohamad. He had been consigned to political wilderness for the temerity in asking Tunku to resign soon after the May 13 Riots in 1969. Razak saw in Mahathir a man who could help him tackle the country's education problems and promptly installed him as minister of education when he became prime minister. On Hussein's retirement Mahathir (1981–) who was then deputy prime minister, assumed the nation's leadership. Mahathir's chequered path to his ascension is a classic case of a man predestined to be leader. Mahathir has been fortunate to enjoy the longest leadership of all and is singularly credited for many of the reforms that have made modern Malaysia what it is today.

Chapter 7 on Mahathir will discuss how he radicalized modern Malay leadership in defiance of traditions. The chapter will also discuss his leadership style in a number of issues such as party factionalism, crises with the rulers and the judiciary and his management of the economy in the wake of the 1997–98 Asian economic crisis.

Chapter 8 will bring the discussion up to date with recent developments of Mahathir's leadership following the Asian economic crisis, the 1999 general elections, the UMNO party elections and the closing of the Anwar Ibrahim trial in August 2000 and events through March 2001. Most analysts will agree that the events of the last four years were the most testing for Mahathir's leadership. That he survived, underscores the resilience of his leadership. But much more as this book suggests, the survival was an augury that propitiously suggested to him that he was to stay in office – indefinitely. As if he needed that assurance, there was no doubt in anyone's mind, least of all his that he

was *ever* going to step down barring serious illness. But there are ominous signs amidst growing racial and religious factionalism which is clawing at the very core of Mahathir's power and is threatening to shred asunder not only the long-standing multi-ethnic compact of his government coalition but also the unity of the Malays. As he reflects on his future he sees terrifying similarities of the turbulent circumstances that led to the ouster of Tunku on whose painful back Mahathir was to rise decades later.

Chapter 9, the concluding chapter of the book, will summarize the discussion on the relevance of the theory of *innate perception of . . . predestination* as explained in Chapter 2 to the leadership of Malaysia's four prime ministers. It will compare traditional concepts with contemporary leadership experiences with an assertion that leadership is perceived in psychological and sociological factors – the intrinsic faith in leadership in return for tangible benefits.

Chapter 2

Traditional Malay concepts of leadership

Malay leadership ideas have their roots in early historical and cultural experiences that played an important role in influencing many of the elements of perceptual knowledge. The objective of this chapter is to identify how those elements became the guiding standards for societal behaviour and their influence in the conceptualization of Malay leadership. Much of the discussions which centre on historical Malay literature are not merely a recounting of the past but are rather nuances and subtlety in institution-building, behavioural norms and diplomacy. By explaining traditions in the context of leadership, this discussion hopes to clarify the basis of the theories offered in this book. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will explain how Malay society's perceptual knowledge of predestined leadership had evolved from indigenous notions and merged with Hindu kingship ideas of divinity. The second part of the chapter will discuss the transition of leadership to Islamization. It will argue how Islamization re-emphasized historical perceptions by embracing the symbolism of traditions despite their apparent contradictions with Islamic orthodoxy.

Indigenous notions of leadership

The belief in the emergence of the pre-destined leader is as old as any ancient history of prophesies and often romanticized in traditional folklore and in this respect, the Malay World shares some similarities with other traditional societies. But there is a certain uniqueness in the Malay belief system and it is in the interpretation of this uniqueness that we are concerned with here. The author maintains that this quality of distinctiveness can be traced to an inherent perceptual knowledge of the Malay psyche. As the idea of perception is at the core of

this argument, it is important to explain how this is seen. As a subject, theories of perception have evoked great philosophical controversy and are sometimes, whether correctly or incorrectly, equated with 'perceptual knowledge', 'phenomalism' and 'phenomenology'. In general terms, perception as Dancy puts it is 'the sort of knowledge that we get about the things around us by looking at them, feeling them, tasting them and so on'.[9] Kant sees perception as awareness that has sensation as its concomitant. George Moore introduces 'sense datum' that says that we cannot perceive things rather we perceive only sense-data. He adds that what is perceived can be whatever is given and that could only 'resemble' the 'thing'. 'Imagine' is perhaps a better word because we apparently, according to Moore, simply cannot see the 'thing'. Bertrand Russell and C. D. Broad are advocates of this theory as well. On the other hand, Gilbert Ryle and John Austin believe we do indeed perceive things and they consider Moore's theory as confusing invention. We perceive nearly in the same way as we imagine episodes in which we have had no prior experience or knowledge. The study of perception is especially important in epistemology. Plato distinguishes between what one can do through sensory perception and what one can do with the mind. Sensory perception he says is how we sense reality in a real world situation. Mind perception is how we sense reality in an intelligible world that can be apprehended only by the intellect not by senses. But Aristotle develops the view that the intellect can only attain knowledge after the senses provide the images.

Locke in his theory of Representative Perception says it is questionable if we are born with any innate ideas. He believes such ideas are gradually fed to us entirely by our sense perception. What Locke is saying is that while we may not be born with innate ideas, we have the mechanism (sensory perception) to receive ideas. But surely that mechanism must have pre-existed at birth just as we are provided with all our senses but only to use them fully much later. In that sense we can conclude that sensory perception is innate. Another way to look at perception is in *causal* terms. Knowledge about perceived objects depends on causal inference, for example, we perceive fire from smoke or death from abject starvation. Grice offers two ways of looking at the Causal Theory of Perception. Firstly he says while appearance is ultimately the only guide to reality, what appears to be the case cannot be assumed to correspond with what *is* the case. Secondly perception is something to be judged primarily on its intrinsic merits and not merely as a part of a solution to a prior epistemological problem.[10] In

other words we cannot be said to be perceiving something when we are clearly influenced by some earlier experience – that according to Grice is pre-knowledge not perception.

The hypothesis of perception of predestination offered in this argument is defensible if we accept that some things are innate and intrinsic in the human psyche without the slightest benefit of prior knowledge. Perception therefore is sensory knowledge learnt by sense or influence that is sometimes difficult to reason about scientifically. But that is not to suggest that it is impossible to verify. If we regard perception as a theory it should at least be capable of being tested even if a conclusion is not entirely possible. Perceptions of Malay leadership have a cultural and ideological quality and because the quality is expressed in narratives and mythology, it too faces a similar difficulty. But it should not be. Popper says 'the task which science sets itself (that is the explanation of the world) and the main ideas which it uses are taken over without any break from pre-scientific mythmaking'. Invention of cosmological myths he says was necessary to understand and explain the structure of the Universe.[11] Malay narratives on which much of Malay mythology and ideology are based are euhemeristic that is they explain myths on a historical basis and adapt them for their leadership role-models such as in the folklore heroics of *Hang Tuah*. Alluring myths like idealistic visions, miracles and prophetic images are often necessary for the mystification and professed truth of the celestial. They are impossible to prove yet responsible for setting moral precedence.

As well as myths and intrinsic suppositions, the Malay World too had many extrinsic merits by which the right to leadership was determined, such as by lineage, descent, legitimacy, conquest, usurpation and in modern times since independence, through an elective process. An example of lineage or descent would be hereditary kings who ascended the throne because of blood links to a founding ancestor. In traditional Hindu society kingship by descent was the right of the *kshatriya* (person of noble caste) who was said to be the only one according to the *varna* (class system)[12] to possess the spiritual strength to claim the right of power and leadership – such as Asoka perhaps the greatest Hindu king in history who alluded to himself as the *'Devanampriya'*, the supreme ruler in *'Priyadarshin'*.[13] Notions of democratic rights of leadership were therefore foreign to the traditions of the Hinduized Malay World.

Long before the coming of the Europeans, the maritime states of the Malay World had been of particular interest to Asiatic seafaring

traders for their lucrative coastal trade in spices and religious aromatics. The Malay World had been known to India long before it was Indianized. Indian sources from the Buddhist *Jataka* tales refer to the Malay World as '*Suvannadbhumi*' (land of gold) and Malay rulers had sailed into Indian territory before Indians arrived in sizeable numbers. Indigenous concepts of leadership in the Malay World were gradually modified by ideas from India. The earliest evidence of Indian influence was in the fourth century AD with the discovery of the *Mulavarman* inscriptions in Kutei, Borneo followed by those of *Purnavarman* about fifty years later in west Java. From migratory and linguistic patterns, it is believed that the southeast coast of Sumatra was one of the earliest Indianized settlements in the Malay World. It was here where the Saivite-Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya (7–11 AD) arose and became the source of many of the concepts of Malay leadership.[14] At the time blood and spiritually-right relationships were the most important means of claiming the right to rulership.

An example would be of Melaka's first ruler in the fourteenth century, Parameswara, the refugee Palembang prince. He declared himself ruler according to his spiritual descent of the mythical kings of Bukit Si Guntang according to *Sri Vijayan* traditions.[15] Another example of traditional legitimacy would be that of Sultan Muzaffar Syah, the first ruler of Perak but the last sultan of the Melakan dynasty whom the Malays revered as the original king of the Malay World.[16] He was installed by the people by virtue of his being the genuine *raja mahkota* (crown prince) though his father had unfairly relegated him to *raja muda* (young king but not the heir apparent). An example of leadership by conquest would be that of Raja Kecil, a Minangkabau prince from Siak. He legitimized his claim to the Johor throne by the overthrow of the previous ruler, the *Bendahara*-king. He also staked his claim on the ground that he was the posthumous son of the last Melakan king, Sultan Mahmud. He asserted that as a descendant of Mahmud he possessed the spiritual powers inherited from the ancient kings of Bukit Si Guntang. This claim was sufficient to gain the allegiance of the *orang laut* (sea warriors of the Melakan kings) and to wrest the throne from the *Bendahara*-king.

The elective process of leadership as it is now in Malaysia is typically by party and parliamentary elections, a western concept induced by colonialism. Weber describes the elective process of leadership as 'legal-rational' as it ensues from the legal order and formal institutions. Elected leaders he says are rational in the sense that they are objective, impersonal and linked to the growth of bureaucracy.

However, this is a simplistic view of elected leaders akin more to the occidental mode. There are elected leaders who have justified their long stay in power by supernatural claims, such as 'mandate from heaven', '*mahdi*', or the coming prophet, etc., all ostensibly chosen by the same 'democratic' method Weber has in mind. Their leadership is hardly rational if we are to assume Weber's view of leadership. Modern governments too have retained non-elective leadership which, though largely symbolic, does have powerful constitutional prerogatives. A good example is the monarchy of Malaysia which not only has these powers, it also professes spiritual lineage that it symbolically suggests in royal ceremonies by the recitation of the *ciri* (acclamation of supernatural genealogy). Occasional insinuation of such invulnerabilities are not entirely unknown even by modern-day politicians.

By whichever method leadership is attained, the number of followers who are willing to be led measures its success. This willingness indicates that the leader and the people have coinciding and reciprocal interests. Ideas of reciprocity were known in ancient times in the Malay World. A simple story is told about Hang Nadim, a *pahlawan* (warrior). He agreed to abduct Tun Teja, a princess of the Pahang royal court, for his master the sultan of Melaka Sultan Mahmud Syah. Hang Nadim agreed to undertake the dangerous mission because he had hoped to redeem himself from the disgrace he had incurred from the sultan for failing in an earlier mission. For the successful accomplishment of the Pahang mission, Hang Nadim was rewarded with the title of *Laksamana* and the sultan happily married Tun Teja.

Besides having coinciding interests, most leaders tend to be culturally similar to their people in race, language, custom and most importantly religion, whereby spiritual and political protection was offered in return for loyalty. In this respect, traditional Malay society was unique in that there was immense loyalty towards its rulers as evidenced by the fact that the Malays did not abandon their sultans when they were overcome by colonization, political or economic problems.[17] To this day loyalty is held as an important element in alliances and treasured strongly by the Malays in all aspects of relationships. According to the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) 'Malay subjects are never disloyal . . . I may be put to death . . . for I have no wish to serve another master.' It is assumed that so long as the leader is fair to his people the more likely he would be given loyalty. Malay literature has many examples of rulers who fell because they were not only manifestly unfair to their people but also betrayed the sacral protection they were destined to provide and the trust expected of them.

Weber talks about another type of leadership quality that he calls 'charisma' meaning 'gift' in Greek. Charismatic leadership rests upon certain magical qualities of the leader which attract the masses. According to Weber, leadership in Hinduism is charismatic by nature and is characterized by leaders who are perceived as exceptional spiritual individuals. These qualities according to Weber are not ordinary human virtues and set the leader apart from ordinary people. Weber's view implies that the charismatic quality of Hindu kings was probably the most important of their leadership attributes and this, perhaps, explains the more pronounced reverence that was placed on rulers in the pre-Islamic era of the Malay World. Hinduized Malay kings were regarded as reincarnate deities of *Shiva* and *Kali*, objects of reverence and fear.[18] They were believed to be divinely appointed, as they were, according to Moertono 'identified with a God'. All rulers in old Java according to Anderson were charismatic and permanent since they were not subject to the pressures of political dynamics. The people's perception of spirituality in their king apparently never changed.[19]

Many aspects of charismatic leadership from this view can be said to be inherent in Malay society before Hindu ideas were adopted.[20] However, if we consider that leadership in the Hindu Malay World was the exclusive preserve of descended rulers, there appears hardly any opportunity for charismatic leadership to emerge. Weber and Moertono would be quite wrong to assume that ancient Hindu-Malay rulers were necessarily charismatic. Granted that charismatic leadership has always been present, charisma should only be taken as a personal quality not an assumed strength. Furthermore, it is doubtful if charisma really played any role in traditional leadership especially if we consider that the Malay decision-making process has traditionally relied on *muafakat* (consensus) in royal *majlis-bicara* (meeting council) rather than any special quality in the leader's personality. However, it is possible that in the days when affairs of the royal court were more sacramental, the ruler's decisions were believed to be divinely-inspired and personified from an 'inherent' charismatic quality.

The charisma Weber talks about is suspiciously different with rulers of old from what we understand of the word with present-day leaders. With old rulers the power of his spirituality or the charisma was such that he was never physically close to his subjects who respectfully kept a distance from him. The ruler's presence was more felt than seen thus providing an air of mystery in his personality. The ruler bridged this distance by rituals and court ceremonies that were held frequently in which the people participate enthusiastically. It was supposed to be a

great blessing to be able to see the Hindu ruler during these occasions; in the same way as deities that were taken out from temples for public display were great moments of blessing. Occasions such as these served to uphold the aura of the ruler's divine legitimacy and together with his ability to provide protection and livelihood, confirmed the enduring belief in his supernatural attributes.

According to Paul Mus, Southeast Asian indigenous belief systems had several features in common with Indian religions including spirit-belief and ancestor-worship and the veneration of soil-gods. He says that a cult of spirits pre-existed Hinduism in autochthonous societies and believes that 'it makes more sense to speak of a religion of the monsoon zone of Asia than to speak of Indian religion or Chinese religion prior to the civilizations which were later to give meaning to these words.' Mus suggests that Indianization was a matter of putting Sanskrit words on local custom 'which the Hindu and Buddhist intruders lightly wrote their signatures on before they passed away.' There is sufficient evidence to support the view that an indigenous concept of charismatic leadership had preceded Indianization.[21] Such a concept according to Mus arose from the worship of soil-gods or *yaksa* through the ritual-making shaman-king in pre-Brahmannic times. The Malay World was already a thriving civilization before the Indians came as can be seen by its skill in *sawah*, the cultivation of irrigated rice-fields and its knowledge of metal tools. The Malays were skilled seamen who had ventured far beyond the Indian seas, such skills that were made possible by their own knowledge of nautical science.

Villages had established social systems of *adat* and in places like Minangkabau, a wholly indigenous system of matrilineal law survived even after patriarchal practices appeared with the coming of Hinduism. The cultural vitality of the *wayang-lakon* (puppet show-drama) which was adapted to show the *Ramayana* epics, the instruments of the *gamelan* orchestra and the fabric innovations of *batik* and *ikat*, all indicate that the Malay World had attained a high level of creative sophistication. There were also ideas of power and leadership that according to Anderson were intrinsically indigenous although they approximated elements of Indian cosmology.[22]

Though Anderson's discussion centres on Javanese concepts, the Malay World was similarly influenced by ideas from the Hindu kingdom of Majapahit in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He says that fundamental to the idea of power was fertility and order. Fertility was identified with the sexual virility of the ruler that was an essence

of his dignity. His 'seed' was the microcosmic expression of power and he was seen simultaneously evoking the fertility of the land and expanding the vitality of his kingdom: the more virile he was the more productive the land would become it was believed. It augured well for the fertility of the land if the ruler fathered many children who are considered a *rezeki* (good fortune) even these days by Malays and Indians. Malay rulers perpetuated the ancient belief of fertility by keeping concubines beginning with the first legendary Malay king of Bukit Si Guntang. According to the Malay Annals: 'When Sri Tri Buana was established on the throne he wished for a consort; and wherever there was to be found a beautiful daughter of a prince he took her to wife . . . to no less than thirty-nine princesses had this happened.'[23] Instances of the ruler's excesses were so common that the 'palace became a scene of scandals' but they tended to be tolerated even when it was patently immoral as was the case of Sultan Mahmud Syah's infidelity with the wife of a close aide. Tome Pires, the Portuguese chronicler says '[the ruler] took all the beautiful daughters . . . to be his concubines'.[24] Another aspect of power was order that was measured by the maintenance of harmony in society. The ruler maintained harmony by 'absorbing' his adversaries by *cerdek* (cunning) and *kehalusan* (subtlety), the former by out-witting and the latter by polite and subtle language and self-control. Both are forms of non-aggressive means of diplomacy that are applied today.

The Malay Annals relates several instances when the power of absorption was applied. One instance was the *cerdek* of Sultan Mansur Syah who coached his envoy with clever answers to prepare the latter for an audience with the emperor of China. So impressed was the emperor that he presented his daughter to Sultan Mansur Syah thus ending China's threat to the Melakan kingdom. In *kehalusan*, proper leadership demands virtuous and politeness in character. The ruler had to show himself as peace-loving, god-fearing and benevolent. According to custom, a leader who chooses warfare when diplomacy appears a better option manifests a weakness in his leadership.[25] An instance of *kehalusan*, according to the Malay Annals, was seen in Sultan Muzaffar Syah's success in preventing a Siamese attack. Through diplomatic words he subtly conveyed through his envoy his peaceful but not obsequious approach to the Siamese king that '(since) he was preserved by God from his enemies . . . all the men of Melaka were invulnerable.' But he said he would not fight because Siam faced west '[as] it is the custom of us Muhammadans to face the west when we pray. We cannot therefore face that way when we are fighting'. The

Siamese king was so impressed with the message that he rewarded the envoy with a Siamese princess.

Another feature of indigenous power according to Anderson was control of the *pusat-mandala* (centre of power). Control of the centre was achieved by a centripetal process in which minor chiefs converged toward the ruler at the centre in a spirit of *anak-bapak* (child-father) accord. The core of the traditional polity had always been the ruler who personified the unity of society with his *wahyu*[26] (divine radiance) which was central to the symbol of power. One of Perak's most illustrious rulers in the eighteenth century, Sultan Iskandar Syah, built a *mahligai* (palace) as 'the exemplary centre . . . to disseminate civilisation'. The sultan's palace was his *tanda* (symbol) of his reign from where he conducted royal affairs. In the traditional sense the centralization of power in the centre also meant the concentration of large populations required for intensive rice cultivation and the mobilization of human resources for buildings and armies. An example of how this process of centralization was achieved was with the Majapahit king Hayam Wuruk (1350–89). First he made sure that the centre was harmonious and any public display of friction was strenuously avoided. Second he decreed that all heads of princely families lived in *dharmas* (religious domains) in the capital city to ensure the close unity of the court. For officials outside the family and further away from the capital he required that they attend the *Phalguna Caitra* (annual court festival) when rewards were customarily made. This was an event designed to emphasize the importance of the *pusat-mandala* by inducing the princes to come personally to the centre to declare their loyalty to him. The event also provided an opportunity for everyone to feel the ruler's *darshan* (holy personage) that was said to emanate from the ruler's *cahaya* (protective blessing of his majestic light).

In the Malay World an event such as the enthronement ceremony was also an occasion when the process of *pusat-mandala* was displayed where subjects paid homage to the ruler to reaffirm their loyalty and to receive the ruler's *cahaya*. However, it was to Indianization that Malay divine leadership owed its spiritual shape and concepts. One of the concepts was the definition of the Malay ruler as a *kshatriya* as was the case with Parameswara Melaka's first ruler. When Parameswara underwent the *abiseka* (reaffirmation rite) ceremony he was deemed to have rejected Javanese over-lordship and asserted his right by virtue of his divine descent as a ruling *kshatriya* to re-establish the Srivijaya-Palembang dynasty.[27] The other was his

daulat (sacred forces surrounding kingship) and his power in *durhaka* (*lèse-majesté* or treason) based on four inscriptions found at the foot of Bukit Si Guntang Mahameru where Srivijaya's first kingdom was founded in 683 AD by King Jayanasa. These inscriptions invoked spirituality and a divine genealogy that became abiding standards of royal power in Malay kingship. Srivijaya therefore provided the models of Malay leaders and Bukit Si Guntang the symbolic birthplace of the Malay people.[28]

From the myth of Bukit Si Guntang and royal spirituality we have two current ideas of legitimacy based on the Saivite-Buddhist doctrine: one is the synonymy of Bukit Si Guntang to the Hindu concept of Mount Meru, the spiritual centre of the cosmos ruled by the supreme god *Shiva*; and the other is in the mythic belief that Malay kings are celestial beings associated with the sacred.[29] The doctrine says the world consists of a central circular continent that is surrounded by seven oceans and seven continents. In the centre of the central continent rises the cosmic Mount Meru around which the sun, moon and stars revolve. On its summit lies the city of gods surrounded by the eight guardian gods of the world and it is this summit on which Hindu kings were given birth by *nagas*, the heavenly serpents and the original masters of the earth's soil. With this came the idea that as one who creates, *Shiva* could also destroy. Therefore *Shiva* is both Creator and Destroyer which he manifests through the goddess *Kali*. As a manifestation of *Shiva*'s creative ability, the traditional Malay ruler was seen as the essence of soil-fertility expressed in the cult of the *lingga*, the phallus-shaped stone god that was also a symbol of native spirit belief. In the same way the *raja-lingga* or the ruler signified the creative and productive functions of nature. As a manifestation of *Shiva*, the ruler controlled the resources of the earth and his well-being was regarded crucial to the prosperity of the community. His *daulat* had to be revered and protected to receive the bounty or *kurnia* of the ruler, as was the case with the legendary warrior *Hang Tuah* who had to carry out a difficult mission to gain the forgiveness and reward of the ruler.[30]

As a manifestation of the Destroyer or *Kali*, the ruler invoked *tulah* (a form of royal *sumpah* or curse), the terrifying nature of evil, destruction and bad omens on the unfaithful.[31] The ruler could inflict great harm on those who offended him and he had to be appeased to ward off malevolent spirits. A reflection of *Kali* in the Malay ruler was in the patronage of the *pawang* or *bomoh* (shaman) in whom the ruler vested his *ilmu* (magical powers).[32] Such an *ilmu* was said to have been

invoked by Sultan Abdullah of Perak in the murder of James Birch in 1875.[33] Beginning around the early thirteenth century, a wave of Islamic propagation gradually replaced Hinduism and Buddhism. By this time there was already in place a hierarchy based on the supernatural god-king at the apex followed by a *varna* system of followers.

Islamization and the legacy of traditions

The culture of leadership in the Islamized Malay World combined many aspects of indigenous and Hindu historical traditions. The most important was the heritage of divinity which remained the essence of legitimacy and authority. Second and no less important was the institutionalization of Hindu royal custom which helped perpetuate the memory of this divine tradition. Metaphysical perceptions that had evolved in the pre-Islamic era had endured throughout the development of Malay leadership but were obscured now with Islamic inscriptions. Though public displays of their supernatural rituals are obviously a thing of the past, their concepts are far from diminishing and are even re-emphasized in some matters of *adat*, homily custom, monarchical symbolisms and by the dramatization of mythologies in *bangsawan* (opera). While these aspects would appear to be contrary to Islamic orthodoxy, they underlined the durability of historical perceptions and the continuing mystification behind the persona of the Muslim leader. This discussion will begin by identifying those elements that have persisted since pre-Islamization and then argue for their relevance in modern Malay leadership concepts.

As Islam seeks equal salvation for all humankind, it accords no special status to royalty. Early Islamic rulers were expected to discard their old Hindu image: they no doubt tried to do this but they were equally passionate about their traditions. The Malay Annals and Malay *Hikayats* (literature) show that they continued to romanticize their supposed links to former divine Hindu kings not only to distinguish their status from their common followers but presumably also to uphold their divine status. Islamic rulers also felt it was propitious to retain lofty symbols of the past and indeed there had been instances when Hindu ideas of divinity were used to legitimize their right to authority.[34] But despite this argues Ahmad, Islamic rulers lacked genuine mystique of original Malay kingship because they were not completely immersed in the traditions of Hindu divine kings.[35] While Muslim rulers had never been known to make overt claims of divinity,

there had been more than subtle hints of their supernaturality. For example, Malay tradition likened them to 'God's Shadow on Earth' who ruled the earth in place of god.

They also emphasized by ceremonies or *bangsawan* (opera) the mythology of their descent from Alexander the Great and the supernatural princes from Palembang.[36] Unique in Malay leadership is its ability to syncretize into its institutions many of the indigenous traditions without blasphemy to its Islamic character. The process of syncretization began with the conversion of Melaka which had been Islam's most important entry into the Malay World. It began slowly because Hinduism was well-entrenched in Malay society and also it was likely that Hindu kings were unwilling to shed their veil of divinity for Islam's earthly image. This could explain why Melaka was not fully converted until its fifth ruler Muzaffar Syah (1446–59)[37] some four decades after the conversion of its first ruler Parameswara who even as a Muslim had assumed the spiritual lineage of mythological kings descended from Bukit Si Guntang. Parameswara also underwent the *abiseka*[38] to reassert his *kshatriya* descent, a ritual that is most definitely pre-Islamic but presumably not un-Islamic in his view.

The Srivijayan royal legacy continued to be the norm and was sacrosanct in the Melakan court even when Islam began to impact on the political and economic life of the ruler as shown in the example of Iskandar Syah (1414–24). When he finally decided to become a Muslim he decreed that his kingship should embody the traditional practices of his descent.[39] Such a traditional practice was the *ciri* which recounts the mythical genealogy of Alexander the Great and the princes of Bukit Si Guntang that was uttered in every king's ear during his lustration ceremony.[40] The impetus for a vigorous drive for Islamization in the Malay World came with the incursion of *kafir* (infidel or non-Muslim) Europeans. European presence that had resulted in a pervasive anti-Christian propaganda in the sixteenth century, had coincided with the active propagation of *Sufism* (Islamic mysticism) in the maritime states.[41] The *Sufis* were prepared to tolerate certain indigenous mystical traditions which they felt would not compromise their belief system. Perceptions of the mysticism of kingship, for instance, found lacking in conventional Islam were accommodated by *Sufism*. In this respect, two *Sufi* ideas were particularly attractive to the Islamized Malay rulers. One was the tradition of kingship and the other was the notion of the 'Perfect Man' or '*al-Insan al-Kamil*'.[42]

In the *Sufi* tradition of kingship, Malay rulers identified themselves

with the *tarikat* (brotherhood) and the etiquette of Mogul traditions with the use of titles such as sultan and syah. *Sufi* notion of the 'Perfect Man' and the Muslim ruler's idea of pre-eminence differed little from that of his Hindu forefathers. As divinity legitimated the authority of the Hindu kings, Sufic mysticism too venerated his kingship with the idea of his spiritual oneness with the Prophet viz. 'the just King was joined with the Prophet like two gem stones set in a ring' according to the Malay Annals.[43] While the belief in *hululiyah* (incarnation) in Islam was non-existent and even a major heresy, Malay kingship found ways to integrate the cult of divine descent into Islam, namely in the concepts of *ummah* (Islamic community) and *tasawwuf* (mysticism). The *ummah*, the politico-religious unity of the Muslim community presupposed the *kalifah* (supreme leader) as guardian of the faithful chosen to lead by the ethereal gift of *sakti* (divinity or supernatural power). In *tasawwuf*, the mysticism of oneness with god, the *kalifah* approximated the Hindu ideal of the *cakravartin*, the *Vishnu* royal incarnate.[44]

Islamization was, of course, much more than about legacies. It brought about a dramatic radicalization of social order and regional hegemony. Malay leadership under Islam could not remain unaffected; not only was it different from its Srivijayan past in its religious structure it was also different functionally as it had taken on itself the responsibility for all secular affairs. To the Malay rulers Islam was also a matter of political expediency and alliances. Islam was urban-based and flourished in thriving mercantile centres through a network of commercial ties. Unrivalled success in attracting international trade gave Melaka an edge in regional leadership something Melaka would possibly not have assumed had the rulers remained Hindu and therefore outside the Islamic *ummah*. It was for this reason that one of Melaka's rulers Seri Maharajah converted and became Sultan Muhammad and was then able to share in the northern Javanese coastal trade and be allowed to marry the Islamic Pasai princess.[45]

As trade required the mutual dependency of the ruler and his servants, the Islamic *kerajaan-rakyat* (*kerajaan* means government or being a raja-subject) relationship was developed as an inseparable social institution and according to the Malay Annals: 'Subjects were like roots and the ruler was like the tree, without roots the tree cannot stand upright: so was it with rulers and their subjects.' Whereas in traditional Srivijayan experience leadership was dominated by a sense of the supernatural where a system of magico-religious beliefs provided the social infrastructure of society. Islamic kingship continued

also to practise some aspects of its Hindu tradition in its two-tiered class structure system, namely the ruling class and subject class both detached and distinct.[46] At the zenith was the ruler followed by the *menteris* (ministers) and other minor officials. Titles were also bestowed accordingly: the highest normally to the most senior.

A feature that is not unlike the past is class stratification. While the Hindu World had its *varna* class system, the Islamic Malay leadership has its hierarchy of nobility and the bourgeoisie which appears to fly in the face of egalitarian Islam. The difference was that in Hinduism the people regarded the religious idiosyncrasies of the ruling class as exclusive attributes of its special status.[47] As with his Hindu predecessors, the Islamic ruler also vaunted his status by seeking the *kebesaran* (glorification) of his leadership with a multitude of royal celebrations. The people too held such acts of royal veneration in high regard since they were as essential to their own spiritual *keselamatan* (well-being). While it was presumed that the emergence of the Muslim leader was no longer regarded as the machination of the gods, there were still lingering pre-Islamic beliefs.

The leader could emerge in one other way and that was if he was believed to have inherited the *wahyu* of the previous ruler and the god-sanctioned quality of *sakti*.[48] This was the case with Melaka's Sultan Muzaffar Syah. When he became ruler he re-imposed Hindu custom in the belief that the *wahyu* of the previous ruler would pass on to him. He also legitimized his leadership by claiming that his victory in battles was due to his position as the elect of god[49] and heir to his predecessor's *wahyu*. Anxious to regain his position among his Muslim neighbours he regularized his kingship by reverting to secular and Islamic practices. The Islamic ruler was the Keeper of the Faith but with a different kind of religious authority. Unlike his Hindu forebears the Muslim ruler actively involved his religious activities with the *rakyat* (people). He also assumed exclusive authority of the *fikh* (religious decree) and the *syariah* (religious administration or Islamic law).

However, not unlike his Hindu ancestors he created and often justified deviations from the basic system in accordance with his own sophistication bringing about a highly personalized mystical power at the centre. An example was Raja Kassim (1446–59) who succeeded Melaka's Sultan Muhammad. While his usurpation of the throne was condoned by his followers, his part in the murder of the rightful heir was not. According to Hindu tradition he had violated the sacredness of royalty by taking a life and had thus absolutely forfeited any right

he might have felt that was deserving to him. Islamic Malay tradition justified his usurpation on the ground that he was destined to be *raja* by divine sanction.[50] The argument was that the murdered heir was unprotected from bad omens because he did not possess the *wahyu* and therefore did not deserve to rule.[51] The contradiction between Hinduism and Islam was apparent; while the former disqualified him for his sin the latter justified him for the deprivation he had needlessly endured.

Loyalty was perhaps the most important tradition Islam inherited from the Hindu Malay past. It was, in fact, embedded in Malay kingship long before the advent of Hinduism. Legend has it that loyalty was sealed in a sacred pact between the ancestor of the Malay kings Sri Tri Buana and the early Malays.[52] In that pact the people promised to be loyal to their rulers and their families and in return the rulers promised to be fair in their treatment of their people. If the ruler was unfair the subjects reserved the right to break the pact. Loyalty to the ruler was ensured by the social control of *durhaka*. Loyalty was not merely given to the ruler but it was also demanded and exacted from the people under pain of the consequences of *durhaka*. Disloyalty extended by any act that was likely to offend the dignity of the ruler was constituted *durhaka* and deserving punishment through *tulah*.[53]

It may be useful here to delve a little deeper on the phenomenon of *durhaka* to see just how entrenched it is for social control. To begin with, it is a psychological tool used to forestall any intention to harm the ruler. This is done by the power of suggestion that the ruler's protector spirit will inflict misfortune (usually death or a severe sickness) on the perpetrator. A close example but less bizarre would be the casting of spells in *voodooism* a practice that is still common in parts of Africa, South America and the Caribbean. *Durhaka* exudes that kind of collective spirit on the entire community which believes that the ruler is sacrosanct and that he has the ghostly power to inflict punishment on anyone for disloyalty. It would be equal to saying that bad omen will befall on those who have sinned against the ruler. If we include the belief of malevolent spirits in *durhaka* we can appreciate how terrifying the curse of *durhaka* was on the impressionable in the old Malay World.

In some ways *durhaka* has a similar quality to *karma* and the do-goodism of Christianity and Islam where one has to be morally good at all times for fear of retribution. The term *durhaka* is loosely used these days more by an angry mother for her naughty child ('*anak durhaka, mati pergi neraka* . . . you accursed child, you'll go to hell

when you die'). But the Islamic spirit of conscience of not doing harm to others and especially to the rulers tend to convey an impression of an on-going acknowledgement of *durhaka*. But it should be appreciated that the sultans today do use the term nostalgically.

However, in the case of the ancient ruler the rules were somewhat different. The Malay Annals reveals that the pact was one-sided as rulers often abused their authority.[54] If the ruler acted unjustly towards his subjects 'God alone could mete out His punishment'.[55] William Marsden writing in his *History of Sumatra* in 1783 says that the ruler was 'seen in the sacred light' by his subjects and 'an air of mystery' surrounded him. He suggests that the ruler's role in profane matters seemed to exude the fear of unseen forces.[56] The Malay Annals tells of many stories replete with the consequences of *durhaka* that came to be used by the rulers as a potent weapon of social control upon which loyalty was exacted. Fear of the ruler then was the essence of *durhaka* a phenomenon that has its roots in animistic spirit-belief and Hindu cosmology.

A characteristic of traditional cosmology made no distinction between the dead and the living. The dead retained some residue of the concentration of power thereby providing a historical continuity to the 'living' traditional power. The living ruler drew his *semangat* (invisible vital force) from the soul of an ancestor[57] which could then be conceived as powers of *tulah*. The drawing of this *semangat* was done by chanting appeals to *Kali* at the *keramat* (royal tomb of an ancestor), a custom still believed to be practised by newly-installed rulers of Perak[58] though *Kali* is now supplanted by the departed soul of a highly respected mystic. The virtuous aspects of *semangat-keramat* were also expressed in the Sufic idea that all invisible life forces were a single unitary essence linking 'God to the Perfect Man' quaintly joined with the Hindu imagery of god-incarnate.[59] Like the Hindu period when the people resorted to magic and millenarian prophecy for divine intervention or spiritual nourishment,[60] the Islamized Malay too was so inclined.

Malay society appropriated aspects of the evil forces of Hindu gods into Malay shamanism with *Shiva* and *Kali* becoming *Batara Guru* and *Black Genii*.[61] It was the job of the *pawang* or *bomoh* to carry out all the acts associated with shamanism. The *bomoh* claimed his extraordinary powers from the *semangat* he drew from the royal regalia[62] and assumed the role of representative of the invisible spirit world.[63] Enduring practices of shamanism and the use of the *bomoh* were a recognized feature in Malay society and some states like

Perak and Kelantan today have an officially-appointed royal shaman.[64] The royal shaman in Perak acts as the Keeper of the Guardian Spirits and has the exclusive right to conduct state seances.[65] In one such occasion in 1875 as mentioned earlier, Perak chiefs were told by a spirit to kill James Birch the Perak British resident.[66] Unlike the Hindu king the Islamic ruler did not directly perform spiritual seances but allowed the use of his *pusaka* (royal regalia) as the house of Guardian Spirits in seances.[67] A ritual in which the ruler did participate directly was the enthronement ceremony. It was the most elaborate Hindu ritual to survive in the Islamic royal court. The ceremony was preceded by a performance of dramatic episodes from *Ramayana* the Indian epic. In Kelantan the reciter acted as the representative of *Vishnu* appropriately attired with a yellow scarf. Throughout the performance words in praise of *Shiva, Nataraja, Ganesha and Arjuna* were heard.

The choice of *Ramayana* was regarded as appropriate because it depicted a type of kingship that was a model for Malay rulers. Hinduism gave the Malay ruler notions of a cosmic world where leadership in the earthly sphere was sanctioned by divine favour expressed in ancient incantations. But attempts by early Indian Muslim missionaries to replace these incantations were crude.[68] Malay rulers who had been incarnates of *Indra* and *Vishnu* became mortal descendants of the mythical Islamic king Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain.[69] In the enthronement ceremony while the *imam* recited the *doa selamat* (prayer) asking *Allah* to guide the new sultan, a member of the *muntah lembu* (keepers of the sacred *ciri)* would whisper in unintelligible Sanskrit his complete divine genealogy.[70] To the Malay *raja* and indeed to his subjects his cosmic past was mentioned to illuminate the divine decree which transcended his new faith in the monotheistic god. In the words of Wolters, a leading scholar of Srivijaya, 'Iskandar (Syah) . . . invoked the greatness of Srivijaya in order to remind his followers that they were a chosen people about to renew their greatness'.

The mobilizing of their folk identity shaped by memories of the past was another weapon used by these rulers'.[71] Srivijaya was regarded as a potent spiritual force which like Islam was adapted to immortalize the reverence of Malay leaders. The final act in the enthronement ceremony was the public homage. Each man approached the sultan with hands clasped in supplication and touched the sultan's knees with his forehead and then placed his head under the sultan's feet. It was at this moment that the greatest respect was paid to the monarch. It is not clear why only males were traditionally

the ones allowed to pay homage to the ruler. It is possible that the archaic Malay taboo of *najis* (ritually unclean) that precluded female participation in religious activity[72] was similarly considered in enthronement ceremonies. In any case the rituals that are being practised today in enthronement ceremonies are evidently of Hindu origin.

A Javanese inscription dated in 375 AD bears the mould of a set of footprints with a Sanskrit message: 'These footprints resembling those of *Vishnu* were the footprints of Purnawarnam reigning prince of the City of Taruma'. To this day Malay royalty is referred to as *'Sri Paduka'* – 'noble footprints of our Friend'.[73] 'Friend' in this ancient inscription referred to the ruler whose feet were blessed by *Vishnu*. As is customary in Malay court custom, royal subjects kneel before their rulers in the fashion of the *sujda* (Indian act of kneeling and bowing before a deity) although it is believed few kneel these days. Immediately after enthronement the sultan will pay a pilgrimage to the graves of former rulers, again a pre-Islamic practice to receive the *semangat* of his ancestors. Items that are the most time-honoured among the royal regalia of the enthronement are the *curek* (sword), *kayu kamat* (seal), *lembuara* (spear) and the *tanjak* (headdress). The *nobat* (royal band) and the regalia owed their origins to pre-Islamic times.[74]

Since the regalia is the dwelling place of the Guardian Spirits of the Realm, it is preserved with utmost respect and secrecy. It was believed that the fate of Melaka was sealed when the sultan's headdress fell into the sea; shortly afterwards the Portuguese attacked and seized the kingdom.[75] Part of the regalia that was seized by the Portuguese included an extensive collection of jewellery such as golden necklets and armlets that had the shape of the mythical dragon *Antaboya*, symbols of the Hindu god that were worn by Islamized Melakan rulers during their installation ceremonies.[76] In Malay royalty words like *Indra* could mean prince as well as god. It could also denote a royal title like *Permaisuri Indra* (royal princess) and *Mahkota Indra* (royal crown/prince). The Islamic ruler retained the Hindu idea of the four faces of Mount Meru represented by white (east), yellow (south), black (west) and red (north). These were the colours of the sultan, the *raja-mahkota* (heir or crown prince), *menteri besar* (chief minister) and other ministers respectively.

If the adoption of Islamic ideas of kingship by the Malay rulers was slow the adherence to Islamic law was even slower. Apart from laws of inheritance, divorce and the moral code for public decency, very little else was adopted through the eighteenth century. Old indigenous and Hindu custom was retained because the idea of supernatural sanction

was less severe than prosecution under Islamic laws.[77] Another reason certain custom was retained was because of the sense of *malu* (shame) or loss of face, an intrinsic value in Malay ethos. The sense of *malu* for wrongdoing was sometimes considered sufficient punishment. *Malu* could be so great that it could lead to suicide as the Malay Annals relates in the case of Sriwa Raja, Bendahara of Sultan Muzaffar Syah who took poison because he felt ashamed for insulting the Sultan.[78] Another example was the story of Tun Jana Fakil a court official to the Raja of Siak a vassal of Melaka who blindly obeyed his *raja*'s order to kill a man without first ascertaining authority from the Sultan of Melaka. For committing this act he was castigated by the Sultan who said 'You are a man of little discretion. You must indeed be a jungleman not to know the rudiments of proper behaviour'. But it was the Raja of Siak who felt greater shame for it was him who had ordered the killing without reference to Melaka and he promptly begged the Sultan's pardon 'The elder brother has erred, he can only hope for the pardon of his younger brother'.[79]

If Islamic law had prevailed both the Raja of Siak and Tun Jana Fakil could be put to death. The murder of Sultan Mahmud of Johor in the historic regicide of 1699 was another example of how severe the punishment could have been for the usurper *Bendahara*-king had the Malay World adopted Islamic law. Not only did the *Bendahara*-king and the perpetrators escape punishment they were also vindicated. Mahmud's death not only ended the Melakan dynasty it also struck at the very core of Malay tradition which radicalized and unsettled traditional perceptions of leadership. Never before had a Malay *raja* been killed by his subjects but neither had a murder of an innocent subject gone unpunished.[80] In this case, Sultan Mahmud was the murderer and the innocent victim was the pregnant wife of a court official.

Mahmud's death it appeared was fitting retribution not only because it was for his callous murder of an innocent subject but also because redress against a ruler's injustice was allowed under an ancient royal pact. On the other hand, the tenets of *adat-adat raja* (royal custom) and *durhaka* only allowed punishment of rulers by divine intervention and it was therefore contrary to tradition for a subject to seek revenge against the ruler. According to legend Mahmud's killer was finally punished by the powers of *durhaka*. It could be argued that god acted against Mahmud's oppression by finally ending the Melakan dynasty thus putting into effect a covenant the Malay Annals aptly describes: 'As for the Malays, how grievously they may offend . . . if you put them to death when they have done no

wrong, your kingdom will be brought to nought.' Mahmud's regicide raised serious questions of *daulat*, *adat-adat raja* and *durhaka*, qualities that had been the foundation of Malay perceptions of their ruler's legitimacy based on his sacred lineage.

Another reason for resistance to Islamic law was the inherent fear of *durhaka* that invoked terrifying mental torment on the offender a punishment that had obviously been effective and considered sufficient by the rulers. *Durhaka* would explain why offences against the crown were almost unknown. Though the sanction allowed the death penalty for those who disrespected the ruler,[51] there was no evidence that anyone had been put to death for mere disrespect as Islamic tradition had never intended that royal powers be absolute in this respect.[52] Besides, tradition also required that all crimes be tried under due process of law.[53] Unlike his Hindu predecessor the Muslim ruler was more approachable and less of an absolute monarch says the Malay Annals: 'Upon you was laid the duty of faithfully cherishing those who were subject to you and of liberally forgiving . . . as bidden by the Almighty God . . . shew forbearance'. He had to be since he was both judge and arbiter in all state matters especially religion. Another example of a Hindu legacy was the concept of the ruler's personal merchant (*saudagar-raja*).[54]

Since Hindu kingship was considered divine and belonging to the higher *varna* of the *kshatriya* class, it was considered improper to engage in business. Commercial affairs were therefore conducted by the *saudagar-raja* on behalf of the ruler. This custom was only partially retained with the Islamic ruler as successive generations of rulers engaged directly and actively in business. In the Islamic period the economic well-being of the state gradually became a major preoccupation of the ruler as his prestige was measured by the amount of prosperity he was able to distribute to his people. Islam had little problem in combining religious zeal with economic pursuits as its leaders were the main driving force of trade being holders of most of the monopolies. In this respect, the Muslim leader proselytized with greater socio-economic sensitivity. He provided his people with a livelihood and expected obedience in return from his subjects. The Malay Annals says: 'No servant ever disobeys the will of his master even if he has to suffer thereby; by how much the less should he disobey a master who loads him with benefits.' Many other Hindu political[55] and economic systems were also retained such as the Srivijayan maritime code and the *syahbandar* system. Even the Islamic legal code when it was finally established in the Malay states had, according to Winstedt

'traces of Malay indigenous patriarchal law but mixed with relics of Hindu law'.[86]

Summary

In exploring the concepts of traditional Malay leadership this chapter has attempted to explain how those concepts had evolved since pre-Islamic times. One of the earliest beliefs in leadership was a perception in predestination of the Malay ruler which suggests that an innate belief by his people of his divine descent earned him his position. Malay society had a belief system that venerated the ruler whose well-being and virility was linked to the fertility of the soil. As leadership evolved, traditional Malay expressions were replaced by classical Sanskrit. *Anak-bapa* accord became *bakti* (devotion); *cahaya* was sometimes loosely referred to *wahyu* or *sakti*. *Mandala* was used with the Malay word of *pusat* to describe the centripetal power of the centre. For social control Indianization reinforced the indigenous *durhaka* the element of fear that was identified with *Kali* the goddess of destruction. Indianization introduced court rituals that glorified the Malay rulers.[87]

Village polity terms such as *tun-bendahara* (prime minister) and *syahbandar* (mercantile comprador or mayor) and a tributary overlordship by China and Siam presumed a period of active commercial activity that was extended with the advent of Islamization. In addition to this the period also saw a strong forging of military alliances and diplomacy to assuage warring differences within the Malay World community. There appeared to be a strong retention of indigenous and Hindu ideas in Malay leadership even after the adoption of Islam by the Melakan rulers in the mid-fifteenth century. Some of these ideas were clearly not within the tenets of Islam but were justified by a combination of tradition and an entrenched sense of spirituality which the sultans did not consider heretical.[88] Many non-Islamic practices were tolerated and justified as having 'divine sanctions'.

Anachronisms included divinity which alluded to the superiority of the sultan thus denying a basic Islamic tenet which regarded everyone as equal 'before the eyes of Allah' and the animism of *keramat* which venerated the immortality of departed souls. Activities common in the Hindu period but *haram* (forbidden) under Islam continued to be indulged in by the sultans included gambling, cock-fighting and the use of narcotics.[89] Sexual excesses which were thought to be desirable in kings of the Hindu kingdoms because they demonstrated fertility were regarded as *zina* (infidelity) and forbidden by Islam. Yet they were tolerated in sultans as could be seen by the excesses of Sultan

Mahmud Syah of Melaka. He acknowledged that his liaison with a married woman was a sin that was punishable by death at the hands of the husband. But he said the punishment should not be carried out because it would be treasonable to kill a king.[90] The legacy of supernatural fear was used by the sultan to exact loyalty and obedience from his subjects and in this case, to demand forebearance from his subjects for his misdeed. Like the subjects of Hindu kings Islamic subjects too believed loyalty to the *raja* also meant rewards in the life hereafter[91] and if disloyal, be plagued by *durhaka* for the rest of their life. Hindu traditions gave the ruler most of the glory and reverence of kingship which he did not want to forget and neither could Islam completely supplant.[92] While the grandeur and perceived spiritual immortality clearly divided the ruler and the people, the aspect of *muafakat* which the Islamic ruler inherited from Hindu tradition was developed to bridge this division.[93] Muslim rulers were keen to retain the traditions of kingship since they perpetuated the myth of divine leadership which *Sufi* ideas of mysticism helped to reinforce.

For tradition to endure it requires a ruler to legitimize and a people willing to honour its legacy. These were some of the aspects that supported the view that the Malay World had a system of leadership. The elected leader of the twentieth century is in a way more powerful than his predecessors considering the access he has to the state's coercive machinery. Though modern he appeals fervently and frequently too to culture and traditions. The modern Malay leader is an embodiment of history and the culture of the past. Why was he chosen and why was he so powerful are questions that answer to a sense of perception of his extraordinary attributes accorded to him by divine grace. While the expression of leadership or authority could take many different forms, the essence of Malay leadership that surrounds *adat* and a culture of reverence would remain with the Malay psyche. However, the truly modern Malay leader was not to emerge until after the Second World War. The arrival of the Europeans accompanied by a capital economy and colonization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries redefined Malay leadership under the sultans. This was a period when political leadership was surrendered to the British while Malay leaders were relegated to a surrogacy of colonial patronage under a British-appointed residency system. The British resident was later replaced by a western-style parliamentary system which ultimately reinstated the Malays to political leadership in 1957. The emergence of the national elite in the post-colonial period and the transition to independence will be the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter 3

The rise of the national elite

Colonialism to independence

Early beginnings of European intrusion

Relative to its other colonial possessions Britain's rule of the Malay states had been peaceful save for the Malayan Emergency. However, despite the apparent tranquillity, colonization represented a period of intense anxiety for Malay leadership because the treaties that had been entered into by the sultans with Britain effectively relegated Malay sovereignty except in religious matters. More importantly Malay rulers were virtually stripped of authority over their own people and throughout the British occupation their state of leadership was in limbo. What was intended as a temporary accommodation of an advisory nature evolved into a state of 'surrogate' leadership that overwhelmed Malay supremacy. Still it must be acknowledged that the colonial presence was largely tolerated if not entirely welcomed by the sultans. The Malays were, of course, not inexperienced in dealing with European intruders who before the British had been the Dutch and earlier the Portuguese who took Melaka in 1511.

Though militarily inferior the Malay states (except for the Straits Settlements) did not capitulate to colonization until three centuries later. Until then they had been quite adept or *cerdek* (cunning) at keeping the colonizers at bay. The experience of Johor in this respect had been quite remarkable. Clearly under-strength Sultan Allaudin Riayat Syah avoided intervention by forging an alliance with the Dutch in 1602. While the Dutch were preoccupied in the north, he expanded suzerainty in the peninsula and in east coast Sumatra. When Johor helped the Dutch seize Melaka in 1641 its ruler then Sultan Abdul Jalil exacted Dutch goodwill to neutralize his enemies. Johor prospered unmolested by any foreign force for the next twenty years.[94] In the late 1670s the Malay World experienced its earliest resistance against

European intrusion when a Minangkabau-based movement in Naning, near Melaka, called on all Muslims to drive out the infidel Dutch. When the movement failed, the people reverted to Dutch obedience.[95]

By the late seventeenth century the Malay states could no longer compete with the Dutch whose dominant position in the East Indies was bolstered by faster ships and a booming spice trade.[96] Johor nevertheless continued to benefit from its friendly relations with the Dutch who regarded Johor as the principal and most powerful Malay state during the late seventeenth century. But Johor's proud record of model leadership was suddenly shattered in the regicide of its ruler, Sultan Mahmud, in 1699 as it ended forever the lineage of the Johor-Melaka Sultanate. Since that incident, instability reigned in the rest of the Malay states exacerbated by the Anglo-Dutch rivalry in Riau-Johor and Terengganu.

The origins of British intervention and the Pangkor Treaty

Before British colonization Malay populations confined themselves in *kampungs* or clusters of village settlements. Boundaries dividing each *kampung* were either rivers, thick rain forests, or hills. A thick mountainous jungle range for example divides the eastern states of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan from the western states of Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Johor. With the exception of the Kelantanese, all Malays speak nearly the same kind of Malay. They subsisted on rice and sea products. The primary form of transport for people and goods was by *sampans* or riverboats. There was maritime intercourse between the settlements and over time, the villagers of the different *kampungs* became related by marriage. But relationships between the *kampungs* had often been marked by hostilities between those who saw themselves as *anak negeri* (autochthonous or *bumiputra*) and those who were *anak dagang* (recent immigrants) predominantly the Achenese from northern Sumatra, Minangkabaus from eastern Sumatra, Javanese from Java and Bugis from Suluwesi. These migrants tended to settle in their own linguistic groups.

As they integrated into the larger Malay community they became indistinguishable but many still spoke Malay with an accent and in some cases, such as with the Minangkabaus and Bugis, continued to speak their own languages and practise their own cultural traditions. Since they were Muslims and willing subjects of the Malay rulers, a strong spirit of Islamic neighbourliness prevailed. As polities these *kampungs* had established their own code of conduct in custom, law

and trade which was based on village kinship, religion and ruler loyalty. Life went on mostly without any dramatic change until about 1870 when new canning technology in America created a big demand for tin. Before this, the Malay rulers had been quite content to mine tin in small quantities and allowed the Chinese to share in the industry. As the demand for tin grew, the rulers invited investment from the Chinese who brought in new equipment, money, opium that was traded for more capital, labour and other industries such as in pepper and gambier. The ventures were organized by *kapitan Cina* or Chinese compradors who organized the Chinese labourers into *kongsis (guanxi)* or clan guilds that later became hotbeds of Chinese secret societies. Conflict soon broke out between the Cantonese and Hakka labourers of the *kongsis* for control of the major tin mines in Perak and Selangor.

The strife that later erupted into a major inter-ethnic civil war was backed by secret society groups hired from China. Meanwhile, another conflict loomed between the Bugis and the Minangkabaus, who later aligned themselves to the Cantonese and the Hakkas respectively. Civil strife in Perak, Selangor and Johor and a succession feud in Perak underscored a most unsettling period in the history of the Malay states. It was at this point in 1874 that Andrew Clarke, the governor of the Straits Settlements which had its headquarters in Singapore, convened a meeting on the coastal island of Pangkor to help resolve the feud among the Malay chiefs and between the warring Chinese secret societies. Clarke succeeded in resolving all the conflicts. Chinese agreement over mining rights and Malay succession resolutions were embodied in a series of agreements known collectively as the 'Pangkor Treaty'.

Unlike the Indian sub-continent, Britain did not have a clear imperial policy for the Malay states though the earlier presence of the Dutch in the East Indies and the French in Indochina since the 1780s would be reason enough. Eventually, Britain felt a presence was needed in the Straits of Melaka because of concern for the defence of India and Chinese trade and security for the trading operations of its East India Company in the Riau Archipelago which culminated in the establishment of the Straits Settlements in 1825 comprising of Penang (1786), Singapore (1819) and Melaka (1824).[9] But despite these possessions Britain still maintained a non-interventionist policy towards the interior Malay states; the colonial office wrote in 1868 that the government was 'not disposed to adopt the responsibility directly or indirectly of taking steps for the security of life and property in

independent countries where this security cannot be given by the Lawful rulers'.

Moreover, as late as September 1873 the secretary of state said Britain had 'no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay states'. However, he agreed to consider any steps 'made with the full consent of the native government'.[98] But Britain did finally intervene. It was the disintegration of Malay authority and continuing threat to British interests in the Straits Settlements that caused Britain to reverse its earlier position.[99] The Pangkor Treaty effectively formalized Britain's colonization of the Malay states. There is every reason to believe that the Malay chiefs were not blind to British expansionist designs. After all they had seen how Melaka had been bounced between the Portuguese and the Dutch and finally to nestle in the hands of the British nearly a half century ago. The acquisition of Melaka which was cemented by the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty and added to Britain's possessions of Singapore and Penang, completed a formidable British maritime vanguard of the Melaka Straits. While the Malay chiefs were negotiating the Treaty, Penang had already prospered as a British colony and began to rapidly eclipse Melaka's prestige.

Nonetheless, the Malays were displeased with the way the British had acquired Singapore and especially of Britain's *de facto* occupation of Penang in 1786. Powerless against British military superiority a desperate Sultan Abdullah of Kedah – to whom the sovereignty of Penang previously belonged – appealed to all Muslims in Penang to fight the British.[100] When he failed to get the support, he tried the diplomacy of *kehalusan* following the example of his grandfather who in 1642 succeeded in similar fashion in winning an equal treaty from the Dutch. Abdullah however was wrong to think that the British would be similarly disposed to him. When *kehalusan* failed, he appealed to Islamic brotherhood but that too failed. Finally economic hardship and fear of the Dutch who had already interfered in succession disputes in Terengganu and Johor swayed Abdullah to accept the terms of the British agreement on Penang in May 1791.

The agreement disadvantaged Abdullah immensely as it forbade Kedah to trade with other European powers. It also did not provide for any defence guarantees that Abdullah had specially counted on as a shield against Siamese terror.[101] Similarly with Singapore, Raffles' negotiation with Johor's *de facto* ruler, the *Temenggong* (literally defence minister) not only resulted in Johor losing Singapore, the acquisition also removed the Riau Islands from the Johor Sultanate permanently. Against this experience, Malay signatories of the 1874

Pangkor Treaty were either naïve or too trusting of British intentions. The agreement was to have far-reaching consequences for the Malay states as we shall see later. To some extent the Pangkor Treaty had been a progression of political and economic factors rather than a wishful colonial imperative.

A favourable outcome of the Treaty was that it created a forum for peaceful dialogue for future differences and for the Malay rulers it set precedence for colonial mediation processes for succession quarrels. Clarke's mediation in the settlement of the disputed Perak succession was seen by some quarters as foreign intrusion and an effrontery to Malay tradition particularly as the settlement was in favour of Clarke's proxy, Sultan Abdullah. Thus began a tactic of 'divide and rule' that was to feature in British involvement in subsequent succession conflicts.

Another important aspect of the Treaty was the placement of a British resident whose advice had to be sought and acted upon by Malay rulers on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom.[102] The resident was also responsible for the collection and control of all revenues and the general administration of the state. While the Treaty also produced political stability and increased mining productivity through colonial policing, it also set the stage for a trail of Britain's acquisitions in the Malay states. British policy also justified intervention as a means to protect Malay interests against the economic dominance of a burgeoning Chinese population.[103] But British policy far from limiting immigration, actively brought in Chinese for the tin mines and Indians for the rubber estates.

While that significantly boosted the export economy of the British, it introduced a more plural mix in the population. As Chinese prosperity grew so did Malay resentment because the latter were excluded from more productive economic activities. With no real role in government, Malay esteem was further hit when a colonial decree removed the rulers' succession prerogative.[104] However, the Malays could not have been entirely displeased with this move as most of the tensions in the *kampungs* were over divided loyalties in succession feuds. It seemed strange that even at this point there was no directive from London for a full-fledged colonial policy for the Malay states. The colonial signatories of the Treaty it seemed had acted quite independently.

For instance, the decision (and quite likely the appointment) of the first resident was made before the signing of the agreement. None of

this including the signing of the agreement apparently had the prior permission of the colonial office. When it was finally reported, the colonial office accepted the arrangement as '*fait accompli*'.[105] That the British got away with so much demonstrated not the naiveté of the Malay chiefs but rather to the giving nature of the Malays. Besides, the Malays given their polite *kehalusan* behaviour were reticent to making any outward expression of resentment in the negotiations.

To say that the chiefs accepted the agreement totally is, of course, incorrect because barely a year after the signing of the Treaty a leading chief Raja Maharajalela murdered James Birch, Perak's first resident, when the latter attempted to collect taxes and abolish debt-slavery. Further resentment against British rule emerged in the 1890 Pahang Rebellion, the 1915 Kelantan Uprising and the 1928 Terengganu Uprising. While it cannot be said that the Treaty was truly desired, paradoxically it prepared the Malays for the future federation of the Malay states.[106] Certain of the weaknesses embodied in the Treaty were later to provide a continuing theoretical justification for British arrogation of all effective power in Malaya.

A cardinal argument for intervention was the inability of the Malays to govern themselves. Clarke wrote shortly after signing the Treaty that the Malays did not place any value on traditions and institutions and 'like every other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children . . .' James Birch, as Sadka notes, also shared this opinion 'experience . . . among an Eastern people has taught me that they are perfectly incapable of good government.'

The colonial administration

By defenders of the British Empire the Malayan colonial administration was often lauded as one of the best even though it marginalized the Malays. At the end of First World War, the colonial administration was concerned with developing a more efficient civil service and economic growth and this it did by concentrating its resources in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. A restructured administration separated Penang, Melaka and Singapore (the Straits Settlements) from the Federated Malay States (FMS) of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang and the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Johor. The existing British residents of FMS and the advisers of UMS reported to a new resident-general in Kuala Lumpur. The restructured colonial administration was essen-

tially centralized under the overall control of the governor-general of the crown colony of Singapore.

State councils ceased to have legislative functions thereby diminishing what little authority the rulers had enjoyed in the past. However, in 1909 a federal council was created as a suprastate legislative body (mainly at the insistence of European rubber interests to curb the authority of the resident-general) the stated aim of which was to restore to the sultans some of the authority they had lost at federation in 1895. However, the restoration was superficial as rulers sat in the council only as ordinary members without any particular influence. Since the rulers only spoke Malay, their presence was purely symbolic in the English-speaking council and their attendance eventually ceased, reinforcing the impression that the British were indifferent to Malay needs. The council was supported by a Federal Secretariat comprised of the federal civil service and a specially-defined Malay Civil Service (MCS).

At the outset Malay participation in the colonial civil service was handicapped firstly by the shortage of English-speaking Malays and secondly by Britain's preference for expatriate English-speaking Indians, Jaffna Tamils, Eurasians and *peranakan* (Straits-born Chinese who were also proficient in Malay). Colonial senior civil servants were generally obsequious and like their own British bosses were supercilious and aloof.[107] However, their compliance and subservience did not necessarily lead to efficiency neither were these civil servants believed to be happy with the often authoritarian behaviour of the British officers many of whom came from a military background. The perceived political stability and the civil orderliness probably had something to do with the non-complaining nature of civil servants; Malay civil servants especially tended to be less outspoken about their grievances. The Malay's non-confrontational psyche and the yielding nature of *kehalusan* meant that there was a tendency by others to assume Malay acquiescence.

Given the low number of Malay civil servants and their even smaller number of senior bureaucrats, it could not be assumed that the Malays had no consciousness neither were they always tolerant of their under-representation in the colonial civil service. The British though were not unaware of Malay dissatisfaction. They tried to compensate for the disparity by recruiting local elites into an array of policy-making councils and conferences. Unfortunately, this strategy had more to do with appeasing feelings and imparting a show of legitimacy than for any serious input of indigenous people into the

British decision-making process. British attempts at setting up the Malay Administrative Service (MAS) from members of the aristocracy met with little success. Khasnor Johan says early British prejudice coloured their confidence in the Malays and the false image of Malay ineptitude was used as justification for British intervention in the Malay states.[108] As part of the myth of Social Darwinism, this prejudice buttressed all imperial paternalistic policies.[109]

Despite its initial shortcomings, the MAS swiftly built up an impressive corps of bureaucrats by the beginning of Second World War. By then the ruler's prestige had already begun to increase as protocol demanded even more of his presence at public functions and important legislative meetings. Local body legislation and other instruments of government were required to bear his royal seals confirming his customary ratification. It displayed to the public an illusion of a sultan in control but failed to obscure the reality. The Malay ruling class accepted the steady extension of British control over their affairs for their own self-seeking interests as well. For instance, the sultans' enemies were put down by British forces as in Perak in 1875 and the Pahang Rebellion of the 1890s. The putative rulers still maintained a sense of royal dignity: a non-functional seat in state councils, a privy purse and new and elaborate *istanas* (palaces) completed the patronage of their colonial masters. The colonial system also guaranteed the sultans their exclusive authority over all religious and customary affairs, not so much for its magnanimity but because the British had learnt in India that these matters were best left to the locals who were very resentful of foreigners' interference in matters of religion and tradition. The preservation of Malay tradition and the monarchy was thus assured.

The British introduced an economic framework and technology that transformed a predominantly village economy of coconuts, palm oil and timber, to a large tin and rubber export economy. To meet this changing trend, the ruler consolidated his role as provider of capital and labour a role he had first learnt from the Portuguese and the Dutch.[110] He depended on the assistance of British merchants to provide him with new techniques in commerce and currency. He exacted royalties from miners on his holdings and gained considerable commissions by lending his name to businesses.[111] As the colonial administration assumed responsibility for public spending, the ruler's income was entirely his own to spend.[112] The ruler was therefore not a person without wealth and influence.[113]

The ruler's leadership role however was not really augmenting. He

lacked the expertise in dealing with complex western agreements and often found himself at a disadvantage. [114]

The ruler began to lose control of the supply of labour as his subjects turned to the British for work that was more profitable and regular. At the same time he had to learn to deal with the influences of an alien religion and social philosophy that accompanied westernization. He faced new experiences in his community such as education offered by Christian mission schools, health care managed by nuns and priests and an enthusiastic Christian clergy that was not always busy proselytizing but indulged also in trade and the several welfare activities it shared with the colonial administration.[115] A combination of British superior economic and technological skills and a patronizing political policy left the sultans economically diminished. By the 1930s anti-colonial sentiments had begun to filter in steadily by immigrants and especially by Malayans who had been exposed to them in Europe and who now regard colonization in terms of a dispossession of their land. Colonial officers too had sensed this trend and had begun to plan constitutional changes for the Malay states. But the outbreak of the Second World War forced a halt to these plans.

British post-war policy in Malaya

Britain's post-war policy for the Malay states went further than the reconstruction of the economic infrastructure. While reconstruction was obviously expected, it was not the focus of the policy. The colonial office had planned as early as 1941 for constitutional reform in tandem with radical restructuring of 'white raja rule' in Sarawak and 'chartered company authority' in North Borneo. The object was to align the administrative functions of the Malay peninsula to that of North Borneo and Sarawak for a better grip and national cohesion of colonized Malay territories.[116] But the colonial office decided in 1944 to leave out North Borneo and Sarawak and instead agreed on a proposal by Edward Gent, the assistant under-secretary for the colonies, to integrate the peninsular Malay states with Penang and Melaka, excluding Singapore. This was to be the much-maligned Malayan Union which Gent and the colonial office were to regret as we shall see later.

Britain's post-war policy for Malaya should be appreciated in the context of wider imperial objectives. Britain was already pressured into decolonization in the Indian sub-continent which had its own unique problems. Apart from the moral duty it had to help heal the

economies of its colonies in Southeast Asia, Britain also had to contend with hegemonic tendencies of other European powers and its Allied security obligations in the Pacific. There was also pressure back home for Britain to restrict its scarce resources for more urgent domestic reconstruction. Tarling is right when he says that Britain's plans for post-war Southeast Asia were unrealistic due, he suggests, to its huge indebtedness incurred by the Second World War.[117] Britain had anticipated drawing the cost of post-war reconstruction from revenues of British-owned industries. Britain's territorial ambitions were far from finished and post-war policy had harboured hegemonic plans with a view to consolidate economic domination which Britain had plenty of at the end of the War. But that is not to say that Britain was not keen on decolonization. On the contrary, Britain was eager to unshackle some of its more troublesome possessions especially in the Indian sub-continent. Britain had emerged after the War severely weakened and a military option (as it was in Burma) was obviously going to be a costly affair. The mood therefore was for decolonization with economic control firmly in view. But that was not Britain's plan for Malaya. The unsettling question of immigrants, the growing jungle resistance against British rule, the position of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo were some of the issues that demanded continuing British presence. But perhaps the more pressing was Britain's commitment to Malaya's sultans that Britain ruled in alliance with them and this partnership was to be terminated only by mutual consent. The rulers were keen to claim their rightful authority but were nervous about claiming it on the back of a ruined economy and the unresolved, touchy issue of the Chinese and Indians. But Britain was not unmindful of the rulers' position and Churchill had assured them that 'we shall see them righted in final victory' in recognition for their contributions to the war effort.[118]

Churchill's words were mere tokenism as Britain's policy in reality favoured deeper intervention in the Malay states. Britain's preoccupation for Malayan constitutional reform detracted its efforts to rehabilitate the economy of the Malay states. It also did nothing to help Britain re-establish its leadership credibility that had been so ignominiously undermined by the Japanese attack of its bastion in Singapore. The MacMichael constitutional reform was so unpalatable to all sectors of the Malay states that it not only emboldened Malay nationalistic sentiments, it also mobilized solidarity between the Chinese and the Indians towards thoughts of independence.

Malay nationalism in the making

In political terms, nationalism signifies a united stand of a community against all forms of foreign domination. It implies the community's consciousness of shared history and values. In nation-building, nationalism provides the spirit of belonging that is elemental in the survival of the nation-state. In historical terms, Malay nationalism incorporated a religious identity that harnessed collective assertiveness. However, as a sentiment for self-determination or nationhood, nationalism was never a burning issue with the Malays. The very notion of the nation-state had no tradition in the Malay World since it was barely transiting from a feudal polity at the time of British occupation. There certainly was cool if not wide resentment against foreign domination that provided the bedrock of Malay nationalism that had remained latent until after the Second World War.

Much of this resentment rested on the fact that the British were *kafirs* who the Malays were discouraged to associate with on religious grounds. This however did not prevent the sultans and other members of the Malay elite from forging close ties with the British. The Malay struggle for nationhood was unique: it was spared the fury and carnage that characterized many other freedom movements in Asia.[119] The advent of the Pacific War saw Britain replaced by yet another colonial intruder, the Japanese. But Japan's assumption of authority over the Malay states had quite a different meaning not only to imperialism but also on the question of sovereign rights. Japan had no empire to speak of neither was it driven by the sort of Darwinian zeal that had accounted for many European imperial successes.

Japan did however have its 'East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' an anti-colonial imperative that was Japan's *casus belli* for the warfare it unleashed on western colonial governments in Asia. While Japan's thrust southwards had been welcoming to some extent to French Indochina, India, Burma and Indonesia where it fuelled simmering freedom struggles, the same was not true of Malaya. The Malays who had fought loyally alongside British soldiers against the invaders, did not see *kafir* Japanese aggression as a model for their nationalistic aspirations. Besides, Japan's administration of the former British Malaya was so appalling that it established no empathy with the people and the civil service. Neither did the Japanese make any real effort to motivate the Malays about independence nor did they try to establish rapport with the sultans. One can surmise that the Japanese

would be at a loss as to how they were to treat the rulers in a newly-liberated Malaya considering their distaste and ignorance of indigenous politics. They were however conscious of Malay sensitivities and kept their peace with the sultans by distancing themselves on royal matters.

The sultans were not pleased with the absence of the British. Britain's departure affected their protection and financial support. Firstly under British control the sultans had been allowed to retain the monarchy with some respectability and relations with the British advisers had been exceptionally sociable, an act the Japanese found hard to follow. Secondly the rulers stayed loyal to Britain by funding anti-Japanese struggle that was organized by clandestine British military units in the Malayan jungles.[120] Thirdly the Japanese forces known for their harsh administration, had ironically not been too unkind to the Malays – civil jobs were retained and the rural scene left very much the way it was. The sultans had always believed that sovereignty was inviolably theirs and in a strange way waited for the return of the British to help them accomplish it.

But the sultans were at the same time wary of independence and were not so compelled to re-assert their sovereignty rights. They feared that a Westminster-type government that the British were likely to introduce on independence, would erode their powers and worse, reduce the Malay states to a single monarch as in the United Kingdom. In addition, the thought of independence never really worried the sultans who surmised that nationhood was still too nascent an idea for the Malays and too risky for Britain to experiment on Malaya so soon after regaining control. After all, the idea of a free, united Malay states that Britain had mooted as early as 1935 was not received with a great deal of enthusiasm. Besides, growing unease with Japan's intrusion into Manchuria and unsettling conditions in India and Burma put paid to Britain furthering the idea in Malaya.

Talk of colonial liberation, in fact, was rife during the height of Japanese rule: Indonesia, Burma and Vietnam had pre-emptively declared themselves independent in the absence of their erstwhile colonial masters. Sukarno talked about the unification of Indonesia and Malaya under his grand vision of 'Indonesia Raya'. However, independence for Indonesia went far beyond rhetorical sloganeering as thousands of Indonesians lay killed fighting the Dutch at the very time the Malays were contemplating their own choices with their colonial master. This was obviously a worrisome prospect the Malays had no intention of taking up, not with the kind of superior firepower

the British had. Besides, there had only been isolated skirmishes with the British but by and large the Malays enjoyed far better relationships with the British than the Indonesians could ever imagine they could with the Dutch.

Nonetheless, the spirit of independence was not lost on Malaya as Malay nationalists forged contact with their Indonesian counterparts to revive ideas of federation. But in the end the Malays whose cultural and political conditioning had been markedly different from Indonesia, opted to negotiate independence with the British with their own brand of *kehalusan* diplomacy which they felt was more agreeable to British politics. The Malays counted on the co-operative effort of their elites to negotiate with the British in the most diplomatic way they knew how and they prevailed when the British aborted the ill-fated Malayan Union. In place of the Malayan Union was the Malayan Federation of 1948 based on a central government with federal legislative functions but the rulers were to be sovereign in the Malay states. Citizenship provisions under the Agreement were stricter and there was still no resolution on Singapore. In the main, the Federation of Malaya Agreement was seen as Britain's accommodation of Malay concerns and its recognition of UMNO for self-government dialogue.

The rise of the national elite

A national elite is a group who by virtue of its 'strategic' position in a community is able (often with other elites) to influence and affect outcomes in the lives of the people in the community. In colonial Malay states there were two elite systems – one comprising the aristocracy, court officials, village headmen and senior religious officials and the other, the senior colonial bureaucracy, senior non-Muslim clergymen and leaders of business guilds.[121] The Malay elite system was an inter-dependent group and according to Case '[had] consensual unity and an accommodative tradition'.[122] This was in line with the custom of *musyawarah* and *muafakat* which required collective undertaking for decision-making. British colonial officials played an important role in integrating the elite in the accommodative tradition. They brought together regional leaders from loosely-knit groups thus forging new networks of local elites and imposing upon them a civil government and the rule of law.

From these groups emerged a pool of bureaucrats who were to run the local bodies and town councils. These developments did much to prepare the elite in managing the nation-state that was to come later.

In some elite systems the leader may operate above the general level of elite and sub-elite interactions. An example would be that of revolutionary or charismatic leaders who were not elites in the conventional sense such as Fidel Castro, Gandhi, Mao, Khomeini and Lech Walesa whose entry into elitism was propped up by a popular uprising. Their ultra-elite status which assumed their extraordinary ruling capacity could display 'either a power-sharing or power-monopolizing orientation' which could be used to radicalize the conventional elite's image.[123] An example would be the government of President Suharto which exhibited a thoroughly power-monopolizing strategy within the emerging elite class drawn from hand-picked sycophantic military-politicians. In the Malaysian case the late Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman displayed a consistent style of consensual elite unity. Whereas, Prime Minister Mahathir has shifted back and forth between the two orientations.

Elite accommodation in the bureaucracy meant that everyone knew each other and it created, according to Zakaria Haji Ahmad '[a] close accommodation . . . [which] provides a political setting with advantages for the post-colonial governing elite . . .'[124] It is debatable if this elite closeness as Zakaria implies contributed much to colonial and post-colonial political affability. The Malay elite used their presence in these councils to make contact with non-Malay business elites more for social networking and political alliances than to promote Malay business interests (which if there were any they were small as the best investment schemes were reserved for private British capital).

'Ini tanah kita' (This is our land)

The Malays are well known for their hospitality – even in the most humble home a meal is always offered to a visitor. In the *kampungs* particularly they will share with the less fortunate their coconuts, fruits and rice. No formal invitation is ever required for any kind of *kenduri* (feast) and the whole village will join in a *tahlil* (prayer but usually referring to prayer for the departed). While the Malays are a giving people, they are not egalitarian in the sense that there was a concept of property ownership that did not equate to equal rights. They hold dear to *harta pusaka* (inherited customary and familial property) since Islamic inheritance laws prohibit testatory practices common under English law.[125] Given these conditions, how dispirited were the Malays about the controls that were placed on their hitherto free use of native resources? Since there was no great outpouring of

Malay disenchantment, the general mood was assumed to be one of acceptance.

On the other hand, Malay customary land did not extend beyond the boundary of a *mukim* – a district where one would live permanently since food such as rice and fish were sufficiently available – and British acquisition of non-*mukim* land therefore did not seem improper. But the mere presence of foreigners nearby and the imminent loss of future *mukim* expansion were enough to unsettle the Malays. The British who knew how troublesome land issues could be, quickly mollified Malay resentment with a 'hands-off' policy towards Malay land. Muhammad Ikmal Said says that protection of *mukim* land under the nominal direction of the sultans 'provided an important smokescreen that the land remains under Malay sovereignty'.[126] This successful colonial policy went on to see British and other European interests holding title to extensive real estate in rural Malaya enriched in rubber, palm oil, tin and iron ore.[127]

Only *mukim* land of rice-growing fields, fishing grounds and high-density areas of the Malay population were left alone. The question of land ownership and sovereign rights provided less intensity of nationalism than the problem of citizenship because the Malays felt that unabated immigration particularly non-Islamic had disquieting ramifications on Malay cultural life. The problems of land ownership and sovereign rights were symptoms of the core problem of immigration and would not have been there had the colonial authorities stemmed the inflow of outsiders. The Malays were particularly concerned with the growing number of the Chinese who were seen as 'colonial parasites sucking away the wealth of their country hand in hand with British colonialism. Worse they competed for the same resources, had little regard for the Malays and even demanded economic and political concessions from the British'.[128] The Malays expressed their objections to British proposals for automatic citizenship for the Chinese during the Malayan Union talks. The Malays recalled the reigns of terror by both the predominantly Chinese Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) during the interregnum (between the middle of August and early September 1945).

The maturing of Malay nationalism

The turning point of Malay nationalism was in December 1945 when all nine sultans of the Malay states signed away their sovereignty to

Britain under the MacMichael Agreement for the Malayan Union which came into being in April 1946. The Malays had suspected that the rulers had been coerced into submission by British-Chinese connivance and condemned the Agreement as a sell-out of Malay sovereignty. Some would argue that the sultans had conspired unconscionably in the naive belief that formal subservience to the British Crown would guarantee their existence. The object of the Malayan Union was to prepare Malaya for self-government and placate anti-Malay sentiments but it was apparent from the start that it was in for a rough ride. It excluded Singapore (it became a separate crown colony) which not only angered many on both sides of the Causeway but also former governors and British colonial officers as it was seen as an annexation of Malayan territory.

The main issue in the Agreement was the rejection of the idea of a Malay Malaya which meant the complete erosion of Malay paramountcy. In addition, the Agreement allowed liberal citizenship provisions that accorded immigrants equal political status with the Malays.[129] Britain's passage of the Malayan Union lacked adequate consultation as it was rushed barely within ninety days of its re-occupation of Malaya. Britain had been pressured to come up with a political framework it thought could arrest the differences between the Malays and the Chinese and the more urgent task of anti-British insurgency looming in the jungles but it had not counted on the overwhelming Malay backlash that ensued. The perceived loss of sovereignty in the Agreement triggered such resentment that Britain was obliged to abort the *de facto* Malayan Union within two years of its inauguration.

There was no doubt that the Malayan Union was doomed to failure from the start as it sought to defranchise Malay sovereign rights with the object of prolonging British rule. And it put back the eminently trusted friendship Britain had built since the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 and represented a low point in Britain's post-war foreign policy.[130] A positive outcome of it was that it brought on a greater awareness of sovereignty issues and set the tone for a more vigorous challenge to British rule. For the Malays it was also a reminder of just how close they had come to permanently relegate their sultans to powerlessness and it was just the catalyst that was needed to advance the maturity of Malay nationalism.

Strong nationalistic passions pervaded during the course of the Malayan Union and the Malays were as Sopiee says 'a race awakened'.[131] So strong were the passions that it is fitting to be

reminded that the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was formed on the eve of the inauguration of the Malayan Union. To the credit of Malay *adat-kehalusan* diplomacy no blood was shed in its campaign to end the Malayan Union. The intense nationalistic mood of the time instilled widespread political interest within the Malay population. Nearly every Malay political party joined in the anti-Malayan Union fray such as the leftist Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Union of Malay Youth), the Parti Kebangsaan Melayu (PKM, Malay Nationalist Party), Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API, Conscious Youth Force) and the Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (PUTERA, Centre of People's Power). One of the better known Malay activists at the time Ishak Haji Muhammad who later became the Chairman of the Labour Party of Malaya (1957–58) called on the British to 'stop the Malays [from] being exploited by other races'.[112]

The KMM even went as far as demanding independence that it envisioned sharing with Sukarno in his grand plan for the 'Greater Malay state of Indonesia Raya' where 'all Malays in one region should come together and see themselves as One Race speaking One Language and belonging to One Nation . . .' But the idea of independence or 'Melayu Raya' only began to gain momentum with such parties as the Pembela Tanah Air (PETA) and Kesatuan Rakyat Istimewa (KRIS), the Malay Nationalist Party, API and PUTERA. Some of these parties particularly the KMM had previously collaborated with the Japanese for a federation with Indonesia as insurance against the takeover designs of the MCP/MPAJA. Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy another well-known proponent of 'Melayu Raya' and president of the MNP between 1945 and 1947 spoke convincingly of his 'assimilationist policy' of non-Malays. He said a future government should have a liberal citizenship policy that would make all migrants feel welcomed in the country and consequently help remove the racial tensions especially between the Malays and the Chinese. The Chinese though were sceptical of Burhanuddin's policy that they felt would prolong Malay domination.

MNP Vice-President Ishak Haji Muhammad however took a radical view. In a joint manifesto Ishak as chairman of PUTERA (Pusat Tenaga Rakyat), a coalition of small parties namely MNP, API, Hizbul Muslimin, AWAS and GERAM, declared that while PUTERA was not insisting on assimilation, the coalition wanted all migrants who aspired to be permanent residents in Malaya to declare themselves 'Malay nationals'. He further declared that a free Malaya would become part of Indonesia. PUTERA's reactionary stand was viewed

with unease by the colonial administration that saw to its demise in 1950. Its members later regrouped under the Parti Rakyat Malaya (PRM) in 1955 that called for a 'Malay Homeland' to include Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei and with 'some links' with Indonesia. But the party failed to gain any meaningful membership from the Malays who eyed it with suspicion for its left-leaning views.[133] Besides, the party's plan for regionalization was too outlandish for a Malaya that was hardly ready for an amalgamation of such magnitude while its own efforts at self-sufficiency were at such a critical juncture.

The Malays completely lost what little interest they had in Indonesia Raya and were never again interested even when talk of Maphilindo (the proposed federation of Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia) was to surface later.[134] Besides, Sukarno's pre-occupation as the global crusader of Afro-Asian Solidarity subordinated his interest in Malaya's independence endeavours.[135] All in all, small Malay parties found it difficult to carve themselves any credible niche in the political spectrum because they were either too extreme in their approach or had plans that were out of sync with the immediate needs of nationalism. It was left to UMNO to lead the way.

The roots of dissatisfaction and Malay assertion

Much has been said about the fruits of colonial administration and admittedly Britain's legacy in Malaya is one of the better stories. But Britain's return in its imperial venture in Malaya was so great that it not only outstripped the wealth of the local people but continued to hold the majority ownership of major resources such as rubber, tin, petroleum, shipping and major trading firms for more than two decades after independence.[136] Mechanisms for *bumiputra* ownership were not put in place until the introduction of the NEP (New Economic Policy) in July 1971. Moreover, colonial altruism did not extend so far as to benefit ordinary rural folk because it was designed according to the 1920 Annual Report of the Federated Malay States to 'make the son of the fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or peasant than his father had been and a man whose education will enable him to understand how his own lot in life fits in the scheme of life around him'.[137]

Even in the urban centres, government social services paled in comparison with Christian and Chinese welfare associations. In education for instance, British administration never saw fit to provide for

higher primary Malay and elementary English education until well into the twentieth century and even then only sparingly to those who had the means.[138] Even the prestigious English-medium Malay College at Kuala Kangsar established in 1905 for the exclusive education of the Malay aristocracy and gentry, failed to meet Malay expectations two decades later. For example, in 1921 all the thirty English schools were only in the urban areas; total enrolment for the entire country was about 10,000 which included only about 700 Malays. Only nine Malays passed the Senior Cambridge examination of which three were from the Malay College.[139]

Razak, the late prime minister, later commented that the consistently low standards of the Malay College in its early years were confined to children of the rulers whose 'aristocratic exclusiveness as the children of the aristocrats had no compelling need to work hard'.[140] But the fact of the matter is that the colonial education system did not provide Malay students with the opportunity to learn English until their teens and was content for them to be schooled entirely in Malay in rural schools. Razak himself when he was admitted to the Malay College at the age of twelve in 1934 had no knowledge of the English language. In contrast, his non-Malay contemporaries such as Tan Siew Sin and Singapore's Goh Keng Swee and Lee Kuan Yew who were Razak's fellow students in England, were already proficient in the language. If education was regarded as an important colonial objective then the extent of British assistance for the Malays was woefully inadequate. The point here is that British policy was not concerned with the development needs of rural Malays. Britain surmised that so long as the sultans were appeased Malay docility was assured. Appeased they certainly were and some would even argue that the British benevolence of luxury and comfort had stupefied them out of any nationalistic initiatives. So when Britain's imperial fortunes dissipated with the onset of the Second World War, Malay discontent began to take shape led not by the sultans but by a growing middle class which drew much of its strength from the plight of the most disadvantaged under colonial economic development – the Malay rural class.

What worldly benefits that were deprived of the *kampung* Malays were probably compensated for by the utter freedom they had enjoyed in matters of religion and custom. But since isolated from mainstream civil activity, a sense of alienation prevailed in the Malay community. Solace and inspiration were found in the mosques that provided besides the peaceful deliberation of spiritual matters, a perfect

environment for the uninhibited nurturing of nationalistic fervour whipped up by religious teachers and *imams*. In a *kampung* setting, indigenous values such as *adat-adat* (custom and traditions), *bangsa* (race), *negeri* (country) and traditions of *ummah* were reinforced in the face of the growing presence of alien cultures. These values provided the impetus for unity and a reassertion of Malay leadership. That the colonial government had left the Malays to their own devices in the *kampungs* was not necessarily a bad policy. The Malays had themselves preferred no government intrusion into life in the *kampungs*. The government responded by legislating protection of Malay settlement land. But the choice of relative freedom and an easy-going life in the *kampungs* over the hustle of urban life also meant that the Malays were losing out on the opportunities of economic changes that were rapidly taking place in the urban centres. British policy made no secret of its continuing lack of interest in the rural economy – Britain's primary interest in the Malayan economy was in the exploitation of raw materials for British industries. Government resources were concentrated in plantations and mining and their supporting commercial services areas in which Malay numbers were very small and subordinate to Chinese, Indian and British superiors.

The Malays were also at a disadvantage in not having an organized labour collective similar to the highly successful systems of the Chinese *kongsi* or the Indian *kangani*. Malay tensions were already high against the Chinese and the Indians and in a situation like that, the colonial government's do-nothing policy for the Malays seemed prudent. This was done together with a furtherance of Britain's 'divide and rule' policy that promoted a racially segregated labour force i.e. mining was for the Chinese, rubber-tapping for the Indians and rice-growing for the Malays. This status quo strategy was applied by the colonial administration in an increasingly plural Malaya and blunted the undercurrents of racial tension.

The Malay tradition of consensus and *adat-adat kehalusan*

Nevertheless, the sultans continued to co-exist with the British in relative harmony and their passive disposition gave some semblance of a Malay sovereignty that was alive and well. Besides, it also served colonial interests to maintain stability in the Malay monarchy not only to mitigate Malay sensitivities but also because the sultan had important social and mediating roles in cultural issues in the colonial administration – the sultan was at the apex of a four-tiered hierarchy comprising

the *orang besar* (district chief), the *penghulu* (village chief) and *rakyat* (people) that oversaw problems in the *kampungs*. Anxious to regain some real authority, the Malay rulers proceeded first to gain credence with the British by asserting themselves in ways that were socially acceptable to the British administrators. They began to emulate British statesmen in excelling in English, travelling overseas and structuring their own administration in a colonial fashion.[141] Malay rulers adopted English sophistication as they strove enthusiastically to meet a more westernized life-style.

The most striking example was Johor's Sultan Abu Bakar a committed anglophile. He played cricket and billiards and decorated his residence in European style. Governor Ord said of Abu Bakar 'In his tastes and habits, he is an English gentleman'.[142] Others entertained lavishly in the European style, consumed alcohol, habitually wore European clothes and sent their children to England for education. Apart from emulating the British monarchy, the rulers also adopted its ceremonial finery for state functions. Some rulers were also given to capricious behaviour that endeared them little to Malay conservative values.[143] British opinion of Malays in general gradually changed assisted partly by the westernized outlook of the elite especially that of the monarchy. It was now according to Sadka 'the Sultan who advised the Resident'.[144] This was still only superficially and mostly face-saving in the main.

Nevertheless, the very cordial relations the Malays had developed with the colonial government swayed colonial attitudes favourably on Malay problems. Having now established himself in the social circle of the colonial administration, the sultan began to reinforce his prestige among his own people. He reasserted his leadership in the *majlis bicara* (disputes council) which served as a tribunal for issues on religion and custom, areas reserved to the Malay ruler without reference to the resident. The *majlis* promoted his prestige enormously as his findings on *adat* matters, family, religion, inheritance and customary law had profound consequences on the lives of the *kampung* folk. *Adat* protocol dictated that the sultan presided over the *majlis* with bilateral consultations of *musyawarah* (deliberation) and *muafakat* (consensus). The former provided a facility by which all parties in a dispute were given the opportunity to air their differences. In the latter, all decisions were made in a spirit of 'give and take' by collective agreement to which all parties were to adhere to strictly without exceptions.

Adat remained an important link between the ruler and his people

for 'it [*adat*] does not rot in the rain or crack in the sun'.[145] An important aspect of *adat-kehalusan* was in the use of appropriate language, of proper address and tact. *Adat* provided the ruler with the *kehalusan* or the subtlety of language that apparently impressed colonial officers. The basis of *kehalusan* was that one should speak softly and politely and if there were reason to chastise it should be done privately without any harshness and with the utmost subtlety. Frank Swettenham, high commissioner for the Malay States in 1901 and the first British officer to pass the Malay examination in 1872 observed that 'Like French, it [Malay] is essentially a diplomatic language and one admirably adapted for concealing the feelings and cloaking the real thoughts. Not even in French is it possible to be so polite, or so rude, or to say such rude things with every appearance of exaggerated courtesy, as in the case in Malay.'[146]

It was Islam more than anything else which provided the ruler with the vehicle for the reassertion of his leadership. He was the leader of the *ummah* and would call his people for *jihad* (holy war) if his kingdom were under threat. This was the experience in the Pahang Rebellion in 1895 when the sultan called for *jihad* against Clifford's expedition. Clifford later wrote of Malay feeling that 'if those against whom he rebels chance to belong to any other faith, no matter what the cause of the quarrel, no matter how lax the rebel's own practice may be, his revolt is at once raised to the dignity of a '*sabil Allah*' (god's war) against the infidel . . . in this lies the real strength of the Muhammadan population.'[147] It was customary for the sultan to pray with his people in the town mosque on Fridays. Sometimes he preached a sermon and often after prayers, he discussed informally matters of common concern to the community. On other days, the ruler prayed in his own mosque normally adjacent to his *istana* (palace) with his aides and village luminaries.

His mosque was also an important place for *Hari Raya* gatherings (the day celebrating the end of the fasting month of *Ramadan*) when his people paid their respects to him. The mosque was a common venue for a variety of public meetings and as a religious place it was immune from police raids and frequently used as the gathering place for anti-colonial or Malay nationalistic discussions. Just as in the style of the *pondok* (village hut) which was used as a meeting-place for garnering village loyalties and propagating Islam, the mosque and *balai rakyat* (community hall) were nerve centres of Malay solidarity. The sultan used his presence at these centres to exert his *daulat* (sacred forces) and to receive from his *rakyat* (people) their continuing

acknowledgement of his *kemuliaan* (exalted status) expressed by such salutations as 'Yang Mahamulia Sri Paduka' (literally His Highness the Sultan with the Sacred Feet). On such occasions, the Malays were reminded of the legacy that owed the sultan his exclusive right to Malay leadership and of their abiding loyalty to him. So important was loyalty that it was symbolized at the end of an enthronement ceremony by the sultan eating from the same plate with four of his closest subjects.[148] Apart from the fear of retribution from the ruler's sacred force, the people were compelled to loyalty and obedience by the coercive function of the state's administration of religious law.

The religious administration as an extension of the *majlis bicara* was responsible to the ruler and was headed by officers all personally appointed by the ruler. The administration also controlled the *Syariah Court* (Islamic Court). The court heard cases on matrimony, inheritance and issues connected with public morality. It issued strict penalties for the avoidance of Friday prayers and fasting and *khalwat* (improper physical proximity between unmarried couples). The sultan's authority was further enhanced by his exclusive right to overturn the *fatwa* (court's ruling) but would exercise it only after consultation with his *mufti* (judge). An example of how the *fatwa* could be overturned was in the granting of pardons. The sultan often pardoned defendants if family members and the *kampung* felt strongly about the *fatwa* over the nature of a misdemeanour. The frequency with which he acquiesced in pardons further fostered the image of the magnanimous ruler in the *anak-bapak* (father-child) tradition.

For more involved family and community cases, the *majlis bicara* (disputes council) would be used by the litigants not only for its less formal procedures but also for the sultan to use his jurisdiction to arbitrate disputes according to *adat* tradition and customary law. The sultan's findings in these cases were final and sometimes complicated cases were arbitrarily decided based on familial or community goodwill. Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor once resolved a difficult problem by asking the parties to shake hands and read the Koran together upon which the litigants immediately sank their differences. The sultan seemed to have lost nothing in the eyes of the *rakyat*. In the Malay polity, people were not considered to be living in politically defined states or governments but rather in a *kerajaan* or the condition of having a *raja*.[149] Therefore, the *raja* and his people were essential and inseparable components of a *kerajaan*; that is one could not exist without the other. As it was in the interest of the king to protect the

rights of his people, the people regarded the sultan's position in the *kerajaan* system as sacrosanct to their own existence.

By remaining devoted to the sultan, the well-being of the community was assured by the sultan's *anugeraha* (divine beneficence) and as Protector of Islam, the sultan was by implication the supreme leader of the Malay Islamic community. The powers vested in the sultan by the colonial administration in religious and customary matters reinforced the sultan's position in the eyes of the Malays because these matters were more paramount to them. The closeness of the sultan to his people was further affirmed by the cultural likeness he shared with the community in race, language, religion and heritage. The sultan regarded his subjects with such endearing terms as *anak buah* (royal subjects or king's 'children') and *anakanda-anakanda* (children). His subjects in turn accepted his paternalistic control over their lives. The Malays could not apply these qualities to the British resident. Colonial rule in that sense created a form of 'surrogate' leadership as it meant only a temporary and partial authority over Malay life since all matters of religion and custom remained the domain of the sultan – factors that mattered most to the Malays.

The sultan was naturally not unaffected by the loss of the administrative leadership of his state. But he held his followers tightly by what little authority he had. He played his part in infusing moral and spiritual support for the *kampung* folk in their nationalistic causes. The sultan had resolved quite genuinely to acquit himself more honourably since he could not only lose loyalty of his people for his wayward ways but also risked a succession challenge that would invariably involve the British resident. For the decade preceding independence, relationships between the sultans and their people had been especially good.

Decolonization

The open forum in which foreign students in Britain were allowed to share and express their nationalistic dreams was the breeding-ground for many a budding nationalist. Sopiee calls them the 'Old Malayans in London' and credited them for the drive of nationalism in Malaya. He is only partly right. The first conscious drive to nationalism did not happen until well after the Second World War. It was not the 'Old Malayans' nor was there the plethora of returning students who provided the early impetus of nationalism; they had only arrived after several fronts against colonial rule were organized in the aftermath of

the Malayan Union. The credit was to Dato Onn Jaafar and the several home-grown English-educated. What was needed was the sophistication to see nationalism through. And this was where Tunku came in, the first of the several 'Old Malayans in London' who followed when he took over UMNO's leadership from Dato Onn Jaafar on 1 April 1951. Even then it was believed that Tunku was thrust into the job[150] probably because he showed disinterest in politics in his early student days in England. He was first back from England in 1925 having graduated from Cambridge University and had been involved in a Malay organization *Seberkas* since 1935 but little was actually known about his political life until he descended to prominence nearly two decades later.

In fairness to Tunku, nationalism was a matter of exposure and self-consciousness that had no great outpouring in the days when he was a student in England. Besides, the idea of independence took momentum after the war and only after Britain had itself broached the issue.[151] He was certainly moved by the vitriolism of independence movements in the Indian sub-continent as he often talked passionately about Nehru. However, his and the other returning Malays' way to independence was much more subdued due to the Malays' friendlier relationships with the British. In a show of humility, Tunku said the idea of Malayan independence was owed to the then Malaya's Governor-General Malcolm MacDonald. Tunku said of MacDonald '(he) was really the man who gave the people of this country a sense of Malaysian consciousness; and it was he who taught the people to look ahead, with ultimate independence as a goal . . .'[152]

Britain decided to enter negotiations with UMNO when it saw that the party was well-organized, had popular support and sound leadership under Tunku's stewardship. Negotiations were congenial and business-like and as expected, proceeded well for the most part although Whitehall's delaying tactics on several occasions riled the usually patient Tunku. The Malays however trusted the British and knew independence was a matter of time. The trust was borne out in Britain's decolonization model which was fair in comparison with that of other western colonizers. The British were even-handed and often approachable in dealing with matters of self-determination. The Americans for example failed to form bureaucratic structures in the Philippines; they instead emphasized elections. Filipinos were conditioned for a long time into believing that elections make politics which in turn they contend should determine the structure of the bureaucracy.[153] As a result, they not only produce successive

chronically unstable governments, they were also unable to fully govern themselves without American patronage until the 1990s when the Americans finally left with the closure of the sprawling Clarke Base (coincided with the massive devastation caused by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo).

The French on the other hand felt that the more immersed colonized peoples were in France's cultural values the more easily they would accept paternalistic centralization of power. Given the extraterritoriality with which it regarded its colonies, France obviously saw no merit in elections least of all in the steady nurturing of the local bureaucratic elite in power-sharing. Consequently, France had perhaps the bloodiest record of decolonization, an experience that has left none of France's former possessions with an enduring democracy. The Dutch too followed the French model though less severely. The problem with the Dutch was that instead of withdrawing gracefully in the face of rising nationalist sentiments in Indonesia at the end of the Second World War, they mounted an offensive to regain Indonesia. Experience like that of many colonial powers brought about repressive military regimes on independence that were to last for a long time.

Furthermore, the Dutch formula of power-sharing federalism failed to appeal to the Indonesians because the elite class the people had counted on to manage autonomous regions under the federal plan, had been decimated by the Dutch during the revolution. Weiner notes that with the exception of the British, not a single newly-independent country that lived under French, Dutch, American, or Portuguese rule has continually remained democratic. Weiner adds that Britain genuinely promoted autonomy and was more concerned than other colonial powers about leaving behind a stable democracy.[154] Britain's good intentions however had been badly miscalculated in Burma, Kenya and Uganda where bloodshed preceded independence.

Britain, of course, combined its noble ideals with strong self-interest. While the British did not have any problem in transferring power to the able Malay elite, they were not sure that the system of justice they were leaving behind would be honoured. In their rule of Malaya they introduced legislations against reckless acquisition of land and for a strict hands-off policy of Malay settlement land. But they were apprehensive if the government of independent Malaya would be similarly disposed. The British feared that the rampant nationalization that had swept in freed colonies such as Indonesia, India and Burma could similarly befall on their extensive holdings in independent Malaya. These concerns did not suddenly dawn on the

British on the eve of independence. They knew they had to devise protection for their interests in anticipation of their ultimate departure.

For this very reason the colonial government put in place in Malaya extraordinarily stringent democratic procedures (such as wider legal recourse for the protection of foreign-owned assets) that were designed to limit the prerogatives of the new government. While these measures were ostensibly self-serving, the British had on the other hand legislated unprecedented tight labour and public safety laws that went beyond the realm of democratic equity, for example, the high-handed Public Preservation Security Ordinance that evolved into the still-existing dreaded Internal Security Act which was frequently used to stifle opposition politics in Malaya and Singapore. On independence, any fears of a nationalization rampage were, of course, unfounded. Life went on quietly and peacefully with no great jubilation.

As it has often been said, the Malayan government worked because it inherited a legacy that was clean and efficient. But legacies alone do not make good government; it comes from a people who were determined to prove their capacity for competent control of their lives and respect for others. Such are the qualities of *adat-adat kehalusan* that have served Malay leadership well.

UMNO and independence

Malay displeasure with the British-initiated Malayan Union provoked a huge Malay crowd to gather spontaneously at a protest meeting in Johor Baru. This show of solidarity at this meeting in May 1946 culminated in the formation of Malaya's first united Malay political party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), a platform upon which Malay nationalism was consummated. That it was able to attract instant large-scale mobilization of Malay nationalism rested on two main foundations. Firstly was its core leadership that was comprised largely of the traditional elite of the executive Malay Civil Service, senior clerics and the aristocracy. They were middle-class and conservative in their religious outlook and many were products of the Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua movements of the 1920s and 1930s. Secondly UMNO was firmly focussed on the main issue – the protection of Malay rights and identity.[133] UMNO not only succeeded in dismantling the Malayan Union it also convinced Britain of its sole right to negotiate future constitutional matters. This it did to the exclusion

of other parties by entering a bilateral agreement with Britain on the limited autonomy of the Legislative Assembly in 1952.

UMNO and the role of protection

Protection to the Malays meant the collective effort of the community to help each other in time of need. In the period before independence, the need was interpreted as a pervasive feeling of dispossession. Realizing how important it was in the Malay psyche, UMNO enshrined the philosophy of protection in Article 4 of its constitution. What was once the moral responsibility of the rulers, protection now became the primary mobilizing force of UMNO which perceived itself as the premier protector of the Malays and Islam.[156] The displacement of the sultan as protector-supreme was perhaps a reaction against the carelessness with which the sultans had signed their consent to the Malayan Union accord. The Malays also believed that their mobilization under the UMNO political leadership was the best avenue for collective representation for the challenges in the post-war period.

UMNO however ensured that the sultans were not ignored and paid due deference to them by acknowledging their symbolic spiritual leadership in the process of nation-building. A fundamental basis of protection is that UMNO is *kaum orang orang Melayu* – a purely Malay party and its strict adherence to this policy had been evident in its public repudiation of leaders who had attempted to breach its ethnic exclusivity. An example would be that of Jaafar Onn, the founding president of UMNO who under British pressure called for a multiracial composition of the party's membership. He ultimately left the party to form the multi-ethnic Party Negara that was no match for the rising popularity of UMNO in post-war politics. UMNO rapidly rose to be the only party capable of rousing nationalist consciousness for self-determination. Since Islam is synonymous with Malay identity and well-being, UMNO made it a point to include it in its basic political culture.

Its protection was often the *raison d'etre* for all manner of political rhetoric in the post-war period. Sovereignty, Malay rights and education were issues that were often debated with strong religious overtones. Shaw says early nationalist consciousness was initiated by returning Malay students notably from Oxford and Cambridge Universities.[157] Could this be true? Most were from the privileged aristocracy or middle class and beneficiaries of the colonial scholarship system, hardly the archetypal nationalists with fire in their bellies.

While Malay politics has no history of nationalists in the mould of a Rizal or a Gandhi, it is however true that credit for pushing Malay assertiveness did indeed belong to these returning students. Though grassroots nationalistic passions were the greatest among the *kampung* folk who were most aggrieved by colonial marginalization, the idea of nationalism or more accurately, national liberation did not come from them. There were two reasons for this. Firstly neither nationalism nor the idea of a nation-state was known in Malay tradition which saw no compelling reason to depart from an *adat*-bound *kerajaan* feudalism. Unity of disparate communities under force of centralization was a western idea that was introduced with colonization. Secondly the idyllic plebeian environment of the *kampung*, far removed from the buzz of colonial activity did not provide the spontaneity for the emergence of leadership.

For unity to emerge, the rulers had to bury their differences but this was impossible as Malay fiefdoms were rarely free of conflicts. If unity meant that they had to acknowledge the pre-eminence of one among them, this too would have been unthinkable. Besides the risk of the individual sultanates losing their independence and the loyalty of their fighting men was too high a price to pay for unity. Therefore, the mobilization for a united front against colonial rule under the sultanate it appeared was virtually impossible. It is little wonder that leadership was ultimately to emerge from a source that was unaffected and beyond the realm of the feuding chiefs. More importantly, it was someone who understood what nationalism was all about.

Summary

When Melaka fell to the Portuguese, it signalled the vulnerability of Malay leadership to foreign intrusion. The Malay states however did not completely succumb to colonization until three centuries later. Up until then the Europeans considered friendly alliances with sultans more fruitful to their imperial objectives. Britain was to change this course when the Malay states came under its full control in 1874. Malay response to British rule for the most part was not hostile and indeed often friendly. British colonial governors imparted new ideas of statesmanship which Malay leaders eagerly adopted to demonstrate their growing political sophistication. Though colonial governors held the reins of authority, the Malays never regarded them as leaders. To the Malays they were mere symbols of alien rulers to whom they attached no spiritual or cultural emotion in the way they

did to their own sultans. Political and economic transformations that accompanied colonization therefore did not force a change in Malay perceptions of leadership. Rather, in the face of a powerful colonial force, options for assertion of leadership rested on tradition and religion. Traditions of spirituality underlined the belief that Malay rulers were divinely sanctioned. Islam provided a further reinforcement of tradition by calling on the loyalty of fellow *anak Melayu muslimin* (Malay children of Islam) to unite behind the sultan 'God's Shadow on Earth' and to defend their faith against foreign *kafirs*. But there was no concerted resistance against colonial power as the sultans were, 'most courteous and most anxious to please', according to Chew (JSEAH) and seemed content to let the British play the administrative role while they retained their leadership over the more significant aspects of Malay life – custom and religion.

Though politically powerless, Malay leadership continued its existence in limbo as it was sustained by the people's faithful perception of its immortality, the loyalty of the visceral *anak-bapak* (father-son) and by the religious symbolism it carried. The Malays could be said to have lived within the spectrum of two complementary parts: the *psychological* and the *sociological*. The suspension of indigenous leadership during colonization resulted only in the *psychological* part of the leadership remaining (that is the emotional bonds between the ruler and his subjects). And as for the *sociological* part, the economic needs of the people were assumed by the colonial government. Leadership in colonial hands was therefore borrowed, temporary and a 'surrogacy' that was extraneous to the spiritual essence of Malay leadership. Politically weak, the emotions of the *innate-psychological* again came to the fore as Malays rallied behind their incumbent leaders in the turbulent post-war period.

While Britain ruled, the indigenous leadership harnessed rural togetherness not nationalism – it was an imported idea as it had no tradition in Malay society. It was the elite, educated in Britain who translated Malay agitation into nationalism. Nationalism gained maturity soon after the Second World War as Malay reaction against Britain's reforms for the Malay states stirred unprecedented passion for unity and nationhood. Conviction of nationalism peaked when colonial manoeuvres were seen as an effrontery to Islam and Malay prestige. While Malay grouses provided the platform for agitation, Islam provided the adhesion that bound the Malays in nationalism. A tensed but peaceful decolonization process that followed was not seriously marred by the Chinese-driven Emergency terrorism against

the British and indirectly against Malay domination. While actively participating and supporting the colonial government in its time of need, Malay leadership also had to deal with its own future according to its cultural values. It faced a dichotomy of values about independence: should the sultanate have paramountcy in a popularly elected government or was it an anachronism that had to be abolished in the era of representative government? There were obvious political choices the Malays of colonial Malaya had to make but they were not difficult ones. The Malays had already begun to acknowledge Tunku's leadership and did not expect the sultans to have any role in the outcome of the political process.

They decided eventually to keep the sultans. Malay leadership prides itself as being continually evolving and modernizing. The *sakti* it believed was not the exclusive repository of the sultanate and could well pass on to someone society *innately* believed was predestined for leadership. However, the road to a unified Malay nation with a large non-Malay population proved a daunting prospect for the emerging Malay nationalists. A more severe prospect of conflict in the decolonization period was the possibility of a non-Malay leadership supported by a sizeable non-Malay population. The Malays resolved that the only way to counter resistance to their sovereignty was to unite and this they did by forming UMNO in 1946. Another reason for their unity was to voice protest to Britain's proposal for the multi-racial Malayan Union that could ultimately mean a non-Malay at the helm of leadership.

Malay solidarity prevailed and the Malayan Union died prematurely. Malaya's independence in 1957 marked a historical turning point as a united Malay society together with its Chinese and Indian partners installed a Malay politician as its leader. This did not mean the end of the Malay sultan though still titular in the new era of modern government, he now had constitutional protection. He played a complementary role with the civilian government but as he was politically subservient to people who were once servile to him, his relationship with the new Malay government was not always easy. Nevertheless, the government was mindful to accommodate and shield differences away from public eye. The Malay sultan was after all still the symbol of Malay leadership tradition, identity and unity the politicians had sworn to preserve. In fact, his preservation was so crucial to Malay Islamic identity that it was made fundamental to the decolonization process.

It is worth being reminded that Malaya and Brunei are the only

colonies of the British Commonwealth whose monarchical system has survived in its original form. That this was possible owed much to astute Malay political leadership that was built on the calming approach of *adat-kehalusan*, a leadership concept of 'absorption of adversaries'. *Adat-kehalusan* is a mode of etiquette that requires Malays to conduct themselves with politeness and due regard for the custom of others. In diplomacy, it is a tactical stance to make adversaries more amiable to their point of view. As a non-aggressive means of diplomacy, it appealed to the British who reciprocated with equal politeness. *Adat-kehalusan* not only peacefully delivered the Malays from colonial subjugation, it also provided Tunku with a stewardship that calmly steered the nation into a stability not seen with many other newly-independent nations in the post-colonial era. Stability however did not last long because the good-natured attribute of *adat-kehalusan* like the piety of Islam was misconstrued for ingratiating passivity. The problem was that Malay primacy and the re-packaging of economic guarantees at independence did, in fact, lull the Malays into complacency the Chinese and the Indians were quick to take advantage of. Tunku's *kehalusan* diplomacy that he had applied in forging racial harmony was in turn viewed by the Malays as soft pandering to Chinese interests.

The next chapter will discuss some of these problems and take us through the challenges faced by Tunku and the successive administrations of Tun Razak and Dato Hussein Onn.

Chapter 4

Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957–70)

Transition to modernization

A discussion on Malaysia's prime ministers will begin with this chapter on Tunku Abdul Rahman (Tunku). Every prime minister, in subsequent chapters, will be analyzed under three aspects: national unity, the economy and foreign affairs.

Tunku and national unity

Tunku was never destined to be ruler of Kedah since he was one of the many children from 'inferior' royal mothers. Tunku's early childhood was spent with his Siamese mother in Bangkok and when he returned to Kedah, his brother became his guardian and mentor. On his return from studies in England, the colonial administration offered him the prestigious job of a district officer.[158] As his job involved the well-being of rural Malays, it gave him first-hand familiarity with their economic plight. He showed sincere concern for the welfare of the rural Malays and it was believed that he often went out of his way to help them. However, his work among the Malays did not motivate him into politics.

Instead, he joined *Seberkas Pena*, an intellectual correspondence group that was engaged in stimulating Malay culture. While not a political party, the organization echoed many of the Malay aspirations and anxieties that were later to become the mainstay of nationalism. Tunku's active interest in *Seberkas Pena* saw his elevation to president of the organization in 1935. At Tunku's urging, *Seberkas* quite uncharacteristic of its objectives flirted briefly with politics when it voiced its protest against Britain's Malayan Union proposals. He resigned his position when *Seberkas* decided against his suggestion for dialogue with the British – he believed that British goodwill was imperative for the Malays to achieve their aims.

Regardless of *Seberkas*, he continued his personal goodwill towards the British.

Little did he realize that the good relations he fostered with his British colleagues throughout his civil service would put him in good stead in his dealings with them. The 1930s were the closest he ever came to politics. It was to be another fifteen years before his interest was rekindled. Despite his empathy with *kampung* folk, he was unashamedly an anglophile. He indulged in a lifestyle that endeared him to the British and the Chinese upper class but was frowned upon by the conservative Malays. Tunku had the unique talent of adapting perfectly into any social setting. He could for instance be the thoroughly nationalistic Malay complete with *songkok* (Malay cap) and *sarong* and blend in with the most humble Malay gathering in the *kampung*. At other times, he could be socializing at the race tracks and homes of his many good Chinese friends or clinking glasses with British bureaucrats and planters at an exclusive country club. He was certainly a good mixer but he did not belong to the rough and tumble of early nationalism: his entry into UMNO was 'out of the blue' and his rise in the party was equally meteoric.

He had sophistication and a clear English diction that dazzled his contemporaries and *kampung* folk alike. But he was also an opportunist who knew how to work his way up among the largely plebeian membership of the party. The people in turn thought he possessed enough colonial savvy to deal with the 'stiff upper lip' of English genteel pretensions. His election to the UMNO presidency in August 1951 was supported by his old friends in *Seberkas* and one of them said 'He was not smart, but, we knew that he would make a sincere and a real leader.'[159] In Tunku, an honest earthy demeanour about him appealed to people of all races. He is remembered for his most fatherly way of speaking in his imitable Kedah accent, always forgiving and playing down problems and saying quite dismissively *'ta'apa, jangan susah'* (never mind, don't worry).[160]

The Lim Yew Hock Affair was one instance. When Lim, late high commissioner to Australia, fell into disgrace over a series of scandals, Tunku did not think Lim's problems were serious enough to warrant his resignation despite strong public opinion to the contrary. Later when Lim was forced into obscurity, Tunku repaired a thoroughly broken Lim to some dignity with a job at the Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (Islamic Welfare and Missionary Association of Malaysia) better known by its acronym PERKIM. Tunku's charity to Lim and many others was well-known. He had a tendency to please

everyone, a trait that was in many ways his weakness. His royal title Tunku or Tengku meaning prince is a title that is found among many Malays who are entitled to use it by virtue of their royal descent and many do carry it but are accorded no special privileges. He had few trappings of royalty and throughout his civil service career lived quite ordinarily.

Not that he was particularly unpretentious; he did, in fact, make much about his kingly pedigree firstly by his preference to be called Tunku and by his almost 'monarchical aloofness' from mundane affairs of government. He once remarked 'For myself, the less work I did the better it was for me. So I took a lot of time off for my own pleasure such as playing golf, race-going or other extra-mural activities . . .'[161] His title though gave him propinquity in his dealings with the sultans which would explain the relative ease with which the latter agreed to his negotiations for independence. However, Tunku became a target of rent-seekers eager to please his propensity for grandeur and luxury in return for favours. His fondness for horse-racing and frequent socializing with Chinese business people drew persistent allegations of impropriety and provided reason for the Malays to accuse him of partiality towards the Chinese.

Nevertheless, either because of his charisma or the magnanimity of his mannerism or perhaps the awe which simple folk attached to his title, he was given respect befitting of a sultan. He was easy-going and yet an ultra-elite who operated above the general level of elite and sub-elite interactions. He was distinguished by an extraordinary leadership style that displayed his strong belief in power-sharing. His attempts at enforcing a configuration of consensual elite worked exceedingly well with his co-partners in the Alliance but at dire expense to Malay cohesion. History will remember Tunku as the first and only chief minister in the Federal Legislative Council in 1955 and as the unquestioned leader and Malaysia's first prime minister (1957–70) who led the nation to *Merdeka* (independence). Although he did not belong to the same league as great nationalists such as Nehru or Nasser, his success at winning independence was nonetheless historically unique.

At the end of the Second World War a bankrupt Britain was keen to dismantle its empire to release itself from the economic malaise. The rising tide of nationalistic fervour, chronic internal strife in India and the protracted war in Burma had completely exhausted Britain's resolve in trying to bring in stability that clearly could not happen with British presence. In the aftermath of the War, the Indian

sub-continent was no longer stellar pride of the Empire but an embarrassment for a Britain that was only recently saluted for its liberating role in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, the quick succession of independence to India, Ceylon and Burma at the end of the Pacific War augured a welcoming anticipation for independence for Malaya. But Britain had no such plan for the Malay states.

Britain reluctant to leave

When Sir Gerald Templer arrived in Kuala Lumpur in February 1952 to take up his appointment as Britain's high commissioner, he declared that his mission was to unite the Malay states to become a 'fully self-governing nation' but he added that there would be no self-government for Malaya until the communist terrorism was defeated. Templer's appointment was preceded by low morale in the colonial bureaucracy that was also in tatters following the assassination of his predecessor Henry Gurney. Churchill's government shocked by Gurney's killing declared also that Britain intended to stay 'even after self-government has been attained . . .' Nowhere in the nine-point colonial office communique was there any mention of independence. Templer was unpopular and his attitude was often unyielding that led on one occasion to a showdown with Tunku and his Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) partners over demands for more seats in the 1955 Federal Legislative Council election. Templer reversed many of the gains Tunku had made building goodwill bridges with the colonial hierarchy for independence dialogue. Templer ignored the rumblings for independence and instead contemplated holding the Federal elections as late as 1957. Templer's stance unfortunately also reflected Britain's mood. In the early 1950s, Britain's economy assisted by a profitable colonial clientele had improved so rapidly that Britain no longer pursued self-determination for Malaya with enthusiasm for two reasons.

Firstly Britain as the primary logistics base for the United States' Marshall Plan post-war aid to Europe, had sourced raw materials from British-owned companies in the colonies.[162] Britain was eager to keep this monopoly and was fearful of losing it in the hands of freed colonies. British planters and miners who were represented on the Malayan Federal Council wielded considerable influence on colonial policy-making. They were particularly anxious for British forces to stay for the special security arrangements that they had been able to get from the government against communist terrorism. It was

therefore not unexpected that Britain's commercial interests spurred on by the boom of the early 1950s took precedence ahead of Malayan wishes for independence.[161] The Cold War alliance and the USA's containment policy also pressured Britain to make policing contributions to security in the Asia Pacific region.

This was partly satisfied by the boosting of a larger naval presence in Singapore. Singapore's security role in Britain's overall foreign policy was also a reason Britain had steadfastly resisted any talk of its independence. Secondly Britain was afraid that the communists' victory in the looming Emergency would threaten the vulnerability of a newly independent Malay government and inspire greater anti-British sentiment in the Far East. A fallen Malaya could mean the quick downfall of Singapore which was already plagued by left-wing militancy at the time and that would inevitably spell the end of Britain's economic interests in the region. In addition, Britain's prestige affected by its failure to fulfil its promise of protection against Japanese invasion would face further shame should it fail to arrest the 'domino effect' of communist rampage that had begun to engulf Indochina. Such an eventuality could raise serious questions about Britain's capacity to preserve the hegemony of its Cold War allies.

Tunku's job made more difficult

Therefore, far from contemplating any pullout, Britain was determined to contain communist terrorism in Malaya and completely secure its military superiority in the region from Singapore. Britain's military presence was substantially bolstered with additional reinforcements from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Kenya. Britain's prolonged stay in Malaya was also motivated by the rubber and tin boom during the 1950–53 Korean War since the Malayan rubber industry whose revenue had been significant to Britain's war recovery was almost all British-owned. Given these reasons, there seemed no compelling reason for Britain to surrender its ownership of colonial Malaya. Negotiating for independence, contrary to popular belief, was not easy for Tunku. In 1953 Templer tried to diffuse Tunku's zeal by offering to 'bribe' him with a senior position in the government.[164] Had he succumbed, it would have considerably weakened his bargaining position and curtailed his criticism of British policies.

However, there was no let up of Malay agitation for self-assertion. Tunku's efforts in trying to muster support from the Chinese and the Indians saw him at odds with his own party. He was criticized for

compromising Malay rights by seeking more non-Malay support. He was especially criticized for not insisting that Alliance partners should endorse Malay as the National Language. Malay extremists had also demanded 90 percent of elected seats for Malays when, in fact, the Malays made up only 50 percent of the population. Much of the internal bickering was shielded from public view at the time. The persistent pressures he had to endure from all quarters did not faze Tunku as he held steadfast to his focus of diplomatic *kehalusan*, a style he knew would ultimately prevail over the British. As a man known for his humility, his disposition for *kehalusan* and his English gentility all tended to mask his true grit.

But he could be militant if he had to: Tunku led a mass boycott by UMNO and MCA members of all federal executive and legislative councils in 1954 that culminated in the pre-mature departure of Sir Gerald Templer. The period apart from revitalizing Malayan nationalism, also coincided with a marked de-escalation of communist insurgency,[165] a factor that was obviously pleasing to Tunku as Britain would have no cause then to object to autonomy. Buoyed by the UMNO–MCA–MIC (Malayan Indian Congress) victory in the 1955 Federal elections, Tunku visited London in January 1956 to present his petition for independence. He was surprised by the congenial reception he received. Finally after eight years of hankering for independence, the British gave in. On 5 August 1957, Malaya became independent as a constitutional monarchy – under the *Yang Dipertuan Agong* (King literally or The Supreme Ruler of All Rulers) – an idea conceived by Tunku (following a Minangkabau tradition) without real powers but with all royal prerogatives. The fanfare was somewhat subdued – a crowd gathered on the field at the Selangor Club, Kuala Lumpur, to watch the Union Jack lowered at the stroke of midnight. A more ceremonial occasion was on 2 September when the Duke of Gloucester handed the instrument of independence to the fifty-four year old Tunku and it was also the day the *agong* was formally installed. Being the unassuming man that he was, Tunku was quietly happy during the celebrations and the nation too played down the jubilation that normally accompanies such a momentous occasion.

He nevertheless proudly acknowledged his role as '*Bapa Malaya*' or 'Father of Malaya' – a charismatic and fatherly image, qualities that are congruent with Malay traditional leadership concepts. The sultans recognized Tunku's pre-eminent role in delivering the country from colonial bondage. They also acknowledged that monarchical absolutism was a thing of the past but were nonetheless specially pleased that

the constitution at least confirmed their traditional status. In providing for the election of the *agong* among the rulers and the requirement of royal assent for parliamentary legislations, the constitution acknowledged him as the symbolic supreme ruler of their *kerajaan* and *negeri*. The sultans as protocol dictated, took no interest in the politics of the new government.

Tunku and the economy

During the entire period of 1957 to 1967 only about 20,000 jobs were created.[166] What that meant was that for all the industrialization in the decade, a mere 167 jobs were created a month and this represented a minuscule number in relation to the population of 8.6 million. Insofar as employment was concerned, Tunku's job at managing the economy it appeared was dismal. Tunku made no secret of the fact that he was not hardworking and he believed he was more intuitive than scientific.[167] He was certainly perceptive about human dynamics and he probably felt his role as leader was better served in maintaining the difficult job of holding together the racial bonds of the Alliance. His excellent relations with Sambanthan of MIC and Tan Siew Sin of MCA clearly filtered in the multi-racial harmony that was apparent in their congeniality that existed at the time. But not for the Malays. Simmering underneath a calm exterior was the huff of a disgruntled group of Malay 'ultras' that tore apart all the gains of racial tolerance Tunku had assiduously built over the years as we shall see later.

How do we measure the effectiveness of Tunku's leadership? There is a tendency to assess a leader by the quantitative value the leader generates for the nation. This is certainly true of leadership in developed economies where it is often judged mainly on its ability to deliver on promises of growth, jobs, etc. Tunku had no such agenda. He belonged to an era when freedom from colonialism was the sole fixation of the nation. If his sole mission in life was to win independence for his country, then, as far as Tunku was concerned, he had done his job and on that score alone he was successful. But was he? Surely it was incumbent on the leader to help realize the higher aspirations of his people. Independence was only the first step. After all, the yearning for control of one's own economic destiny was what precipitated independence in the first place.

Independence is also about social change that forebodes expectations of prosperity, a higher standard of living and the many good things people believe will be a reality in a non-colonial environment.

Leadership is not only about unity, it is also about inspiring and providing the stimulus for this change and the growth it creates. It is not really enough for Tunku to say that he left economic planning to his deputy Dato Abdul Razak bin Dato Hussein (later Tun Razak).[168] As with most newly-independent states, the Malayan economy was similarly afflicted with unsettling conditions as it came to grips with lessons of a post-colonial economy. Tunku's management of the economy had mostly been by heuristic process, as the prior two years he had served as chief minister of the Federal Legislative Council did not provide him and his cabinet colleagues with adequate lessons in industrialization.[169]

Neither did he learn a great deal from his British masters since Britain had largely operated in a non-competitive and captive market that was provided from a highly monopolistic economic base. The captive market was, of course, the United Kingdom where all Malayan raw exports landed and were re-exported to Malaya as finished products. Reminiscent of its clamp on the export of Indian textiles, the colonial government's policy to support greater industrialization in the United Kingdom meant that manufacturing in the colonies was limited. There were however some manufacturing but they were mainly confined to latex-processing, cooking oil and tin-smelting although tin-canning had been in operation since the mid-1930s. But even then canned Malayan pineapple was exclusively shipped to Britain for re-export. Manufactured rubber products however were a post-colonial initiative. While Malaya's economic successes really belonged to his successor, Razak, Tunku's ideas were not without innovation.

Though industrial strategy in the first decade was focused primarily on the rural-agricultural sector, Tunku also placed high priority on social services and regarded an expanding education programme as a form of national investment. School enrolment jumped from 803,000 in 1954 to 1.272 million in 1960. The education budget was for many years about 20 percent of total expenditure, one of the highest in the world. During that time enrolment in English schools increased by 152,000 whereas in the Malay schools the increase was 125,000 clearly trending towards English education.[170] In the First Malaya Plan (1956–60), agriculture and rural development received 23 percent of budget but industrial development only 1.3 percent. In the Second Malaya Plan (1961–70) and the First Malaysia Plan (1966–70) (FMP), industrial development received 2.5 percent and 3.3 percent respectively of the National Budget.[171] In rice cultivation, the mainstay

of Malay rural employment, the Malays earned substantially less than rubber smallholders.[172]

Due to their laborious nature of harvesting (each ear of grain is separately cut by hand with a small knife), a family could not cultivate more than five acres in two months. Rural poverty was still endemic coupled with high debt incurred in repaying seasonal loans for land-rent, fertilizers, buffaloes and subsistence until the next harvest. Many of the problems were alleviated with the introduction of co-operatives under FAMA (Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority). Commercial and industrial sector development was approached quite differently from the agricultural sector. The government relied on private sector investment to find its own bearings in urban commercial and industrial development. The government created a favourable investment climate for private investment in the form of subsidies and tax reliefs.

Its commitment for free enterprise led to the adoption of the Pioneer Industries Ordinance (PIO) in 1958 that granted 40 percent tax exemption for new industries and the establishment of the Malayan Industrial Development Finance (MIDF) in 1960 to finance industrial ventures. In addition, new tariffs were introduced to protect the new industries from imports. Tunku's government encouraged maximum entrepreneurial freedom but it did intervene to facilitate Malay participation in MIDF amidst rising Malay demands for economic parity with non-Malays. However, Malay participation was already active albeit indirectly. Through licensing requirements for which only *bumiputras* were eligible, many Chinese investors had taken on silent Malay partners, usually the middle class elite, in their industrial enterprise in the fashion of the 'Ali–Baba'. When demands were made for government intervention, Tunku was quick to remind the Malays of his commitment to a *laissez-faire* economy. While the business community applauded him for his non-interventionist stance, it did nothing to address immediate Malay concerns and, in fact, only further fuelled their anxieties.

Malay grouses were acute enough to encourage extreme elements within UMNO to find resolution by several 'extra-constitutional' means. For instance, in the early 1960s the then Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives, Abdul Aziz Ishak was pressured into arbitrarily transferring Chinese-owned rice mills to Malay-dominated rural co-operatives. The incident was of such grave embarrassment to the party that it forced the normally forgiving Tunku to decisively dismiss Aziz for 'unconstitutional practices'.[173] Rightly deserving of

praise from the Chinese millers and unquestionably a boon to his prestige, the incident however did not prompt Tunku to redress the still nagging problem of Malay dissatisfaction. The incident also hastened disquiet among the MCA hierarchy who viewed the grab of the rice-mills by Aziz as reckless disregard by a senior Malay minister for the Sino-Malay alliance in the government. Inevitably, the government bowed to Malay displeasure. It revitalized the obsolete RIDA which was established in 1950 and merged it into a new organization, MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat) or The Council of Trust for the Indigenous Peoples and instituted further 'interventionist' concessionary measures for *bumiputra* enterprises. But these plans did not proceed completely because of resistance from the business community which feared that interventionist policies would undermine free enterprise and limit resources for more viable investors.[174] Such concerns, the Malays however contend, were motivated by protectionist attitudes that prevented not only the entry of new entrepreneurs but also opportunities for the Malays. Before the 1969 May 13 Riots, Tunku was burdened by three major 'external' events that not only severely tested his leadership but also impacted adversely on his direction of the economy. As these aspects will be elaborated in the section on Tunku's foreign affairs, it will suffice to briefly discuss them here.

First was the formation of Malaysia which merged Malaya with Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo in August 1963. From the time the idea of Malaysia was first made public in 1961, Tunku faced strong opposition at home and overseas. Unavoidably, Tunku's complete attention to the cause of Malaysia neglected some of the pressing developmental needs of the Malays. The period also coincided with general economic instability due mainly to the market's trepidation of the political future of Malaysia. Secondly was the bitter Separation of Singapore from Malaysia in August 1965. The economic benefits that were supposed to have come with the expanded federation were frustrated by such ceaseless bitter bickering between UMNO and Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) and more personally between Tunku and Lee Kuan Yew.

Therefore, brinkmanship, suspicions and racial conflicts preoccupied attention for much of the time Singapore was in Malaysia. Singapore's Separation also angered important Malay factions in UMNO because it was seen as a chance lost in reclaiming what Malays believed to be territory unfairly seized from Johor. Finally there was the diplomatic problem with Indonesia. Sukarno's opposition to the federation was so intolerable that he immediately broke off

relations with Malaysia and declared *Konfrontasi*, a limited warfare of Confrontation that lasted until 1966. The effect on Malaysia's economy was immediately felt by the cessation of all trade with Indonesia. The suspension of the movement of people and shipping within their close boundaries severely affected the inter-island barter trade, fishing and other traditional cross-border petty trading areas that had been of economic importance to the Malays.

These events caused a drain of valuable resources and a shift in the economic direction Tunku had wanted to take. However, it is doubtful if a higher growth rate could have been achieved had these events not eventuated. Economic management though not through lack of trying was still haphazard. At best these events provided Tunku with a temporary respite from the domestic tensions that were later to emerge to test his leadership to the hilt. Still even through the turmoil of Separation and *Konfrontasi*, Malaysia managed a steady 5 percent growth rate. In the 1960s, private sector investment averaged a credible and impressive 7.3 percent while manufacturing hit 10.2 percent surpassing expectations. The manufacturing component of GDP rose from 8.5 percent in 1960 to 13 percent in 1970.[175] That the Alliance government was intact at the end of Tunku's tenure with UMNO, its strongest partner, must testify to his success at coalition management. Tunku's greatest achievements were however in foreign affairs.

Tunku and foreign affairs

Tunku's first taste of foreign affairs was with regard to merger with Singapore. At various times Singapore was administered from and was even a constituent part of Malaya. The prospect of Singapore's integration came close during the course of the MacMichael Agreement that created the Malayan Union. But that died when the British elected not to include Singapore in the Malayan Union. Healy is correct in saying that the idea of a broader federation incorporating Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo was originally owed as far back as 1951 to an English man, Malcolm MacDonald, who was then the British high commissioner for South-East Asia.[176] But Healy omitted to say that MacDonald viewed the incorporation as a centralized administrative convenience rather than a prelude to decolonization. However, as far as British official policy went at the time, there was no hint even remotely of either administrative alignment or self-autonomy for British North Borneo or Sarawak.

If anything, Britain's interest in the huge timber and petroleum

resources in the area and its concern for its protection of Brunei, dissuaded any immediate plans for self-determination for these territories. However, it was highly likely that MacDonald had intimated to Tunku what was then Britain's unofficial plan of the 'big picture' of a Malaysian federation. We might take a moment to say a few words about Malcolm MacDonald since he was of some considerable influence to Tunku. He was by most accounts Tunku's mentor in diplomacy and one of those British expatriates who made an immense and personal impact on Malaya and Singapore. There is very little written about Malcolm MacDonald by the 'old' British historians partly because as Stubbs suggests he was 'treated with suspicion . . . tended to fraternize with members of the local population and . . . MCS officers were wary of him.'[177] An amiable man he would often dispense with formality and 'go native.'[178]

Tunku established a close personal relationship with the flamboyant English bachelor in whom he found common interests in their fun-loving ways. It is believed Tunku had privately consulted MacDonald during his trying days with Templer. In the early 1950s when the Malayan economy was thriving and Whitehall had gone cold on the idea of independence, MacDonald quietly worked behind the scene to impel Tunku along. MacDonald was, of course, long gone when the idea of Malaysia was made public. He also did not anticipate the real reasons Tunku wanted the formation of Malaysia. Singapore was foremost on Tunku's mind. He had many good friends there who had wished that Singapore was included with Malaya's independence. He had also been aware of Singapore's determination to be part of the Malayan Union as it attracted the promise of universal citizenship and especially the neutralization of Malay dominance which Singapore thought was crucial for racial equality in the union.

At Malayan independence, passions for autonomy were heightened in Singapore and the general feeling was that Singapore's integration with Malaya was only a matter of time. Singapore's rapidly deteriorating security situation in the wake of growing communist-inspired industrial strikes and Chinese schools riots, had again evoked the question of its integration with Malaya. Tunku believed that the absorption of Singapore into Malaya's federation was vital to Malaya's security and economy and it was equally beneficial to Singapore. The British in Singapore shared Tunku's fear that festering leftist politics if allowed to grow in near-by Singapore, could excite dormant anti-Malay and anti-monarchy sentiments among Malaya's large Malaysian Chinese population. To curb the possibility of such

an eventuality, Tunku had intimated that the successful anti-communist security apparatus he had inherited from the British at independence could be put at the disposal of the Singapore government to neutralize radical agitation.

Furthermore, Singapore's continuing exclusion Tunku felt would negate the long-term goodwill and interest that Malaya needed to keep with Singapore first, to sustain the stability of its export economy that depended on the island city's port for its main exit point and second, to maintain security ties against communist influence. On Singapore's part a merger with Malaya would not only mean a consolidation of its hinterland domestic market and a security partnership but it also offered the prospect of a logical progression to independence. Apart from these reasons and the fact that there was a long tradition of close cultural and personal relationships between the two countries convinced Tunku of the logic of merger that was not only advisable but also inevitable. According to Lee's confidante Alex Josey, the idea of Malaysia (or merger more accurately at the time) was first broached privately by Tunku to Lee Kuan Yew on 2 March 1961.[179]

Nevertheless, Lee had also declared in his inaugural address at the PAP conference in November 1954 which Tunku also attended that merger with Malaya was the party's primary mission.[180] Lee had clearly intended Singapore to be a constituent state of Malaya and therefore did not see any distinction between the 'merger' he had declared and the Malaysia that was to follow. Lee had been privy to a British plan for Malaysia when he brought up the issue with Sir William Goode, the governor of North Borneo (formerly of Singapore), on a visit to Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu) in 1960.[181] Seven years later in August 1961, an agreement for merger was signed between Tunku and Lee, an occasion that was also to inaugurate a tense relationship between the two countries. The merger was not entirely welcomed by the Malayan parliament. In justifying it, Tunku explained the economic, security and strategic advantages of the merger and claimed it was Lee who had approached him with the idea against the despair of a worsening political situation in Singapore.

Merger did not bring the stability Singapore had expected; instead the political situation there became even more divisive. Tunku too thought that the relationship that had been forged between the governments of Malaya and Singapore with merger, did not realize the full scope of the political integration he had in mind since Singapore was in part still a British colony. Singapore had been constrained by its limited status of self-government to negotiate foreign affairs matters

through Britain. Much behind the scene work by Tunku and Lee soon saw this obstacle overcome and Britain's acquiescence to the idea of Malaysia just before the 1962 Cobbold Commission (to assess the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia). However, both the Malayan Chinese (particularly MCA) and the Malays viewed the momentum that had caught on in Singapore over the Malaysia proposal with cynicism. MCA had been disturbed by the possibility that its influence with the Chinese population could be undermined by the competition presented by the entry into Malaysia of Singapore's PAP.

The Malays, on the other hand, were not only put off by the prospect of having to share their country with even more Chinese from Singapore but especially unhappy that these Chinese would be given retrospective parity of Malaysian citizenship. The Malays were particularly upset by the torrent of highly provocative chauvinistic innuendoes from the anti-Malaysia Chinese opponents in Singapore which obviously added to their resentment of the idea of Malaysia. Tunku did not allow himself to be distracted by these concerns and was determined to bring Singapore into Malaysia even though he was not entirely pleased with the prospect of rubbing shoulders with an overbearing Lee and the PAP in a future Malaysian parliament. Foremost on Tunku's mind were the obvious economic and strategic advantages that would accrue for Malaysia with the incorporation of Singapore.

But what worried Tunku was that the merging of Singapore's largely Chinese population with the Chinese in Malaya would outnumber the Malays. A bigger Chinese population could encourage non-Malay leadership and that could threaten Malay primacy. Another worrying factor was still the threat of communist influence. Tunku's confidence in Singapore was however recharged in February 1962 when Lee launched the infamous 'Operation Cold Store' that saw the detention of over a hundred pro-communist opposition members that included some of his erstwhile friends such as Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan and the Puthucheary brothers, James and Dominic. Following the 'Operation Cold Store', Singapore's entry into Malaysia was further assured by active campaigning by the PAP.

Discussions were well underway between the British, Tunku and Lee on the idea that Malaysia should also include North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. This was not only for the purpose of packaging former colonies under one roof but also to prop up non-Chinese numbers. Tunku was not unaware of the strategic problems the inclusion of the East Malaysian states would present since unlike Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak did not share the same colonial experience

as they were administered separately. Sabah and Sarawak too had had limited cultural contact with Malaya and above all, physically too remote for efficient centralized administration. Still their inclusion was an attractive proposition since it would increase the Malay population of Malaysia. Another helpful fact to the Malays was that the Chinese population in these states was not significant. Malaysia was simultaneously a triumph for Malay solidarity and Tunku's premature initiation into the turmoil of international politics. Tunku took on the Malaysia project barely four years into his term as prime minister. It was a project of monumental proportion and Tunku could personally take credit for its success. At home Malays did not greatly appreciate the purpose of an expanded Federation with the East Malaysians since jobs and travel to Sabah and Sarawak were still not liberalized. Those who had aspired for a closer association with Indonesia bemoaned the fact that the Malaysia project had alienated their cultural links with Indonesia with whom they identified. Then there were the on-going problems with Lee Kuan Yew and the disenchanted Malays in Singapore. Abroad Tunku was accused of being an 'imperial lackey' and a 'British stooge' for the continuing presence of British troops in Malaysia (in Singapore and the Commonwealth Forces base in Terandak Camp in Melaka).

Separation

Lee Kuan Yew's relentless campaign for the abolition of special Malay rights and his drive for greater PAP participation in Malaysian politics were some of the major causes for the eventual breakaway of Singapore from Malaysia.[182] To further his cause, he formed the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC) that brought together most of the opposition parties under the banner of his campaign for a 'Malaysian Malaysia'. The MSC gnawed at the very root of Malay sovereignty as it clearly sought to abrogate Malay special rights.[183] This met more than the usual resentment not only from UMNO but also from its Alliance partners, MIC and MCA. The Malays were especially embittered by Tunku's lack of decisive action on the deteriorating state of affairs. They felt that Lee had won too many concessions from Tunku who was deceived into promoting a Malaysia that was contrary to the UMNO mandate provisions agreed to in 1961.

They also saw the massive defeat of UMNO's candidates in Singapore's 1963 general elections as an opportunity lost for Malay visibility in Singapore politics. Furthermore, the poor showing of UMNO

and its Singapore Alliance partnership indicated to Tunku the hopelessness of his attempt to upstage Lee or to win the favour of the Singapore electorate which seemed to approve Lee's highly provocative performance in the Malaysian parliament. It was not until 1964 when ominous signs signalled the reality of an impending Separation. Smouldering tensions between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur coincided with one of the most serious racial riots in Singapore inauspiciously during a public procession celebrating Prophet Muhammad's Birthday on 21 July 1964. Tunku blamed the riots on the Singapore government's treatment of the Malays.[184] The Singapore government said the 'riots were willed by . . . UMNO' to re-establish its political influence among the Malays in Singapore.[185]

Razak who was acting Premier in Tunku's absence and had inspected the affected areas a day after the riots, refused to accept Lee's contention that the riots were carefully organized by Malay extremists.[186] There was little sombre reflection for the lives lost nor was there any let up of the acrimony in parliament. Rumour of Separation was already rife when Tunku on 10 December 1964 said in parliament 'If the politicians of various colours and tinges and flashes in Singapore disagree with me, the only solution is a breakaway . . .'[187] Characteristic of Tunku's independent style, he was said to have reached a 'tentative decision' about Singapore's Separation in June 1965 while recovering from illness in a London clinic. He wrote to Razak to discuss the Separation issue with the cabinet's senior ministers and with Lee. Lee however steadfastly refused to accept the inevitability of Separation and spurned Separation negotiations with Razak. He left the negotiations and the eventual signing of the Separation Agreement to his Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee and Singapore's Law Minister Eddie Barker.[188] Tunku returned to Malaysia on 5 August and four days later he announced the Separation in parliament despite Lee's pleas for alternative arrangements of federation during the intervening days.[189]

Confrontation

With the problem of Singapore out of the way, Tunku was able to focus on Indonesia's Confrontation which Sukarno had unleashed following the declaration of Malaysia. Sukarno had earlier been mollified by Tunku's assurance that he would forego Malaysia in favour of Maphilindo, a proposal for the federation of Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia which was strongly favoured by Sukarno and his

Filipino counterpart Macapagal. However, days later Tunku rejected Maphilindo; Tunku's unexpected reversal of his undertaking convinced Sukarno of Britain's machinations behind Malaysia. Deployment of British and Commonwealth troops against Indonesian soldiers in the Confrontation war was unfortunately a setback for Tunku in the eyes of the newly-emerging Afro-Asian nations. Hostilities ceased in September 1965 when the new government of Suharto succeeded Sukarno. Though *Konfrontasi* was not officially called off Tunku proceeded energetically to patch up diplomatic differences with Indonesia. The job was made more difficult by Indonesia's own internal problems and the emergence of the hitherto unknown Suharto.

The slow road to normalcy with Indonesia was finally reached with a peace agreement in August 1966. The quiet that followed upon Singapore's Separation and the end of Indonesian Confrontation unfortunately did not spell the end of Tunku's problems. He was again tormented by domestic politics. The Malays were divided over the decision to oust Singapore from Malaysia; a faction in UMNO led by Syed Dato Ja'afar Albar, its secretary-general, condemned Tunku for the Separation. The upheaval following the Separation resulted in the dismantling of many efforts at economic co-operation that had been in place even before the inception of Malaysia. Tunku was also faced with a growing rift with MCA. Through the crises of independence and the formation of Malaysia, Tunku had established a significant reputation in foreign relations. He maintained exceptionally good ties with Britain, Australia and New Zealand and was able to get assistance in defence and diplomacy extending well beyond the Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation. He was sympathetic to the American argument that the conflict in Vietnam was due to communist aggression that could escalate to the rest of Southeast Asia. However, he opted for neutrality in the Indochina war by staying out of SEATO (South-East Asia Treaty Organization) and thus avoided being drawn into the United States orbit. He recognized the value of regional co-operation so he steered clear from conflict and opted for the promotion of economic development and cultural exchange through the Association of South-East Asia which he initiated in 1961, that brought together Malaya, Thailand and the Philippines.

Tunku's efforts at cementing closer relations with Malaysia's neighbours paid off when the Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos extended recognition to Malaysia and this was soon followed by Indonesia two months later. In the aftermath of the regional tensions,

Tunku suggested an expansion of ASA to set in place a permanent regional body that could offer at senior ministerial level a forum to negotiate political, economic and cultural issues. Thus in August 1967 ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was established bringing together Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Racial discord and Tunku's exit

Racial discord, something Tunku had fought all his life to avoid, finally brought about his political demise. He tried his utmost but in the end he too would agree that racial distrust was an intrinsic human failing that only time could correct. Time essentially ran out on Tunku. Racial differences had been used by both the Malays and the Chinese to achieve political advantage. The Malays justified their special rights on their inferior economic status. The Chinese in turn complained that such special rights deprived them of employment and business opportunities. As disparities between the two continued to exist so would tensions. Unlike elsewhere, where racial tensions were often with small minorities, Malaysia's racial problems were between two more or less numerically equivalent races. In 1968 for example, there were 4.2 million Malays and the 3.08 million Chinese represented about 36 percent of the total population of 8.47 million of west Malaysia.[190]

At this percentage, the Chinese were hardly a minority. Language, religion and culture all divided the Malays and the Chinese. The Chinese tended to be in the cities and had kept away from traditional Malay occupations in rice-growing and fishing though they did get involved in major rice-milling activities and deep-sea *kelong* (offshore fish traps) fishing. They were shopkeepers, traders and generally in commercial activity. The Malays were in the police, army and in other general civil services. Their respective lives were therefore fairly demarcated. Malaysia has had a long history of racial conflicts between the Malays and the Chinese going back to the early days of Chinese migration into Singapore and Penang. Most incidents then were sporadic and it is uncertain if they were strictly racial as the Malays had differences too with the Siamese, Javanese, Bugis and Achenese.

The earliest known conflicts with the Chinese were during the Larut Wars that preceded the Pangkor Treaty when the Malays became embroiled in Chinese clan wars. Major racial clashes erupted during

the BMA (British Military Administration) September 1945 and April 1946 when an estimated one thousand people mostly Chinese were killed. One of the problems was vengeance over old scores that had been perpetrated by the Malays during the Japanese Occupation. The problem was rooted in the Japanese policy of incorporating Malays into the administration that had been cruel to the Chinese community. Another cause of the conflict was when the Malays retaliated against Chinese guerrillas of the pro-communist MPAJA (Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army) who had emerged from the jungles and launched bloody searches for Malay collaborators.

Further clashes took place in 1947 when hastily recruited untrained Malay police numbers accentuated friction with the Chinese. Several fights were reported in the 1950s over Chinese communist terrorists' intimidation to extract food and other supplies from the Malays in the *kampungs*. Frequent gang fights between rival Malay and Chinese gangs had also been a feature in Malaya and Singapore. In the early 1950s when secret societies were rampant, Chinese and Malays avoided each other's areas.[19] In the 1960s there were more racial riots over issues of merger with Singapore and Malaysia. The biggest one was, of course, the May 13 Riots of 1969. If we had to put a finger on the root cause of racial discord, we could put it down to the wide disparity of wealth between the Malays and the Chinese. In short, it was Malay under-development and Chinese prosperity. Tunku could only do so much: while he brought opportunities to the Malays, he could not wrest control of the economy away from the Chinese short of blatant expropriation. He had hoped that the national unity that he had persevered steadfastly to foster, would translate into a better economic climate for the Malays. In particular, he had counted on Chinese goodwill to respond in more concrete terms to the less fortunate situation of the Malays.

The Chinese had no such inclination; their businesses were an enclave of their own kind. For example, for years Chinese department stores especially the Chinese Emporiums that had sprouted all over the country did not employ non-Chinese. Politically, Tunku had obviously achieved what he had set out to do – the Malays were united under one nation and they had control of the government at both state and federal levels. The alliance Tunku had forged with MCA and MIC had guaranteed for the Chinese and the Indians their active participation in government. Under Tunku's stewardship the transition to Malayanization of the bureaucracy had proceeded smoothly. Tunku who had devoted most of his energy in keeping a tight rein on racial

tensions had in his first decade in office appeared to have finally succeeded in muting racial differences. But that was not to be. The Malays felt their dominance was superficial and threatened. They could not identify themselves with an executive that was English-educated and Malay ministers who were too westernized for their liking. The Malays misconstrued Tunku's attempts to diffuse rising racial tensions as pandering to Chinese interests. The Malays too were unhappy with Tunku's economic policies which despite their provisions for Malay special rights, seemed to contribute to continuing Chinese prosperity. Through the 1960s Malayan economic growth had averaged about 5 percent which was, in fact, quite impressive considering the turmoil of the period. However, Malay participation in the growth was still extremely limited; Malay equity in public companies stood at only 1.5 percent compared to 23.7 percent for Chinese and Indians. These figures indicate that foreigners still held over 62 percent of Malayan businesses.

Malay discontent could be traced to the fact that by 1969 only 30 percent of them had employment in manufacturing. This was only an increase of 3 percent since 1962. Most Malays were in lower-skilled jobs; 74 percent of Malays had a monthly income of less than $200 (Malaysian dollars) compared to 33 percent Chinese in this wage bracket.[192] Despite their entrenched special rights, the Malays seemed incapable of lifting their well-being and consequently had cause to believe that government policies were still too favourable to the Chinese. The rampant corruption and the 'Ali–Baba' practices of the time[193] gave ample justification for Malay suspicion. Malay dissatisfaction erupted into the bloodiest racial upheaval Malaysia had ever experienced in the May 13 Riots in Kuala Lumpur precipitated, it was widely believed, by elements in the Alliance who were shocked by the party's huge loss at the general elections.

UMNO elites started to mobilize Malay grievances and the bloodshed that followed so undermined Tunku's leadership, he was never to recover. He later reflected 'My greatest regret is that I allowed the election to proceed. I was too proud, I felt so sure that I was going to win easily . . . What I should have done (in light of the reports I was receiving) was to suspend that election, declare a State of Emergency and allow time for everyone to cool off'.[194] His confidence shattered and his leadership now only in name, Tunku was content to let his deputy Razak assume overall authority under the interim (NOC) National Operations Council. By mid-1970 the NOC had the security situation thoroughly under control and in August Tunku made the

perfunctory announcement that the Federal parliament would reconvene on 1 February 1971. But Tunku never made it to parliament again – he resigned a month later.

Summary

In terms of national unity, Tunku was certainly *the* man of modern Malaysia credited with more significant historical episodes than any other leader in Malaysian politics. He had the good fortune of being the right man at the right time for the most momentous occasion in the history of Malaysia – independence. His success in bringing about a peaceful transition to self-determination for his people, made him a man destined for leadership. In negotiating for independence, no one matched his persuasive and linguistic skills. While he influenced the English with his westernized manner, his charming yet simple ways to his *rakyat* earned him the endearing title of *'Bapa Malaysia'*. He also recognized that co-operation with the non-Malays was crucial in national endeavours and strove hard to maintain inter-racial harmony throughout his political career. No Malaysian leader has yet taken on problems of such magnitude as Tunku did which included the creation of Malaysia, a limited war with Indonesia and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. Tunku was credited with putting in place a coalition system of government that has persisted ever since. The idea of Malaysia was his and it exemplified his vision of unity among kindred people. Britain's trust in his leadership was strong enough to allow him to absorb into his control, so soon after independence, the enlarged federation. On the matter of the economy, Tunku could not take credit for most of the innovations. With independence, he was suddenly confronted by Malay demands for priorities in economic development opportunities.

As the promise of Malay upliftment was slow in coming, Tunku found himself increasingly on the defensive. Fortunately for him, events in foreign affairs provided a timely diversion to his problems. But only temporarily as his inaction for Malay concerns came to plague him later. In foreign affairs, Tunku's diplomacy was *par excellence*. His campaign for Malaysia was remarkable considering he managed it virtually, single-handedly but it confronted him with the most bitter opposition both at home and internationally. It was in his dealings with neighbours that the task proved most trying. He took on the Filipinos and Indonesians but did not anticipate hostilities with Indonesia. With or without Malaysia, Tunku saw the urgency of

increasing Malay numbers as crucial to the long-term survival of the Malays on the Peninsula. What riled Sukarno was that Tunku had cleverly winched in the Bornean states that are nearer to Indonesia, to simply meet his Malay quota. In the end, his adept skills in garnering world opinion saw him contain Indonesia's *Konfrontasi* with a minimum of damage to Malaysia.

However, he was blamed for Singapore's Separation from Malaysia. There are good reasons to believe that Tunku himself did not want Separation – in his letter to Singapore's Deputy Premier Toh Chin Chye he said 'if he had the strength . . .' he would find some other way to deal with Lee and Singapore.[195] Events preceding Separation clearly showed he had caved in to Razak and company. Unlike Lee, he did not show any remorse over the parting of ways. Faltering relations with Singapore since then more than vindicate Tunku for his failure to reverse the course of Separation. He could reminisce that the island city's sudden birth to a freedom of much good fortune was propitiously as much his doing. Tunku's work rate had always been a subject of ridicule. The fact is, he was laid back but not lazy since he had been thoroughly conscientious in many of the major issues that confronted him in his political career. His leadership style was consensual and one of delegating which he did more of over the years. This, tended to negatively depict him a picture of disinterest. His habit of entrusting decision-making responsibilities to others could explain the fact that his ministers were the most prominent and independent-minded of all, given the wide authority they carried.

We should be reminded that Tunku was also simultaneously Malaysia's foreign minister, a job he did remarkably well. Characteristic of his political style was that, he believed in frequent personal consultation with leaders in the region. He also kept close links with Britain and members of the Commonwealth and later with Islamic countries, notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait – links that were to prove invaluable to his future role as secretary-general of the Jeddah-based International Islamic Council and later to Malaysia's PERKIM. Unfortunately, Tunku's indiscretion in extending and receiving generous favours to win political support, was described as corruption by some of his enemies. Considering his legendary sense of compassion coupled with an attitude of loyalty, the exchange of favours did not seem inconsistent with the brotherly spirit that was pervasive during the testing period of national integration.

There were rumours of large scale corruption in Tunku's administration, some of them believable but Tunku seemed never to have

enriched himself with ill-gotten gains. If he had any, they never surfaced on him or his family. Rather, by relative standards he led an austere existence in retirement preferring altruistic jobs that paid only modest stipends. The Tunku legacy illustrates perfectly the *adat-kehalusan* quality in Malay politics but in a way it emphasized his docility. His resolute stand on racial fairness did little to stem growing Malay disenchantment that finally became the proverbial straw that broke the back of his leadership.

In terms of the hypothesis that perception is innately sensed by his followers, it is evident that the people believed him to be predestined for high office as shown by the utter trust the people had in him. Though he had immense leverage at his disposal, Tunku was not terribly efficient at using it. Maybe, he did not need to. People and even his opponents were generally kind to him and if there were any effrontery to his authority, it was exercised with polite, customary Malay restrain. But that is not to say that the people, not least of all the Malays, were incapable or even devoid of resentment. Such a thing did happen during Tunku's premiership when his policies began to crack into bread and butter issues. And when the sociological benefits for loyalty were not forthcoming, doubts of his perceived divinity began to manifest into widespread dissatisfaction. When things turned for the worst he seemed to have lost his *wahyu* and had none of the *semangat* to help him recover from his enfeebled leadership. His exit was however spared the ignominy despite the wide civil unrest and disunity it precipitated. That was because the Malays were loathed to subject *malu* (shame) on anyone, least of all, their fallen leader. This was in the spirit of *kehalusan* politics of the Malays that one be treated with dignity even in defeat. But Tunku was sorely hurt regardless, a bitterness he was to carry for years.

Chapter 5

Tun Abdul Razak Hussein (1970–76)

Nationalistic leadership

Tun Razak and national unity

Razak made no pretext of the fact that he was more solicitous of Malay interests and concerns than those of the non-Malays. Unlike Tunku, Razak discarded the niceties of *kehalusan* and brandished his support openly for Malay demands for a bigger share of the country's economy. He supported parochial views of Malay resentment which he suggested was the result of generous government concessions to Chinese concerns in language and educational issues; and he maintained that measures to uplift the Malays economically were frustrated by persistent Chinese reservations about Malay special rights.[196] Chinese reaction to Razak's tough-talking stance was patient but ambivalent. Their ready compliance with most of his reforms indicated not only their forbearance at the volatility of the situation but also their fear of the grim outcome if Malay unease was not quickly and generously appeased.[197] Razak had seen how Tunku had failed with the Malays and was quick to distance himself from Chinese affability. But he was equally mindful of the effect inordinate pro-Malay policies would have on the non-Malay population and acted cautiously to bring about changes with incremental moves.

Razak defied the stereotypical image of a leader. In his political style he was dour and his speaking style lacked the imploring flair Tunku was well-known for.[198] He spoke excellent Malay and English and like Tunku and most Malay gentry, Razak was characteristically soft-spoken. He was not known to be particularly close to any Chinese, not even among those in his cabinet probably because he lacked the gregarious quality the Chinese seemed to like in a leader. Probably also, he appeared stern and almost schoolmaster-like. He was remembered for his emulation of Gerald Templer with his stick-in-hand

berating approach when he took charge of rural development in the Legislative Council in the mid-1950s. What he was not he amply compensated for in his highly-disciplined and efficient work ethic.

He was noted for being an efficient organizer and an utterly hard-working bureaucrat – he died from leukaemia and it was believed he was working right to the time of his death. It was public knowledge that he ran the day-to-day business of government for Tunku, something Tunku publicly acknowledged. Referring to the First Five-Year Development Plan, Tunku unabashedly credited Razak with all the work done.[199] But it should be acknowledged that Razak was, in fact, more experienced: he first entered the colonial Malay Administrative Service back in 1939 when he was only seventeen years of age and held the prestigious position of state secretary of Pahang at twenty eight. Though Razak was nearly twenty years younger than Tunku, he had as much if not more experience in politics than Tunku. In 1947 when Tunku was not yet in politics, Razak was initiated into nationalism while reading law in England (in the Malayan Forum with Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee, John Eber and others). In the mould of Sopiee's 'Old Malayan', Razak was one of those students who immediately plunged into politics upon his return and was elected president of UMNO Youth.

He became vice-president of UMNO in April 1951 at the same time that Tunku was elevated to the presidency on Onn Jaafar's resignation. Razak's sterling record on planning social reforms was first exhibited in his 1956 Razak Report on education which he produced when he was deputy chief minister in the Federal Legislative Council. The report had far-reaching goals and became the foundation of the present education system in Malaysia particularly concerning Malay education. The following year saw the implementation of the first national Malay-medium secondary schools. In independent Malaya he was concurrently deputy prime minister and defence minister. He took on the added responsibility of the Ministry of National and Rural Development in 1959 and oversaw the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) which he had initiated in 1956. His efficiency in mobilizing administrative resources to accomplish objectives in sensitive areas plus his caring treatment of problems, was one of the reasons he was given the job of director of the National Operations Council (NOC) to mop up the chaos after the May 13 Riots.

When his prime ministership was formalized on 21 September 1970 he also took on the Defence and Foreign Affairs portfolios – his

demise on 14 January 1976 was blamed on the heavy workload he had taken on.

Barisan Nasional (*Barisan*) (The National Front)

The shock of the opposition successes in the 1969 Federal elections where the government lacked the majority in parliament, caused Razak to re-structure the Alliance. Under his plan for the expanded coalition of *Barisan*, Razak sought to boost his government's parliamentary majority to more than the two-thirds required for constitutional amendments. His plan was not initially received with much enthusiasm by MCA mainly because Razak wanted to target other Chinese parties for membership in the coalition. MCA's concern was that new members would leap-frog into the government without having to go through the ideological mill that had forged their earlier alliance. Razak's promise of limited access to political decision-making for the new members, also fanned further apprehensions of his Alliance partners. However, MCA's fear of a repeat of its 1969 electoral failure, grudgingly acceded to Razak's coalition plan on the basis that the bigger Chinese representation in the coalition would help win back the Chinese votes it had lost to the Democratic Action Party (DAP).

In 1970 the opposition had forty-one of the ninety-three seats in the Federal parliament and at state level, it controlled three states Penang, Perak and Kelantan and two municipalities, Georgetown in Penang and Ipoh in Perak. Razak considered the opposition strength potentially dangerous to the reforms he had planned for the Federal government. He was specially concerned for the opposition's capacity to inflame ethnic displeasure over his reforms not only from Chinese-dominated parties such as the DAP and Gerakan but equally from extreme Malay parties who were always distrustful of Alliance concessions that continued to have Chinese inputs. Razak's plan for the *Barisan Nasional* was to dispel such anxieties in the government and he did it by incorporating the more accommodating of the opposition into the coalition where they could voice their criticisms within the decorum of partnership and away from public view.

Chinese support outside the Alliance began with Razak's successful co-option of his old friend and former head of MCA, Lim Chong Eu who as leader now of the Gerakan Party, controlled the Penang State government. Gerakan agreed to share with the Alliance the control of Penang and likewise in the Federal government it now became a

partner in the *Barisan*. A similar agreement was negotiated with the Seenivasagam brothers with their Ipoh-based People's Progressive Party (PPP) whose membership was comprised mainly of Chinese and Indians in Perak. With the inclusion of the Gerakan and PPP, the *Barisan* completed its consolidation of non-Malay constituencies in west Malaysia.

In East Malaysia, Razak later expanded the *Barisan* with the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak. In Sabah, Razak had a fairly easy passage as all parties were Alliance affiliates since opposition parties had either been absorbed into the Alliance affiliation or dissolved by the autocratic government of Tun Mustapha Harun who headed the United Sabah National Organization. In Sarawak, the problem of building a coalition was much more complicated. The Alliance members there managed to win only ten of the twenty-four seats in the Sarawak Legislative Assembly. The *Barisan*-Sarawak connection was finally made when Razak persuaded a member each from Iban-based Pesaka Party and the Chinese-based Sarawak United People's Party to join the Alliance affiliates and to give the Alliance the majority it needed to control the state assembly. Razak's attempts to bring in the Malay-based Parti Islam Sa-Melayu (PAS) into the *Barisan* fold required some compromise as the PAS which controlled the conservative Kelantan state also had a large anti-UMNO following in Terengganu and Kedah. Negotiations continued for several months before Razak was able to persuade PAS President Mohamed Asri Haji Muda of the virtues that were presented in the wider Malay platform of the *Barisan* for the further assertion of Malay Islamic interests.[200]

The primary objective of the renewed coalition which emphasized Malay rights and privileges and Malay economic betterment was not lost on the non-Malay faction of *Barisan* which, nevertheless, viewed its consolidation in the coalition as a useful insulation against the backlash of failing UMNO initiatives. The Chinese anticipated this correctly; the habit of using them as whipping boys for Malay economic ills ceased quite dramatically since the establishment of the *Barisan*. Razak viewed political stability primarily in terms of a more effective ideological consensus to underpin the government's coalition. He believed that the ideological support base must be firmly entrenched for a truly credible and viable national political consensus.[201] One of the first things he did when he was appointed director of NOC was the creation of the Department of National Unity that formulated a year later the national ideology of *Rukunegara*.

Known as the Articles of Faith of the State, the *Rukunegara* is

literally a pledge of unity and obedience to the state containing five principles: belief in god, loyalty to king and country, upholding the constitution, rule of law and good behaviour and morality. These principles were to be achieved by five objectives: unity, democracy, justice, liberalism and progress.[202] The new ideology beseeched 'a greater unity of *all her peoples* . . . ensuring a liberal approach to . . . *diverse cultural traditions* . . .' (italics added).[203] In January 1970, Razak formed the National Consultative Council (NCC) to 'establish positive and practical guidelines for inter-racial co-operation and social integration for the growth of a Malaysian national identity'. The council had representatives from a wide spectrum of society – ministers in the NOC, state governments, political parties, Sabah, Sarawak, religious, social, professional groups, public servants, etc. The council was a closed-door forum for the deliberation of government policies to achieve the traditional *muafakat* (consensus). The *Rukunegara* ideology and certain amendments to the constitution and the objectives of the NCC, set in place unprecedented racial stability right through to the present day. They also greeted new ground rules in politics and the enhanced powers they brought to the Federal government, gave greater respectability for the *Barisan*. Razak's innovations were well received as they gave an appearance of a government that was moving positively forward and was sincere in its efforts to share the political process with others.

However, he combined his control of the government with the enforcement of the sedition laws that basically prohibit public criticism of the Malay rulers and Malay special rights. However, the fervency with which he pushed ideological consensus dissipated quickly. There was consensus all right but it was not achieved on ideology *per se* neither did Razak go exactly hawking an ideology even if there was one. In any event it would be fanciful to believe that the opposition parties could be enticed by an ideology *en masse*. Razak's objective for the coalition was simply to enlarge a power base to recoup the parliamentary majority that was lost in the last elections. The objective of *Rukunegara* was to instil a nationalistic spirit of belonging, certainly not for coalition peddling. It was not clear therefore just how ideology fitted in the consensus he so ably achieved. In the overall scheme of things it did not seem to have much tangibility.

The *Barisan* was formally registered in June 1974 with the old Alliance structure disbanded. The inception of the *Barisan* completed Razak's mission for the wider political base he had sought and effectively narrowed the competition down to UMNO and DAP. Razak

hurried furiously to complete by July the line up of *Barisan* candidates for the Election in August 1974. UMNO was without question the greatest benefactor in the *Barisan*. As leader of the coalition, Razak made sure that important cabinet positions were reserved for UMNO. As a rule, all issues of public policy were first debated and decisions vetted within UMNO before they came before the *Barisan*. While UMNO was obviously pleased with its place in the *Barisan*, the same could not be said of MCA and MIC. MCA which had expressed apprehension about the new coalition, felt its former influence with UMNO lessened since it was no longer the only representative of Chinese interests in the government – there were now five others – Gerakan, PPP, Sabah Chinese Association and Sarawak's SUPP and the Sarawak Chinese Association. MCA had also been unsettled by its problems of leadership partly exacerbated by Razak's dislike for its erstwhile leader Tan Siew Sin who Razak blamed for MCA's vacillation about joining the *Barisan* and the continuing dissatisfaction after it joined the coalition.[204] MIC had no hesitation about the *Barisan* but it too was torn by internal strife for several years until it was settled in 1979 during V.T. Sambanthan's leadership. Unlike MCA, there were no other Indian parties to compete with MIC and its relationship with UMNO after the formation of the *Barisan* remained as it had been earlier within the Alliance. Under the NOC, communal representation had been seven Malays, one Chinese and one Indian. But when the NOC was dissolved and parliament restored, all the major cabinet positions except finance were held by Malays. Non-Malay parties were rewarded with a number of deputy ministerial positions in the new cabinet. In seeking to develop new talent, Razak repudiated many of Tunku's cronies in the administration. He moved cautiously in this direction as he also wanted to preserve some semblance of loyalty and continuity with the previous administration that had been as much of his making as Tunku's. As far as the old ministers were concerned he made no attempt to interfere with their seats in parliament but subtly stripped them of their jobs.

For example, when Senu Abdul Rahman, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, withdrew his leadership of UMNO Youth upon his loss of the 1960 elections, his honour was acknowledged. Yet when he regained his parliament seat in the 1974 elections, Razak did not reward him with any cabinet position. One of Tunku's close associates, Khir Johari, was another example. He lost his post as vice-president of UMNO in 1971 and after a stint as ambassador to the United States he virtually disappeared from active politics. Razak

executed many more purges and by 1975, he had filled his inner circle with a number of 'new faces'. The most prominent of these 'new faces' were the rehabilitated mavericks Mahathir and Musa Hitam. Tunku had expelled them from UMNO in the aftermath of the 1969 Riots (for calling on Tunku to resign). The other face was that of Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, the UMNO treasurer cum vice-president and later a director of Petronas and Pernas, the government trading company. Razak brought in his brother-in-law Hussein Onn as education minister and on Tun Ismail's death in 1973, elevated him to deputy prime minister and UMNO deputy president. Razak also elevated the fast-rising Mahathir to education minister and Musa to deputy minister of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The latter became a full Minister of Primary Industries after the 1974 elections. The elections also elevated militant Malay communal spokesmen to important posts as vice-presidents and on the Central Executive Council to counter and exclude opposition from within UMNO. One faction opposed to Razak was the old *'ultras'*,[203] a group of populists that flourished in the 1970s. These *'ultras'* appealed to extreme Malay nationalism and justified their camaraderie by unrestrained patronage and corruption. Its leadership was centred on Harun Idris, Selangor's *menteri besar* at the time of the 1969 Riots and president of UMNO Youth since 1971. He was supported by Syed Dato Ja'afar Albar, the former UMNO executive secretary, who had earlier resigned his post in protest to Singapore's Separation. They had been useful in helping Razak organize the *Barisan* and Razak was specially obligated to them for using their influence as conservative Islamic idealists to persuade PAS to join the *Barisan*. The other opposing faction was the *'old order'* led by Tunku and made up of his old colleagues such as Senu Abdul Rahman, Khir Johari and Tun Mustapha. As a strategy to contain these factions, Razak encircled himself with Malay intellectuals, technocrats and controversial personalities. He figured they could provide him with the public relations machinery for the extensive social restructuring tasks he had planned. Among them were prominent intellectuals such as Samad Ismail, managing editor of the *New Straits Times*; Abdullah Ahmad, his political secretary; and Abdullah Majid, his press secretary.

These were some of the sub-elite members of the *'ultra'*- Malay nationalist 'new order' who Razak had presumably reined in to disperse the activism that could be built around them if they felt disfavoured by the new administration. The presence of these intellectuals in the 'new order' was also used to regain the allegiance of

Malay intellectuals especially the Malay school teachers who were not yet convinced of the benefits of the new policies. Razak sought to confirm the ascendancy of his 'new order' team in the 1975 UMNO general assembly in which he and Hussein stood unopposed for the top leadership positions. But since neither he nor Hussein was in good health, the election of the three vice-presidents drew more than usual interest in the whole country. The election was also a period of intense anxiety in UMNO as it emphasized the division that had been created by the on-going factionalism and now polarized further by competing support for the contenders. Razak's preferred slate of vice-presidential candidates were incumbents Ghafar Baba, Razaleigh Hamzah and Mahathir. Vying for these positions were also the *ultras* Harun Idris and Syed Dato Ja'afar Albar. The challenge by Harun and Syed Jaafar had bothered Razak because these *ultras* had been increasingly defiant of Razak's leadership and were the most divisive elements in UMNO. A personal rift had also been brewing between Razak and Harun who was implicated in the 1969 Riots and during the elections was investigated for corruption charges. Ironically, Harun had also been a strong supporter of Mahathir when the latter campaigned against Tunku after the Riots. In any case, all three of Razak's sponsored candidates were returned in the UMNO elections but Razak was, nonetheless, distressed by the slim margin of Mahathir's win which he had blamed on Harun's challenge.

To tighten control of the administration, Razak resorted to some unpopular measures such as the strengthening of general censorship, curtailment of student political activities (with the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim under Internal Security Act (ISA) in December 1974 and released only in 1976) and he banned discussions on Malay special rights and the National Language. Despite this, the country seemed appreciative of Razak's strong control of the government. Since the mechanism for inter-ethnic peace if not geniality had been achieved with the setting up of the *Barisan*, Razak was ready to launch into the next thorny question of Malay economic disparity.

Razak and the economy

The dramatic events that followed the 1969 elections beginning with the riots, the establishment of the *Barisan*, the cabinet revamp and finally Tunku's retirement, had profoundly influenced Razak in the way he approached economic reforms. The government's Report on the Riots (in a White Paper entitled *Towards National Harmony*)

stressed that political and psychological factors had contributed to the conflict. The report and public comments of government leaders also emphasized economic causes: they cited the failure of earlier economic policies to address the 'relative deprivation' of the Malays in comparison with non-Malays. Expert commentaries at the time while accepting that the Malays still lagged behind the Chinese economically, did not subscribe to 'relative deprivation' as a reason for the conflict.[206]

Yet theories of 'relative deprivation' continued to be ascribed to the 1969 Riots by the Razak administration to justify certain policies. Resting on the notion of Malay dissatisfaction as the cause for the 1969 unrest, Razak embarked on an aggressive economic agenda that was primarily directed to correct the perceived inequities of Malay underdevelopment. To allay non-Malay cynicism, he assured them that their wealth and jobs would not be expropriated to hasten Malay aspirations as his economic policies 'will be distributed in a just and equitable manner'. Underlying this assurance, he promoted the slogan of *Masyarakat Adil* (Just Society) in his launching of the *New Economic Policy* (NEP) in the Second Malaysia Plan (SMP) on 11 July 1971.

The New Economic Policy (NEP)

The essence of the NEP was to seek redress of the economic imbalances that gave rise to Malay antagonisms and to meet Malay expectations for a greater share in the economy. The NEP prioritized its objectives by tending first to the needs of rural Malays whose plight was identified with stagnated rural projects, lower production yields and rising poverty among the rapidly increasing rural Malay population. Recommendations in the NEP included the rapid modernization of rural development, facilitating the more efficient access and use of FELDA land and the reducing of stringent requirements for state loans. Along with these facilities the government also stepped up its drive to improve public amenities in the rural areas and training opportunities for the high number of unemployed rural youths. The second measure was for the progressive reduction of Malay dependence on (diminishing) agriculture subsistence.

In line with this policy, the NEP recommended a concerted drive for greater Malay exposure in the urban sectors of commerce and industry to be steered by such public enterprises as the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (Pernas – the National

Corporation Ltd), the State Economic Development Corporations (SEDCs), the Urban Development Authority (UDA) and the Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Ltd (MIDF). Razak set a range of goals for the next two decades to measure the success of the NEP recommendations. One of those goals was to target 30 percent of the country's corporate wealth for Malay ownership by the year 1990. To achieve this the government adopted a highly corporatist 'government-in-business' strategy to fulfil its *bumiputra* ownership of large public corporations.[207] The government's deft acquisitions and equity holdings in major public companies through Pernas, UDA and the SEDCs though growing steadily, did not immediately address the more pressing needs of general upliftment for most ordinary Malays.

To overcome this problem the NEP bolstered its objectives with a range of measures that were designed to accelerate Malay participation in the reform process. Included in these measures were the retrospective expansion of Malay special rights in the form of land rights, subsidized education, generous recruitment quotas for the civil service and certain business prerogatives that were already protected in the constitution and had been gradually expanded in the past decade. Furthermore, the NEP re-formulated the system of job quotas and Malay special rights for greater privileged access to higher paying jobs, management positions, the professions, tertiary education admissions and equity stakes in companies. NEP restructuring targets were also extended to the private sector. Companies were asked to submit plans for employing, training and promoting Malays at all levels of their operations and to adhere to the Malay employment quotas that were generally set at 40 percent of the total labour force of the company. Many companies however chose to ignore this directive for the obvious impracticality of it and the absence of effective monitoring of their compliance. But for new foreign companies there was no escape from this policy, as Malay employment was a condition for their acceptance of the licensing and tax concessions that were available to them.

The outcomes of the NEP

The implementation of the NEP coincided with a buoyant Malaysian economy during the years from 1970 to 1974. Politically, the environment presented Razak with a most propitious time to push through with relative ease many of the provocative NEP recommendations as it made the task of managing opposition dissent and racial cynicism

easier to handle. The vitality of the NEP in the Second Malaysia Plan 1971–5 was manifested by a real GDP growth rate of 7.1 percent per annum that was achieved against the target growth rate of 6.8 percent per annum. While the industrial sector doubled its share of growth since 1961, agriculture declined by a third underscoring a successful policy shift towards industrialization.[208] Due to a world-wide recession, the hiatus in 1975 was cushioned by the high growth rates of earlier years. The rapid recovery that followed in 1976 meant that little or no adjustment was necessary to alter either the pace or strategies of the NEP. In the early 1970s, the government acquired multinational companies that had their major business interests in Malaysia such as London Tin (by whose acquisition Malaysia controlled the world tin market) and rubber giants, Sime Darby and Socfin.[209]

By 1975 Malay ownership of capital increased to 7.8 percent from 2.4 percent in 1970 but still fell short of the target of 9 percent. Within three years of the NEP implementation, 98 percent of all those recruited for government service were Malays, a percentage that far exceeded the 4:1 Malay ratio.[210] During the period of the SMP, Malay employment in the commercial and industrial sectors rose rapidly to parallel the rate in the public service. Similarly, Malay admissions to institutions of higher education also increased dramatically. Malay student numbers at the University of Malaya, for instance, increased from 49.7 percent to 66.4 percent between 1970 and 1979 and in about the same period, government expenditure per student rose from RM3,700 to RM12,900 underscoring the NEP policy for greater access and privileges to Malay students. (As in March 2001, RM3.80 = USD1.00).

Of the total of 4,930 scholarships offered in its 1974–75 calendar year, the University of Malaya offered 3,505 to Malay students.[211] The government also actively participated in funding Malay students for overseas studies. The Razak administration's efforts to eradicate poverty did not match the impressive growth in the economy. It managed to reduce poverty by a paltry 5.4 percent of the 49.3 percent households that were listed to be living under poverty.[212] Part of the problem was attributed to the government's policy of winding down agriculture that caused untrained rural Malays to look for work in the cities where they soon established themselves in the notorious squatter colonies of Kuala Lumpur – the subject of constant jibes by critics of the NEP.[213] The SMP had also experienced a widening gap in income disparities between the rich and the poor, a phenomenon that not only

called into question the inequality of Razak's reforms but was also a perennial embarrassment which successive governments were simply unable to redress.

While the NEP was generally positive to the overall well-being of the Malays, it did not give them benefits at the speed which Razak had intended. One of the reasons for the slower than expected growth was the government's acquisitive policy of corporate ownership that muddled fiscal policy and foreign investment. Firstly inordinate government spending in infrastructural and non-productive sectors caused revenue deficits and increased borrowings. Funds were also being drained for an equity buying spree to meet corporate ownership objectives. Secondly rising inflation, ambiguities in acquisition policies and interventionist regulations, as well as repressing private sector expansion compounded by capital outflows, frightened away foreign investments. Investors also found it hard to reserve *bumiputra* preferential shareholding since *bumiputra* capital was acutely scarce. Capital was of no issue if the government was itself the equity partner as funds could be allocated from state budgets or from borrowings from say, Amanah Saham or Tabong Haji which too had been set up with state endowment. But for the average private individual the option was often straight government loans through either state loan agencies or banks such as Bank Pembangunan, Bank Rakyat and Bank Bumiputra whose liquidity in the main was also tax-resourced. The shares were often enough for the collateral required for the loans and interest could be nothing or minimal.

Sometimes shares were gifted at absolutely no cost to the beneficiary *bumiputra* director especially in instances where the benefactor was of such prestige that his name (always male) alone carried enormous commercial value to the investor. If access to loans was impossible and if the investor wanted a *bumiputra* partner badly enough, a company advance was usually arranged for the partner and repayments were offset against future dividends or other remuneration. This system could alternatively have a complex 'buy back' arrangement where the shares could only be resold to the investor at a pre-determined price. Although *bumiputra* equity obliged no further contribution from the partner, the company would normally utilize the services of its Malay partner in largely public relations roles. The performance and the day-to-day running of the company rested exclusively with the investor and the prohibition on the repatriation of foreign capital negated debt-recovery by liquidation.

Razak and foreign affairs

When Razak took interim charge of the nation under emergency powers of parliament following the events of the 1969 elections, he had only putative leadership that meant that he really did not have authority outside the NOC. Besides, Tunku was officially still the prime minister and Razak was not to take official control until sixteen months later. But that did not prevent him from immediately planning changes for the country and like the NEP, those changes included some of the most innovative foreign policy initiatives. When he took office as Head of the NOC, he not only had in his hands the cinders of domestic chaos but also a passive foreign policy that still bore the scars of recent regional tensions. Razak had been conscious of the need to temper domestic issues with external forces especially with his immediate neighbours. The 'next door' proximity to Thailand and Indonesia and the close maritime access of Indochina and the Filipino archipelago to Malaysian waters, emphasized Malaysia's security vulnerability. His first step was to develop ASEAN goodwill beyond cultural and sporting exchanges, a role it has been identified with since its inception in 1967, by wider regional co-operation in diplomatic and economic initiatives.

Success of one such regional diplomacy was Razak's remarkable relationship with Indonesia's President Suharto to whom he extended military assistance for Indonesian border operations in Borneo.[214] He also brought the question of air space rights within the ambit of ASEAN for collective resolution in flight-path dispensations for foreign aircraft. Foremost on Razak's mind however was external aggression and he decided that the best way to insulate Malaysia from external aggression was to internationalize his country's policy of appeasement and neutrality. Accordingly, he announced in September 1970 at the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Lusaka, Zambia, his proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia. However, enthusiasm for his proposal soon dissipated as the international reaction he had hoped for did not materialize. This was not unexpected since the Lusaka conference was overwhelmingly a gathering of third world countries whose affirmation of non-alignment merely sought to disavow links with the superpowers.

Razak's stance of neutralization therefore had to be brought to a wider audience which he did in October 1971 before the UN general assembly. He quickly followed it up with ASEAN a month later. But before he presented it for ASEAN's endorsement he thought it politic

to conclude the still existing Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA) and replaced it with a new security partnership with Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore under the Five Power Defence Agreement. Ten months later in his Kuala Lumpur Declaration, his policy of neutralization was endorsed by ASEAN. Abbreviated ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality), the policy basically declared that Southeast Asia should be free from 'any form or manner of interference by outside powers'. ASEAN's endorsement of ZOPFAN was nothing more than a moral expression for it did not limit member states' capacity to initiate any foreign policy they saw fit. Indeed, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew ridiculed ZOPFAN and openly courted an alliance with the US.[215] Reservations about ZOPFAN had rested on extensive American involvement in the war in Indochina and its presence in the Philippines and Thailand and the ready deployment of forces under the Five Power Defence Arrangement. While ZOPFAN was no guarantee of neutrality for Southeast Asia, it inspired similar peace initiatives elsewhere and marked an important milestone in Razak's international image as a statesman committed to peace.[216]

Perhaps his best known achievement in foreign affairs was with regard to China (Peoples Republic of China). Soon after China became a communist state in 1949, the international community kept its relations with it at arm's length mainly because of the diplomatic ambiguity that had arisen over the status of Taiwan which also styled itself as China (Republic of China). The loyalties of overseas Chinese as in Malaysia were similarly divided between the Kuomintang (KMT) of Taiwan and the Communist Party of China adding to the perplexing question of preferred recognition for either. The communist uprising in the Malayan Emergency that made up mainly of ethnic Chinese, identified its ideology with China. China made no secret of its support for the MCP's 'liberation' war in Malaya. China's hand in the wars in Korea and Vietnam, plus its collusion in proxy wars in Africa and sponsorship of radical movements in Southeast Asia, alienated it further from the international diplomatic community. Against this background Malaysian apprehension of diplomatic ties with China was appreciated, a feeling that was equally shared by Malaysian's neighbours.

In September 1971, Razak however took the bold step of announcing Malaysia's willingness to establish diplomatic ties with China and rejected the conception of a hegemonistic expanding China. To stem any backlash his overture might have caused with the Soviet Union, he strengthened Malaysia's relations with the Soviet Union

with a Joint Communique in October 1972 that called for 'a principle of peaceful co-existence, full equality, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and renunciation of the use of force . . .' Malaysia had maintained good relations with the Soviet Union since a Malaysian delegation visited Moscow in 1966 to promote rubber exports and since then the Soviet Union became the biggest buyer of Malaysian rubber. Encouraged by President Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 and a cease-fire in the Vietnam conflict in 1973, the issue of relations with China became more urgent for Razak. In May 1974, Malaysia finally established diplomatic relations with China the first ASEAN country to do so since Indonesia severed its ties with China in 1965. Within days he visited Mao Zedong who was reported to have told Razak that the Malaysian Chinese should be loyal to the country of their adoption and that the guerrilla warfare in Southeast Asia was an 'internal matter'.

ASEAN overwhelmingly approved Razak's efforts in establishing ties with China as the way was now opened for its members to formalize their own links with China. Before then the substantial cultural and trade relationships the ASEAN states had already enjoyed with China were all informal. ASEAN had held back its official recognition of China partly because of American and non-communist states' intransigence over the two-China question with Taiwan. Another reason was the deference ASEAN paid to US hegemonic interests in the wake of volatile communist activities in the Asia Pacific region at the time. Nixon's visit to China changed all that but even so the US did not accord recognition to China until 1979. Razak's China initiative in a sense manifested his courage and underlined his belief that the pursuit of international diplomacy should be neutral and independent of superpower politics.

Razak who had been quick to repair relations with Indonesia soon after the end of *Konfrontasi*, realized equally the importance of lifting Malaysia's profile with other Islamic countries. During 1974 he undertook to stress ties particularly with small loose Islamic states that had neither the wealth nor the might of larger Islamic countries. In June of that year, concurrently as foreign affairs minister, Razak sponsored the Fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers and pleaded with Islamic members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for economic assistance for those states whose economic plight had been aggravated by the year's oil crisis.

Within a year of the conference, Razak toured Saudi Arabia and seven Gulf states to promote Arab investments in development

projects and joint-stock ventures in Malaysia. As well as boosting his own prestige internationally, his attempts for closer ties with Islamic countries also impressed the local Muslim community and welfare groups such as PERKIM which had benefited from generous Arab donations. Razak initiated relations with Vietnam shortly after Saigon's fall in 1975 and Kampuchea when the State of Democratic Kampuchea was proclaimed on 3 Jan 1976 just eleven days before his death. US withdrawal from Indochina though welcomed by most, was received with some misgiving by ASEAN as the future of Vietnam's foreign policy was hard to gauge given the presence of the Soviets in place of the departed Americans. Razak's immediate thought was a policy of *rapprochement* to show Malaysia's approval of Hanoi's liberation of South Vietnam. He also attempted to seek an endorsement from Hanoi of ASEAN's neutralization policy to restrain Vietnam of any influence it might have on Southeast Asia. Though Vietnam was not able to give any such commitment, it was believed that there was tacit acceptance of Razak's gesture.

Summary

In terms of national unity, Razak's overhaul of the entire face of Alliance and its reconstitution into the *Barisan* was one of the most remarkable political events in the history of Malaysian politics because it effectively diminished opposition politics. But more crucially it was an important psychological turning point for the Malays. Malay plurality in the *Barisan* that had been drawn from competing political interests, finally united the Malays on a common platform. It would be crass to suggest but it is true that a sense of Malay reawakening came out of the rubble of the 1969 Riots – bloodshed has such a morbid way of forcing social change – and arguably, was just the catalyst needed to put an end to lingering grievances. Razak's 'Second Generation' political elites, which saw the demise of Tunku's 'Old Guard', were more interested in advancing a public policy that was strongly partial to Malay interest.

Razak created a Malay hierarchy in his administration that was no longer sneered at for favouritism by non-Malays since the multiethnic *Barisan* he had created, conveyed an impression of transparent consultative politics. Known for his extraordinary organizational skills, Razak established the *Barisan* swiftly and with such commitment that there was surprisingly little resistance to his undertaking a task of such magnitude. The fact he could even persuade

opposition parties to join in the *Barisan*, whose objective was to help bolster the government's two-thirds majority in parliament, underlined the tremendous all-round trust people had in him. The manner in which he was allowed to juggle cabinet positions and institute policy reforms with such rapidity, showed a man totally in charge and consumed in the tasks at hand. Unencumbered in authority, Razak carried out his mission with complete honesty and thorough efficiency.

To reconstruct national unity and a devastated economy in those dark days in the aftermath of the Riots, Razak drew on the talents of some of the best political brains in his administration – Mahathir, Hussein, Musa Hitam, Tengku Razaleigh and Ghazali Shafie. This line-up was also a group of highly ambitious personalities who, at one time or other, had jostled for power and been controversial individuals within UMNO and the *Barisan*. And there was no let up in their ambitions. But Razak was above the fray and paid scant attention to the surrounding political ripples. By distancing himself from internal politics, he appeared unbiased and was able to keep a fair and tight hold on government unity. Razak's success in rebuilding national unity was manifested by the racial stability Malaysia enjoyed under his leadership and the absence of any major racial flare-up since 1969.

As to the economy of the country, Razak could take credit for most of the innovations and planning he had put in from the time he was Tunku's deputy in the legislative assembly in 1955. Razak's most dramatic economic reforms though were motivated by events in 1969. Razak chose to accept a widely-held but false notion that attributed the cause of the 1969 Riots to Malay deprivation and their resentment of continuing Chinese economic dominance. As is now known, the problem was about power politics since no one, for instance, could explain how the death of poor Indians in working-class Sentul in Kuala Lumpur fitted with Malay deprivation. In any case, official admittance of racial motivation in the carnage was not only difficult but would also do little good to future race relations. It was just as well, as any explanatory theory, other than an economic one, would invariably trace blame right to implicit state connivance. Whatever the motivation, Razak got on quickly with rebuilding Malay confidence in his government. He enhanced Malay economic power by the introduction of the NEP that challenged the non-Malay dominance of the economy. Razak's economic policy moved away from one that had been balanced in its treatment of multi-racial interests to one that was

openly preferential to Malay interests. Chinese and Indian businesses were naturally resentful of intrusive government polices that also called for their mandatory compliance of Malay employment and ownership quotas. Despite grudging compliance from the Chinese and Indians and the gradual erosion of non-Malay capital, the NEP translated into immediate gains for the Malays right across the board. But for all the fanfare that was given to the NEP, Razak's economic policy did not accelerate Malaysia's growth at the speed that was hoped for. The GDP increase over Tunku's FMP was marginal and Malay corporate ownership too, fell short of its targets owing to undue protectionism.

In foreign affairs, Razak's term was a highly successful one. His leadership was fortunate to experience a period of relative peace around the world especially in Asia – Nixon's historic visit to China and the end of the long Vietnam War were perhaps the two most important events – that ushered in a period of stability for Southeast Asia. Unlike Tunku, Razak's diplomacy was articulated with a finesse that combined a no-nonsense and business-like manner with an imperceptible strength. Milestones in his diplomacy included the bridging of ties between Malaysia and Indonesia that eased the strains of recent years. He actively participated in the international non-alignment movement and inspired by it, he promoted his ZOPFAN policy of neutrality for ASEAN. He was the first among his contemporaries in ASEAN to recognize China. For much of his term his relations with Lee Kuan Yew were at best a stand-off. Lee had always believed that if Tunku had been allowed to make his own decisions, there would have been no Separation. He believed quite correctly like most people did that Razak was the architect behind Singapore's ouster: the Separation decision was taken by Razak and its papers drawn up well before Tunku's return from London. Lee felt that if Tunku could re-take control again from Razak, there was a possibility for re-unification but Lee's dreams were shattered following Tunku's exit after the 1969 Riots. And when Razak took office formally, Lee was less than impressed with him for surrounding himself with the same *ultras* who were his strongest adversaries in Kuala Lumpur (namely, Mahathir, Musa, Samad, etc.). Razak's constant contact with old friend and Singapore's Finance Minister, Goh Keng Swee (cousin of Malaysia's Finance Minister, Tan Siew Sin), ensured ties were kept on an even keel with Singapore throughout his tenure.

Turning to the hypothesis of this study, it would seem inconceivable that Razak had any of the divinity that was perceived in Tunku, given

that he lacked the charisma that one assumes pre-qualifies an inherent spirituality. But then again nowhere has it been suggested that an innate perception of leadership is in any way prescriptive. Indeed, the very suggestion of perception defies any logicality. So, where does Razak stand in the mindset of predestination? Like Tunku, his ascension to office was accepted without dispute. He exercised authority in defiance of consensus but the people trusted him. Such use of power must stem from some sense of invulnerability and the steadfastness of his belief to fulfil a righteous mission. He was said to have risen from chaos and when Malay destiny was in peril. He inspired a perception in the minds of his people that he could deliver more than just hope.

Chapter 6

Dato Hussein Onn (1976–81)

Balanced and corporatist

Hussein Onn and national unity

Hussein had avoided close association with the Alliance since he and his father Dato Onn Jaffar UMNO's first president left UMNO in 1951. He rejoined UMNO in 1968 and was elected to parliament in the 1969 elections. On winning a seat on the UMNO Supreme Council in 1971, Razak appointed him minister of education. Hussein's appointment had a significance to the Razak administration: prior to his rejoining UMNO, Hussein had been a vigorous voice for Malay interests, something that had obviously appealed to Razak's own vision for the Malays. He held similar views as Razak, especially on education. Razak had wanted Hussein to implement an education policy urgently that of converting the entire education system to the Malay medium of instruction. The congruent views and political style of Hussein and Razak provided the basis for their close political relationship that was further reinforced by family ties since they were related by marriage, their wives being sisters. In August 1973, Hussein was elevated to deputy prime minister when Tun Ismail died and Razak added Home Affairs to his portfolios. He became prime minister when Razak died on 14 January 1976.

Crisis after crisis

When Hussein took office he had a weak political base that had a number of serious liabilities. In the period 1976 to 1977 Hussein was saddled with crisis after crisis coming from within UMNO. Apart from problems of split loyalties, there were also lingering problems carried over from Razak notably the arrest of Harun Idris who Hussein subsequently had to expel from UMNO. The many crises in

UMNO could be blamed on the fact that Hussein did not have sufficient time to build a solid base of delegate support within the party since his return and his accession to the top job had been fairly recent. Factional conflict quickly greeted Hussein's leadership. In the 1976 UMNO general assembly the party's three vice-presidents (Tengku Razaleigh, Mahathir, Ghafar Baba) demanded that he appoint one of them as his deputy effectively eliminating from consideration the popular and ambitious Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie. He chose Mahathir because, it was said, he wanted someone with education and maturity.[217] Hussein's choice of Mahathir sparked off a crisis within UMNO that was to have wide repercussions in the party for a long time. Both Razaleigh and Ghafar Baba were deeply disappointed and the latter subsequently refused to serve in the cabinet in any capacity. The Chinese in UMNO's coalition, MCA and the Gerakan too expressed their disappointment at Mahathir's appointment. Since UMNO was the hub of the government, any rumblings within it would be listened to with great concern by the entire country. The instability in UMNO therefore did not bid well for Hussein's leadership image. Problems of national unity for Hussein began in the wake of the 1969 elections. Razak had managed to turn the tide of differences between Mahathir and Tunku and for the period until his death the problems appeared to have been fairly contained.

The conciliatory path Razak paved for Hussein however was rocked as the Mahathir issue resurfaced. The problem that did not seem to go away was that there was a large core of Tunku's supporters within UMNO who did not appreciate the way Tunku's leadership was wrested away from him. Razak had also moved against Tunku's faithful 'Old Guards', Senu Abdul Rahman, Ghafar Baba and Hamzah Abu Samah who were all sidelined in the UMNO hierarchy including Tengku Razaleigh who had later allied himself to the 'Old Guards'. In the midst of the furore in UMNO, Tunku had in the meanwhile taken up an editorial position with *The Star* newspaper and published criticisms of the government, Razak and Mahathir. Since it would be injudicious to litigate against Tunku given his esteem as *Bapa Malaysia* (Father of Malaysia) plus the enormous support he still enjoyed in UMNO, Razak decided to purchase controlling shares in the newspaper but his attempts were foiled when Tunku's good friend, Sabah's Tun Mustapha, snapped up the shares instead.

Another faction was a group who made allegations of communist influence in the government causing Hussein to hastily invoke the Internal Security Act on several prominent supporters among them

Samad Ismail, Razak's confidante and New Straits Times managing editor, Kalil Akassa, UMNO executive secretary, and Razak's protegés, Abdullah Majid,[218] and Abdullah Ahmad. The action was traced to the zealousness of Ghazali Shafie, the Minister of Home Affairs, who had apparently been influenced by Lee Kuan Yew's claim that Samad still held left-wing sway in Singapore.[219] A bizarre series of television confessions by the detainees proved to be a disastrous public relations exercise for the Hussein administration as it lent some credence to the belief that Hussein could be manipulated. Incessant tirades against Hussein left an impression among disgruntled power-seekers and 'Old Guard' stalwarts that Hussein would be easy to challenge and out-manoeuvre. Hussein's overall leadership in this crisis no doubt was strained. However, fortunately for Hussein the on-going NEP reforms had yielded improved economic conditions. The Malays who were the biggest recipients of the NEP benefits were ambivalent to the leadership jostling since they had no cause to force a change to Mahathir. The end of the factional challenge to Hussein's leadership was preceded by the conviction of Harun Idris. This greatly boosted Hussein's stature in the eyes of the *Barisan* especially the non-Malay parties. Hussein however had one major crisis before he was relieved of any further worries and that was over PAS' departure from the *Barisan*. PAS had been dissatisfied with the allocation of seats and its position in state and national administrations: in the 1974 elections for Kelantan, PAS had won twenty-two seats against *Barisan*'s fourteen. Continuing displeasure with *Barisan* caused PAS to pass a no-confidence vote in Kelantan's *Menteri Besar*, Mohamad Nasir, an UMNO nominee in the *Barisan*.

The Hussein government retaliated with the imposition of a state of emergency on Kelantan. PAS quit the *Barisan* in December 1977 and Kelantan was ruled from Kuala Lumpur until the next state elections. Mohamad Nasir was given the task of setting up a new party, Berjasa, a constituent of the *Barisan*. In the state elections the *Barisan* won twenty-three of the twenty-four seats it contested and PAS just two seats. While there were problems within UMNO, there was also bickering between the Gerakan and MCA that had seriously bothered Hussein because any parting of the ways with either party from the *Barisan* could reduce the government's chances at the next polls. Besides, Chinese apprehension over the Industrial Co-ordination Act (ICA) which the Chinese said discriminated against them could see them voting for DAP. So apart from having to take on board Chinese concerns at the ICA, Hussein needed also to ensure that their votes

stayed with the *Barisan*. He could therefore ill-afford to lose support from either the Gerakan or MCA.

Hussein had also faced objections to the education policies from MIC, growing Islamic revivalism, external relations and security; these were significant problems but were overshadowed by the *Barisan*'s internal squabbles. Respite for Hussein came in the *Barisan* victory at the 1978 elections when he was finally able to vindicate his standing with UMNO and the *Barisan*. His astute handling of the 1978 elections saw the *Barisan* taking 131 of the 154 seats and the coalition emerged stronger than the victory of the 1974 elections. At the Federal level UMNO won nine more seats while MCA, MIC and Gerakan improved their positions by two, one and one respectively. At state level the *Barisan* notched up five more seats than previously. He appointed a cabinet of twenty-two ministers: twelve UMNO, four MCA, one each from Gerakan, MIC, SNAP, SUPP, PPBD and Berjasa.

Islamic revivalism and *Dakwah*

Hussein's leadership coincided with a heightened outpouring of religiosity on a scale never seen before. This fervour was the result of a widespread movement seeking a 'back to basics' in Islamic practices, or 'fundamentalism' that often advocated the use of violent militant activism to force acceptance of its objectives. Islamic fundamentalism spread rapidly around the world in the wake of the Iran Revolution and fresh *Intifada* Islamic militancy in the unceasing Israeli – Palestinian hostility. In Malaysia *dakwah* (missionary activities of Islamic fundamentalism) was received with as much enthusiasm but was relatively subdued as the country was spared the militancy characteristic of *jihad* and Islamic reforms elsewhere probably because it lacked the Islamic homogeneity to force popular change on a secular government. Islam is a feature that sets apart the politics and identity of the Malays from that of other communities and any partiality to the imposition of religious edicts were not likely to be accepted by non-Malays.

With this in mind, the Hussein administration viewed the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism with serious concern because it could polarize Malay loyalty along religious lines and Malaysia along racial lines. How entrenched was *dakwah* in Malaysia? Increasing propagation around the ideals of Islamic revivalism resulted in a number of *dakwah* groups being organized actively to promote a political ideology that is based on the *dakwah's* implicit perception of a 'pure'

Islamic way of life. While some clearly identify themselves with republican or *Shi'ite* sentiments, many are not anti-government. Some are, in fact, so pro-government that they echo some of the government's policies in their religious ideology behind such innocuous mottoes as *perjinjingan kami: hidup Melayu, bahasa jiwa bangsa, bahasa dan agama*[220] – generally calling on Malay survival based on race, language and religion. The Muslim public tolerated most *dakwah* groups since the latter's ideals were not provocative to their own beliefs. But there were some radical *dakwah* groups who lived in separatist self-sufficient enclaves because they perceived the government as being un-Islamic and mainstream Muslims too indulgent in decadent western culture for their liking.

Dakwah groups were united in one area and that was to see a more Islamic environment that stressed on Malay primacy. Such *dakwah* motives however underlined a resentment against a government that, in their view, was unwilling to subscribe to Islamic governance. Opposition parties such as PAS had been quick to blame the government's insufficient attention to Islamic development for the rise in *dakwah* and other aberrant religious practices. Needless to say, *dakwah* activities had been looked upon with alarm by non-Muslims and equally by mainstream Muslims. Although some aspects of *dakwah* ideology breached Islamic orthodoxy, the mainstream Muslims were not only generally tolerant but also apathetic. The onus on controlling the *dakwah* movement therefore was on the government.

The Malaysian government had always been aware of the likely conflict that could arise over competing interpretations of the Koran and had, as a matter of religious policy, rigorously confined to itself the absolute authority on all matters of Islamic doctrine. The duty of resolving doctrinal controversy rested exclusively in the jurisdiction of the government's ecclesiastical arm headed by the *Mufti* whose issuance of *fikh* (jurisprudence) or *fatwa* (legal ruling) would be final. Any deviation from this would be construed as defiance of the country's religious authority and the official government position. However, in a climate of social and political turmoil throughout the Muslim world, many well-meaning groups in Malaysia had formed sympathetic links with overseas religious groups whose cause was not always acceptable to Malaysia's religious and foreign policies. By these contacts, local groups either knowingly or unknowingly had been used as conduits for religious propaganda.

The government's attempts to sieve good associations from the bad had been difficult as most of these groups were small and operated

informally and often within sub-groups of legitimate societies. The government's attempts to determine the extent of their deviationist influence in the country were obviously quite problematic. Due to this difficulty there had not been any great effort on the part of the Hussein government to flush out aberrant religious groups. One of the problems was that most of these groups had young student members who had enthusiastically supported, sometimes ambiguous disadvantaged Islamic causes such as the Afghanistan *mujahideen*, *Shi'ite* militant groups, or Islamic separatist groups in Thailand, etc. The government realized that rebuke of any kind could be seen as cruel indifference to the misery of fellow Muslims. Besides, it is often quite pointless to rationalize matters of spirituality that are accepted passionately and without question as was seen in two cases in Ulu Selangor and Batu Pahat when religious passions ended tragically in the deaths of a few *dakwah* followers. Some would argue that violence such as this could be avoided if *dakwah* propagation were totally free and unrestricted: if this was allowed, the government then would have no business acting against dissenting views.

Obviously the last thing Hussein wanted to do was to submit his administration to unfettered challenges in the name of religious correctness. Neither could he stand idly by against deviant ideology that was opposed to the country's majority *Sunni* Muslims because if it was allowed to flourish, it could threaten the very primacy of Malay political leadership. To overcome the problem, the Hussein government adopted a two-pronged conciliatory approach towards the issue of Islamic fundamentalism. On the one hand, it offered official sponsorship to *dakwah* organizations that were prepared to abide by its criteria. On the other, it proposed to let those *dakwah* organizations not on its sponsorship list to carry on but with the proviso that their activities were subject to close oversight for deviationist tendencies and if any were found, the organization would be immediately proscribed.[221] Consequently, the government identified *dakwah* organizations in three categories: the government-approved associations; the Independents (that is associations that were not government-sponsored); and the proscribed bodies which were classified deviationist by the government.

Prominent among the government-approved associations was PERKIM which was founded by Tunku in 1960 and is the biggest organization dedicated to Islamic missionary activities. One of its activities was to organize the annual International Kuran Reading Competition. Since its inception PERKIM had steadily grown to

become the government's symbol of its commitment to *dakwah*. Another approved association was the Jema'at Tabligh. Originated in India in 1925, it confined its missionary work to the ideals of higher social and spiritual awareness exclusively among its Indian and Pakistani members and like PERKIM, it earned state respectability. Among the independents were Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) (Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia) whose president then was Anwar Ibrahim; Aliran Kesedaran Negara (ALIRAN) (National Consciousness Movement founded by the well-known social activist, Chandra Muzaffar; and Darul Arqam. ABIM was formed in 1972 and centred its activities in the universities. It adopted an anti-government posture mainly because of the government policies towards Islam. ABIM's popularity among young middle-class Malays was owed to its close identification with PAS' Islamic conservatism and its campaign against such issues as political restrictions, corruption, public consumption of liquor and western culture. Notwithstanding the two-year incarceration of its president Anwar Ibrahim, it was largely a mainstream Islamic pressure group with no apparent threat to the government. ALIRAN never engaged in 'real' *dakwah* activities and was less vocal in its criticism of the government. It represented a following that was more interested in the intellectual deliberation of socio-political issues. On more than a few occasions it had however voiced its support for radical oppressed groups (e.g. *Shi'ite* Iran) whose philosophy ran counter to the Malaysian government's Islamic policy. ALIRAN management like those of ABIM had also been subject to Internal Security Act detentions.

The Darul Arqam established in 1971 was the most prolific and perhaps the most important of all *dakwah* groups. It operated 'ideal' Islamic communities that were self-sufficient in virtually every aspect of social amenities – schools, mosques, clinics, factories, offices, hostels, etc.[122] It shunned western accoutrements of any kind and chose for its basic living requirements the most spartan and austere of necessities. By its active proselytizing mission, exclusivity, rejection of 'this world' for the *akhirat* (next world) and for a general non-conformist outlook, the Darul Arqam was seen to be anti-government but was spared proscription as it had not at that time openly challenged the government politically. Its leader Ashaari Muhammad who had often displayed a confrontational attitude towards the government's probe into the activities of his association, is believed to have disappeared to avoid arrest.

Groups that were proscribed were the Ahmadiyah, Tarikat

Mufaridiyah and the Muhammadiyyah Tariqah; they were labelled *dakwah songsang* meaning 'upside-down revival'. These were mostly Indian or Pakistani-based Islamic sects that were classified deviationist due to their fundamental denial that Prophet Muhammad was the 'last prophet' or the Koran the 'final word of God'. In the 1970s many smaller *dakwah* groups had sprouted around the rural areas usually formed around *madrasahs* (village religious schools) by charismatic *ustaz* (religious teachers). These types of groups were often informal and had tended to flourish in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. They carried a particular political extremism against authority and western influence and like members of Darul Arqam, they were given to Arabic attire including the full-faced *purdah* (veil) for their women.

The presence of western and university-educated individuals in their groups tended to give credence to their claim of superior Islamic intellectuality.[22] These *dakwah* groups dispersed as quickly as they were formed either by absorption by larger groups or by simply moving out of the *kampungs*. However, these *dakwah* groups were typical of those identified with most of the violence under the Hussein administration. Whether the violence was for reasons of alienation, economic deprivation, or ideology, it wreaked mindless havoc on innocent lives and property. One incident involved the desecration of Hindu shrines in Ulu Selangor by white-robed Islamic vigilantes who called themselves 'The Army of Allah' when four of their members, including a university lecturer, were killed by Hindu temple staff. In 1980, twenty armed followers of a *dakwah* group led by a Kampuchean convert Mohamad Nasir Ismail, a self-proclaimed *Mahdi* (the Promised Saviour), mounted a vicious attack on a Batu Pahat police station in retaliation for the government's attempts to disband it. In the ensuing fray, police gunned down eight of its followers and several more were injured.

In the same year some 10,000 rice farmers in Alor Setar staged a demonstration against the government which Tunku later suggested was organized by extremists inspired by *Shi'ite* revolutionary tactics. By the beginning of 1981, Hussein had been prime minister for five years and the problem of Islamic fundamentalism had still not abated as *dakwah* groups continued to grow strongly. However, considering his weak political base and his earlier health problems from a heart attack, his period in office far exceeded the expectations of most political observers. Eventually, it was not his weak political base but his health that forced him to vacate the leadership of the country. Hussein finally passed on the leadership to Mahathir on 16 July 1981 five

months after a coronary bypass operation in London and a month before the UMNO general assembly.

Hussein was criticized for the way he had yielded the UMNO presidency to Mahathir in the June 1981 UMNO general assembly. He had bypassed the executive council's requirement for its ratification of Mahathir's candidacy. Though the requirement was a mere formality, delegates had taken umbrage for this breach of a traditional practice. After Mahathir was declared the new president, there was the task of appointing his deputy. Since protocol prevented Mahathir from overtly making known his choice of Musa Hitam, then education minister, the task was left to Hussein to announce his preference too for Musa over the more senior Tengku Razaleigh and Finance Minister. Factional defiance had some of the delegates nominating for the still imprisoned Harun Idris as the party's second vice-president.

Hussein Onn and the economy

Despite the problems he had to endure, Hussein had been fortunate to oversee a productive economy during his leadership. His term of office coincided with the Third Malaysia Plan 1976–80 (TMP) during which time the economy achieved an annual real GDP growth rate of 8.6 percent. This was above the 7.1 percent growth rate of the Second Malaysia Plan achieved by Razak between 1971–75 since the beginning of the NEP. Under Hussein, the per capita GNP rose by 7.9 percent, a marked improvement over the previous decade's of 6.5 percent.[224] UMNO though, had been unhappy with the slow progress of the Malays and the lack of support for NEP reforms by non-Malay businesses. Hussein had earlier agreed with his deputy, Mahathir, and Musa Hitam (as Minister of Primary Industries) that the statist strategy advocated by the NEP was not conducive to foreign investment. Hussein had therefore been reluctant to completely impose the NEP recommendations on the private sector.

However, under relentless pressure from UMNO and Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh he set out to reinforce the NEP guidelines. He accelerated the acquisition of businesses for Malay corporate interests through the government-owned Bumiputra Investment Fund. He did this, according to Bowie, by 'selectively acquire[ing] the reserved [Malay] shares in enterprise with high growth potential for subsequent sale to Malays and other indigenous people'.[225]

The Industrial Co-ordination Act 1975 (ICA)

To give more force to the NEP the Hussein government passed the controversial Industrial Co-ordination Act in 1975. In justifying the Act, its architect Tengku Razaleigh said that the ICA was a means by which the government could apply controls for ensuring equitable competition in the manufacturing industry. But non-Malay businesses saw the ICA as overly rigid as it made the strict compliance of NEP guidelines a condition for business licensing. They also considered the ICA mandatory provisions requiring them to open their business to Malay employment, management and ownership as intrusive and communalistic. In the face of strong opposition from the local business community, the government relaxed some parts of the ICA but they were not enough to stem a surge of questionable practices by Chinese businessmen and their Malay partners to circumvent the ICA. Inequities of government policies in the late 1970s, brought about a profusion of ersatz capitalism in Malay business that painted an illusion of Malay gains. Known cavalier and other rent-seeking practices had obvious bureaucracy connivance to rush unrealistic Malay expectations.

The petroleum industry

NEP shortcomings though did not dent Hussein's most significant contribution to the economy – the expansion of the petroleum industry which since the mid-1970s, has been the single largest contributor to the national economy. The passing of the Petroleum Development Act in 1974 saw the set up of Petronas, Malaysia's national oil company, but it was not until 1976 when the petroleum industry became an important export earner when it notched up a credible 18 percent of all export commodities.[226] Petronas's early success coincided with a worldwide boom in oil prices in the aftermath of the oil crisis. With the set up of Petronas, the government negotiated a number of production-sharing contracts (PSC) with foreign oil companies principally Shell and Esso. These contracts modelled along Indonesia's Pertamina PSC (Pertamina was also consulted on various other matters) offered drilling concessions to oil companies on payment of a one-off 'signature bonus' to Petronas.

Drillings rights under the PSC were usually for a term of three years but oil companies could opt out of the PSC at any time. A unique feature of the PSC was that exploration operations cost nothing to

Petronas since all on-going costs were borne by the oil company operating in the drilling concession.[227] Once oil was struck, the oil company kept 20 percent of its sale proceeds for expense recovery and the balance was split 60/40 with Petronas taking the bigger share. The most successful of all the PSC was with Esso Production Malaysia Inc (EPMI) whose concessions in offshore Terengganu had yielded record production outputs for Malaysia. In 1978 export of EPMI's Terengganu crude oil and gas was the second largest item in Malaysia's overseas trade.[228] By 1980, Malaysia's petroleum industry produced 180,000 barrels per day and overtook rubber and tin as the chief export earner with revenues of RM 7.2 billion compared to rubber RM 4.8 billion and tin RM 1.5 billion.[229]

By the end of the Hussein government, Malaysia's petroleum activities covered offshore Terengganu, Sarawak and the refineries at Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan, (two more have since been added in Melaka and Kerteh, Terengganu). In conjunction with Shell, the government invested heavily in developing Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) reserves in Bintulu, Sarawak for export as well as for feedstock for several downstream petrochemical projects, notably the multi-million dollar ASEAN Fertilizer Project. In the early 1990s, Petronas began feasibility studies for the development of the massive Natuna Island gas field along the Malaysia/Indonesia boundary in co-operation with Pertamina and US oil giant, Exxon.

Petronas had also commenced engineering work for a gas utilization network that will transfer gas from EPMI's offshore production platforms to the mainland for industrial and domestic consumption. It had also begun negotiations with the Singapore government to supply Terengganu gas by pipeline to fuel power stations in Singapore. Under Hussein, the petroleum industry was by far the largest of government monopolies and it set the stage for a vigorous policy in state corporate ownership. When the process of *bumiputra* corporate ownership began to flounder, Hussein established the Amanah Saham Nasional (The National Unit Trust) in January 1981. The plan was to hasten ownership objectives and encourage, by tax incentives, an active equity participation in public companies by as many Malays as possible. Amanah Saham, Tabong Haji (Pilgrimage Board) and other *bumiputra* trust agencies provided the government with the financial resources to acquire bigger stakes in corporate ownership. *Bumiputra* control of the corporate sector jumped from 2.4 percent in 1970 to 12.4 percent in 1980.

In September 1981 the government-owned National Equity

Corporation acquired British multinationals and rubber growers, Guthrie, Dunlop and Barlow further extending the government's corporate ownership in home-grown assets. Malay employment that had been on the rise, was further bolstered with the legislation of the ICA that extended employment quotas to the private sector. However, the impressive increase in Malay employment numbers translated only in modest falls in Malay poverty but, nonetheless, satisfactory considering the magnitude of the transition from agriculture to industrialization during the period. Hussein's TMP of 1976–80 had allocated 38.2 percent of its development funds for poverty eradication and it looked well on its way to meeting the NEP poverty reduction target of 17 percent by 1990.

By 1980 although rural poverty had greatly improved, it did not match the impressive gains of 14 percent reduction achieved in the mid-1970s. Less impressive was urban poverty that had only managed a drop of 6.4 percent in the same period. NEP policy of shifting the rural workforce from an agrarian economy to industries in the cities in the mid-1970s, helped reduce rural poverty through income repatriated by the workers. It also caused rural unemployment to abate as more job opportunities were available for the fewer workers who remained behind in the *kampungs*. Agricultural modernization that had been promised by the NEP, had also contributed to the improved conditions thereby reducing poverty with padi-growers from 77.0 percent to 55.1 percent between 1975–80. Bearing in mind that these padi-growers were very lowly paid and their jobs seasonal, the drop in the rural poverty level was quite creditable.

As well, the mean household income of Malays overall for the period between 1971–79 rose to 12.9 percent per annum about a percent point higher than the Chinese.[230] With the exception of the restructuring of the petroleum industry, Hussein brought few other changes into the economy during his leadership. He essentially kept his economic direction on the same course as in the Razak era except for some administrative changes that were mostly policy re-definition in nature. In his economic achievement, he ended his term with a creditable growth of 8 percent although he left behind the after-taste of the discriminatory ICA.

Hussein Onn and foreign affairs

Hussein had been fortunate to ascend leadership at the time of relative stability in Malaysia's foreign affairs. ASEAN particularly had made

remarkable advances in regional co-operation with increased trade ties between its members. It celebrated its First ASEAN Heads of Government Summit in Bali on 24 February 1976 and followed its Second Summit in the following year in Kuala Lumpur. Hussein's initiative of the Treaty on Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia, to provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes between ASEAN member states, was unanimously endorsed by the First ASEAN Summit. He exerted his leadership in regional diplomacy when he led Malaysia to be the first country in ASEAN to recognize the unified state of Vietnam. But like Razak earlier on, he too failed to persuade Vietnam to accept the ZOPFAN neutralization policy that had been adopted by ASEAN. Malaysia was concerned that Vietnam had chosen to continue its militaristic path first by its belligerency against Kampuchea and China and second, by its commitment to increase its military capability under the November 1978 Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Treaty that allowed the continuing presence of Soviet military in Vietnam's naval bases.

Vietnam's high state of military preparedness, bolstered by its victory over the US, presented a forbidding view of a Vietnam that was poised to extend its hegemony beyond Indochina. Hussein's unease had been validated by the fact that the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Treaty was ominously signed on the eve of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea. In May 1979, China faced a set back when its superior forces were embarrassingly pushed back as they attempted to wage a punitive war against Vietnam. Hussein hot-footed to Beijing after the war hoping that the Chinese, still smarting from defeat, would be keenly supportive of any expressions of disapproval of Vietnam. Hussein however returned empty-handed; the Chinese had even refused to renounce their ideological support for the MCP guerrillas still skirmishing along the Thai-Malaysian border.

Hussein's visit to Moscow later in the year was similarly uneventful but was relieved to receive, at least, a symbolic pledge from Leonid Brezhnev that he would elicit from Vietnam a guarantee of non-aggression. Deteriorating circumstances in Kampuchea moved Hussein to persuade ASEAN members for their recognition of the ousted regime of Pol Pot as the legitimate government-in-exile of Kampuchea. A unified ASEAN acceded to Hussein's recommendations and sponsored a UN seat for Pol Pot's exiled government despite the worldwide condemnation of Pol Pot's macabre reputation. Whether it was in appreciation for Malaysia's concern for the affairs of Indochina or just the question of geographical proximity, the

eastern shores of Peninsular Malaysia were suddenly intruded by over 170,000 fleeing 'boat people' from Kampuchea and Vietnam in the month of June 1979 alone. Hussein eventually agreed to allow 75,000 of the refugees to stay in Malaysia.[231]

In March 1980 together with Suharto, Hussein issued the 'Kuantan Principle' which appealed to the Soviet Union and China to withdraw their involvement in the Indochinese conflict and allow for a peaceful negotiation of the Kampuchean dispute under the auspices of a UN Peacekeeping Force. Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union again responded to Hussein's initiative with hollow approval. Hussein decided on a tougher stance and announced in October 1980 that Malaysia would extend military assistance to Thailand if Vietnam carried out hot pursuit of Kampuchean guerrillas in Thai territory. Confidence in Malaysia's military capability had been boosted by generous increases in defence expenditures over the last few years in reaction to the growing instability in Indochina.

In 1980 defence spending increased by one and a half times, that included the purchase of 80 Skyhawk fighter aircraft. Malaysia also had in place a recruitment programme that would triple the size of its combat troops in the next decade. Hussein's confidence was further assured by the support he had in the Five-Power Defence Arrangement Pact. With Indonesia, Malaysia continued to maintain the best of terms. Hussein further strengthened the ties Razak had forged with Suharto by entering into a Bilateral Military Co-operation Agreement with Indonesia in December 1976. In a spirit of solidarity with Suharto, he voiced Malaysia's approval for the integration of East Timor with Indonesia. On relations with Singapore, Hussein turned around the stand-off that had characterized the Malaysia-Singapore relationship in the Razak era.

However, his deputy, Mahathir, and some members of the government were still wary of the Singapore leadership and resentful of Hussein's reliance on the Singapore government on security matters. It was suggested that Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had influenced Hussein into arresting Samad Ismail in 1976.[232] Like Ghazali Shafie, Hussein was on good terms with Lee and other Singapore leaders. Hussein's close co-operation with Singapore culminated in 1980 with a bilateral agreement on an inter-governmental committee to facilitate smooth working arrangement at all levels of each country's administration.

Summary

In terms of national unity, Hussein's efforts were ordinary since he lacked the long party fellowship that was seen to be crucial for UMNO leadership coherence. Co-operation with PAS which Razak had been able to sustain despite long strained relations, collapsed under Hussein and culminated in PAS' departure from the *Barisan*. There was no question though that Hussein was a capable leader. His long absence from UMNO had the benefit of insulating him from factional conditioning. He had a certain aloofness about him and exhibited an independence that eschewed partisan politics. He had an approachable temperament and was usually even-handed in the way he tackled serious issues especially in matters of racial sensitivities. Hussein was a proponent of multi-racialism which Razak had appeared not to be, a quality that might have been built over his long absence from racial proclivities in UMNO and by his known cosmopolitan outlook.

Hussein's ideological stand could be explained by his reversal (and jail) of Razak's appointees known for their extreme views. He had a keen sense of justice and when he could, he displayed it admirably in intra-party relationships. Some would argue that Hussein's quick rise in UMNO and the government was simply an exercise of Razak's prerogative rather than as a matter of party selection. It was said he was persuaded to rejoin UMNO because Razak believed he was the only person who could be entrusted to succeed him in the country's leadership. Indeed, one might wonder if he could have gone anywhere politically without Razak. After all, he had not been active in politics since leaving UMNO in 1951 – with his father and former UMNO supremo, Onn Jaafar – and only to return propitiously in 1968 when Razak's takeover of the party's leadership appeared imminent.

Razak's plans for Hussein were obvious when we consider that he was elected to parliament, then appointed minister of education and finally deputy prime minister, all within a space of three years from his return. It was speculated that Hussein had been rushed into high office to relieve Razak who was in poor health. When Hussein himself was in failing health, he too wanted to hold the job only until a suitable successor was selected and he acted in nearly similar circumstances with the succession of Mahathir. However, Hussein was not blessed with a confidante as close as Razak had in him and probably suffered from a sense of isolation that gave few insights of his private feelings. The mediating posture for which Hussein was noted in his early days

of leadership, soon dissipated as he chose to distance himself from critical internal issues both in party and government. He preferred instead, to leave many of the problems to his deputy, Mahathir, who exploited every opportunity to steal the leadership limelight from Hussein.

All through his administration Hussein had a difficult job balancing his leadership with the rivalry of four strong personalities in his cabinet – Mahathir, Razaleigh, Ghazali and Musa, all determined in their quest for the prime minister's job. Furthermore, persistent rumours of his impending resignation accelerated in-party politicking among the leadership aspirants causing, in the process, heightened uncertainties in the party. Hussein's litany of problems, most of which he inherited from Razak, gave him a lot of bad press – the continuing incarceration of Harun Idris, the arrest of suspected communists, PAS, Gerakan/MCA dissension, MIC dissatisfaction over the government's education policy and the growing rift with Berjasa on the issue of its joining the *Barisan*. He could even be excused for enacting the discriminatory Industrial Co-ordination Act which he was forced to introduce to clean up many of the flaws in the NEP Razak had not foreseen.

To the economy of the country, Hussein brought few new ideas but was credited for its efficient control. Hussein could be forgiven for the lack of new economic innovations because Razak's far-reaching reforms in his NEP was an act hard to follow. Hussein spent most of the government's resources in implementing, tightening and expanding the provisions of the NEP. The many new agencies and quasi-public corporations that were created, were evaluated and monitored for target goals that were set through to 1990. The impact that had been imposed by the NEP, was felt right across social lines – in health, education and housing. Hussein however displayed some reluctance in implementing further Malay prerogatives that had been emphasized in the course of 'affirmation action' entrenched in the framework of the NEP. While the NEP was tolerated by non-Malays, it earned little gratitude from some sections of the *bumiputra* community as it disfavoured those without links to influential party activists. The non-Malay factions in the *Barisan* were generally sympathetic and genuinely supportive of the NEP policies and allowed Hussein, as they did Razak, the leverage needed to fulfil his objectives. But what was unconscionable was that corporate ownership and *bumiputra* entrepreneurial wealth were still freely funded by a large percentage of Malaysian taxpayers who stood to gain little or no benefits from the NEP initiatives.

Supporters of the policy countered that there was nothing repulsive about tax-funded private entrepreneurship as it was a practice common with other governments. Indeed it was but what they omitted to say was that, unlike Malaysia, private entrepreneurship with other governments was not racially selective. In defence of the apparent inequity of corporate ownership and government assistance for the Malays, one needs to look at the other side of the coin. For those who had bickered about Malay enrichment by unbridled state handouts, the opposite was true. The reality was that income for most Malays was low by comparison with the Chinese. Despite the dreaded provisions of the ICA, the Malays were still the highest unemployed in the country. Many Chinese companies employed mostly their own kind reserving for the Malays and the Indians token low-paying jobs. The same would be true of many multinational companies; a visit to any one of them would reveal the smallness of Malay employee numbers. Any wealth that was made, had little to do with selective state patronage much less from a policy as widespread as the NEP. It is inconceivable that a national economic policy could be specifically designed to guarantee a prosperity scheme, let alone one exclusively for the *bumiputras*. Wealth has a strange way of smiling on the very few and the few *bumiputras* that did have it, did not have as much as the richer Chinese. Unfortunately, Malay penchant for extravagance invited an illusion of prosperity. It brought upon the genuinely rich Malays, the envious brunt of derisory *makan suap* (taking bribes) gibes. There certainly were Malays who had gotten rich 'mysteriously' but they were the few who were the expectant 'corridor pacers' visceral in the best of governments. Unfortunately, attempts by the few to circumvent regulatory compliance, lent widespread belief of Malay and government collusion of increasing 'Ali–Baba' practices during Hussein's term. The myths perpetuated by critics such as Yoshihara's *Ersatz Capitalism* and Searle's *Rent-Seekers or Real Capitalists?* that Malay directorships were mere expressions of government handouts, failed to appreciate the reality of the political economy of corporate ownership. That Hussein failed to realize Malay ownership targets, must point to the fact that many Malays were unable to acquire shares because they either did not have the money or the companies were unwilling to part with the shares.

For companies that did have sizeable Malay interests, they were mostly of institutional ownership, say UDA or Tabong Haji whose shares were held by proxy Malay directors. The political economy on corporate ownership was a macro-economic strategy that centred on

the maximum control and balancing of strategic assets for national development. The easiest way to achieve this was to do the unthinkable, by the expropriation of businesses under non-compensatory nationalization. The other way was in the onerous but lawful acquisition of businesses by the government. It also raises ethical questions as it concerns taxpayers' money. The Malaysian government's buying up of rubber and tin conglomerates was an example in point. However eager the government could be for Malay ownership, there was obviously a limit to how far it could go to satisfy a wish list – short-circuiting procedures and uncontrolled borrowings without adequate collaterals were the very reasons that gave rise to allegations of crony capitalism that had been levelled at the government. An item in the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in 1998 reports that 'The emergence of a small group of wealthy Malay *bumiputra* businessmen in the 1980s may have given the appearance that real progress was being made towards the creation of a Malay capitalist class . . . but the reality is that most . . . were little more than "paper millionaires" massively leveraged on the stock market or by loans from state banks on subsidized terms.'[233] The point is: money was in short supply and always has been. It would follow then that the apparent proliferation of Malays on company boards was largely symbolic to meet compliance requirements, since neither the Malay directors nor the government had funds at the ready to satisfy *bumiputra* equity participation for every company.

Yoshihara is right in saying that most Malays on company boards are not truly capitalists. But he and Searle are quite wrong to generalize that Malay directors had earned their positions by less than honourable means. Adorning company boards with patron luminaries was a well-known practice the world over, yet its practice in Malaysia was criticized. These Malay patrons were often high-profile individuals legitimately courted for their influence for the benefit of the companies. These companies could optionally do without them if their presence no longer served company interests. Since these Malays willingly played their lobbying roles in exchange for often lucrative incentives, they would hardly be the ones to rat on their bosses for corporate deceit. The return for the companies must be assumed to have been equally attractive. In any event, little was known about the true extent of *bumiputra* equity interests and other inadequacies in the NEP corporate ownership policy. The mere superficiality of Malay ownership clearly undermined real NEP objectives but equally it debunked the myth of perceived Malay enrichment by state policy.

Hussein ended his term with increasing corporatist tendencies in government economic management. It included a fairly tolerable economic relationship between the Malays and the Chinese but a dramatic marginalization of Indians whose increasing poverty was ignored in the haste to reinforce the NEP. Little credit was given for Malay achievements in fields which hitherto had a scarcity of Malays. The increasing number of Malay professionals was quite apparent but many preferred working in the public service rather than the private sector going back to an old belief in the security of government jobs. And what about the myth of the lazy Malay and his unwillingness for hard work? In the 1970s, Malays left in droves to work in the booming construction market in Singapore. The majority of them enjoyed a preference with Singapore contractors for their hard work and clean habits. Many later converged on Kuala Lumpur when the building boom hit the capital and also in the major towns of Penang and Johor Bahru to engage in the fast-growing service and retail enterprises. Since the early 1990s, most construction workers were foreigners as the booming economy caused many Malays to opt for steadier and better paid jobs in the civil service and in the service and hospitality industries giving the impression that the Malay worker was unwilling to do hard work.

In foreign affairs, Hussein's success was extraordinary considering his foray into diplomacy was followed so soon after his recent re-entry into active politics. What he had missed, he made it up by his likeable personality and professional tact gleaned from his legal training. His diplomacy was tempered with a sense of *kehalusan* that was always evident in his dealings with foreign relation matters and his humanity for his less fortunate neighbours as shown by his compassion in allowing the entry into Malaysia the thousands of Indochinese boat refugees. He rapidly created a favourable impression with his contemporaries in ASEAN with whom Malaysia enjoyed the best relationships ever. Hussein forged an extraordinary friendship with Suharto that included several close bilateral military exchanges which only a few years before was unimaginable. Significantly, he thawed the icy relationship with Singapore that had festered for over a decade and followed up with unprecedented co-operation at all levels of government. His term as prime minister coincided with peaceful times for Malaysia both at home and abroad. Apart from the minor rebuff he encountered on his first visit with Chinese leaders, most of his good work in foreign affairs however escaped wide public attention.

In postulating the hypothesis of innate perception, Hussein

exhibited less of the classical manifestations of tradition and predestination. He did very little to assert or consolidate his leadership preferring instead to manage by delegation which he did remarkably well. Again, like Razak to some extent, he did not aspire to high office. He stepped in on the demise of Razak; he brought a measure of stability and bid his time only for so long until the question of leadership succession was resolved. He claimed illness for his disinterest but survived for many more years. Whereas, Razak was dying and died in office and little was known about the pain he endured. The leadership of Tunku, Razak and Hussein represented similar *adat kehalusan* personalities but with sharply contrasting styles in their governance. While all emphasized Malay political primacy, each however failed to improve on the cohesion that was developed by his predecessor. The next chapter will be devoted entirely to Mahathir, Malaysia's fourth prime minister. Mahathir introduced a new dimension in modern leadership that is radical in some ways yet adopting many of the ideals of former prime ministers of Malaysia. But he is also very different in many ways – while retaining a façade of traditions, he eschews many of the traditional qualities of Malay leadership.

Chapter 7

Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (1981–)

Redefining the modern Malay leader

Mahathir and national unity

This chapter attempts to show how Mahathir modernized his leadership according to a mindset that believes that the greater the prerogatives the more effective the leader. He lauds traditions but uses them only to drive the passion in his rhetoric for unity. He defies the conventions that characterized the leadership style of his predecessors but cares sincerely about Malay values. He wants Islam to be an integral part of the moral society he envisions for his country. It is this Islam in him that superficially suggests his steadfastness to tradition and Malay conservativism which every bit he is not. For Mahathir is the epitome of modern leadership. He is modern but not westernized in the way previous prime ministers were. This chapter will cover his political career through the 1990s by which time, the Mahathir the world had known had taken on quite a transformation that portrayed him rather unfairly of a less kindly autocrat. Mahathir realized then that it was necessary to redefine his leadership to suit the changing political landscape. But he did that with little success. What he needed was a dramatic re-kindling of his latent brilliance. That opportunity came not inauspiciously with the Asian economic crisis in July 1997 when he showed there was much left of the vintage Mahathir. A discussion of Mahathir's leadership in the wake of the economic crisis will be covered in further detail later in this chapter.

Measuring Mahathir

For years Malaysia's development performance was praised from sound economic policies, Mahathir's able leadership, to the uniqueness of its Asian values. For years too Mahathir had made it clear that

he alone was the architect of Malaysia's economic miracle and he wallowed in it at every opportunity. And if there were any flaws in his policies, they were glossed over by an unquestioning, prospering population. There is no doubt though that Mahathir's stirring leadership is an enigma that cannot be ignored and to belittle him would be to give scant regard to one of the most important personalities of Asian political history. To measure Mahathir by any yardstick can be difficult, since his length in office provided an assumption of his success. As a prerequisite to continuing leadership, he naturally needed to be re-elected to parliament but that had always been an easy hurdle to get over. More difficult were the manoeuvres within the inner circle which he had, time and again, won by skilfully capitalizing on the loyalty of those who mattered most in the survival of his leadership. However, survival alone is insufficient to measure success.

Leadership in the main is about inspiring, motivating and leading a nation to all-round happiness, terms that are amorphous but nonetheless valid in the assessment of leadership. Public opinion or polls do not always determine leadership outcomes neither are they an accurate assessment of leadership qualities. The issue of leadership in UMNO is a matter that is debated within the confines of the party caucus. It was within this group of elites that Mahathir had to canvass his leadership and which he obviously did quite successfully for a long time. So, longevity does suggest at least one element of success. Mahathir's length in office had also provided him with a 'moulting' process that had shed him of his past iniquities. As with most politicians, Mahathir had constantly defended his policies however untenable they were. As with longevity where one's prowess has withstood the rigours of time, poor past policies too have a way of bleaching themselves out and forgotten. Besides, public opinion has a tendency to associate the effectiveness of leadership with recent events especially creditable ones.

For a leader such as Mahathir who had built up a long and solid economic track record, there was a tendency to look at some issues with less scrutiny. And in a country where public knowledge of government mistakes were often suppressed that usually left economic performance as the only means of evaluating leadership. But conversely while economic performance was admittedly the most important and quickest barometer of performing leadership, it overshadowed several important social structural changes in Mahathir's leadership. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss a range of issues that will attempt

to provide both an objective assessment and a wider perspective on his leadership.

Defining the image

As soon as Mahathir assumed office in 1981 he initiated a number of measures to give his administration a 'Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy' image. He was determined to clean up the mismanagement and corruption that had undermined previous administrations. He decreed time-cards for all public employees to ensure that all staff were duly at work and name tags to facilitate their identification by the public. He encouraged the public to make complaints about efficiency and corruption to the Public Complaints Bureau. He gave new powers to the National Bureau of Investigations (later Anti-Corruption Agency) to pursue issues of corruption. Ministers and civil servants were required to declare their assets in an effort to discourage them from receiving favours from the business community. In addition, he ordered regular audits on the efficiency of the civil service. Mahathir also promoted an era of tolerance of dissenting views and of public discussion of policy alternatives. And to show he meant this, he lifted the ban on several publications including his own book the *Malay Dilemma*. Additionally, within weeks of taking office, Mahathir issued orders for the release of some detainees under the Internal Security Act and short-term convicted criminals. This was followed a few months later by the release of Malaysia's most prominent political prisoner, Selangor's former *Menteri Besar* (chief minister) Harun Idris.

By 1983 Mahathir had firmly placed his ideology of public policy within the political system that was working and stable. In the field of economic and social policies, Mahathir made few changes initially but asked that targets be achieved with greater speed and public resources to be economically used. He gave the administrative elite more decision-making powers and they responded with the expected new zeal. The refreshing energy that he had infused into the government was introduced by a highly elitist class that was enthusiastically loyal to this new dynamism of Mahathirism. This elite comprising western and well-educated high achievers, characterized a new breed of entrepreneurs in the 1980s who were identified with the modern corporatist image of the *Melayu korporat* (Corporate Malay) of which Mahathir himself was its chief role model. In diplomacy, Mahathir initiated a new political style that portrayed him as a staunch friend of third world countries, especially Islamic ones.

In dealing with international issues he favoured the 'one-to-one' bilateral approach to forum-type multilateral negotiations. Within a couple of years of his leadership, he began to project an image of an active centralist 'Chairman of the Board' who tended to rely less on the influence of political and strategic elites. He believed a more centralized power was important to realize his vision of a truly modern leadership. In trying to achieve this he met several obstacles, some dangerously threatening to his survival.

Defending the image

Mahathir battled through a number of political controversies between 1983 and 1986 which brought forth a uniqueness in his leadership that challenged Malay leadership traditions. Unlike his predecessors who were all lawyers, he was a medical practitioner for twenty years before becoming a politician and then education minister in 1974. His medical training may have something to do with the way he does things differently from past leaders. Former Welfare Minister Shahrir Abdul Samad says of Mahathir 'he will not think of negotiating his way out of a problem the way his predecessors, with their legal backgrounds, would have done. The medical solution is to cut out the cancer.'[234] It was said that he had also wanted to be a lawyer but failed to get an overseas scholarship for law studies in England. In any case it was no mean feat to get into a medical college then especially for the *kampung* boy that he was.[235] However, there was an assumption that politics was only for lawyers given their preponderance in post-war politics. But Mahathir wanted very much to be in politics going by the issues he wrote about in his regular *Che Dat* column (a pseudonym he used in the old *Straits Times*). Although an UMNO member from its founding, he only won a parliamentary seat in 1964.

As a backbencher he showed disdain for Tunku's accommodating style in the Alliance. His non-conformist posture cost him his seat in the following elections and subsequently, his dismissal from the party by Tunku. Obviously embittered, he put his strong views about ethnic issues and Malay politics in his controversial book *Malay Dilemma* that was banned in Malaysia for over a decade. Brought back into the political fold by Razak, Mahathir impressed everyone with his conscientiousness and single-minded commitment that vaulted him over equally able contenders to supreme leadership in 1981. Unlike Razak or Hussein, who were quite detached in their outlook, Mahathir had a tendency to look at problems in a more personal way perhaps, again,

this too had to do with his 'doctor-patient' approach. It is hard to say if his medical background coloured his political instincts but he was certainly different from previous leaders in one major way: he prefers his own diagnosis of issues, savours dominance and delegates little.

He always wanted to be in the forefront of news and not one to buckle under pressure. He gets more resilient after each crisis and ever ready to take on the next one often with a degree of recklessness, quite unlike his early years that showed him to be more amiable and consensual. Despite what he articulates in his book the *Malay Dilemma*, he did not come to power with any particular mindset. As he grew in experience, he redefined his own political image as well as his attitudes in party relationships. Central to this attitude was control. He made it a point to ensure that resolution of any issue be dealt with around the preservation of his leadership. Winning is the abiding motivation that has kept the Mahathir enigma ticking on as long as it had, though the methods he used were not always palatable.

The Bank Bumiputra crisis

The scandals of the Bank Bumiputra and Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) affair seriously tarnished the image of Mahathir's 'Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy' government that he had promoted in the 1982 general elections. Despite what was clearly regarded as a blatant breach of fidelity in a state-owned enterprise, the Mahathir administration merely said that the case was the result of bad judgement and inadequate financial supervision. Mahathir while admitting that the BMF scandal was a 'heinous crime . . . what they did was morally wrong although legally it was within the law, we cannot take them to court'.[236] Mahathir's unwillingness to go public with the full story of the affair was well understood if not misplaced. He wanted to contain the damage that had been inflicted on his campaign for an efficient, clean administration. But even more so he was aware of the political cost such a revelation would make on his government since several prominent members of his inner circle were allegedly directly implicated in the bank's misdeeds.

Nonetheless, the Bank Bumiputra affair reflected adversely on Mahathir's integrity and setback his *bumiputra* entrepreneurial plans under the NEP. Since the inception of the NEP under Razak, a large number of public bodies and corporations were set up to promote *bumiputra* participation in the economy at both the state and federal level. Bank Bumiputra was such a corporation at the federal level that

had been formed to fund economic development and specifically to provide financing for *bumiputra* individuals and corporations. The loans that were disbursed by the errant BMF Hongkong branch went to the Hongkong-based Carrian Group for highly speculative property financing. The only motive one can glean on the transaction was the quick and high returns that could be expected from this risky venture. However, that was not to be because the loans to George Tan, Carrian's boss, were enormously over-extended and above the bank's SRR (Statutory Reserve Requirement) or the loan-asset ratio.[237]

Secondly Tan enjoyed an exceptional preferential borrowing rate without adequate collateral. Even if the loans were good just how they could contribute to *bumiputra* well-being was anybody's guess given the size of the loans and their low yield. The bank said the loans were not properly authorized by Kuala Lumpur and Tengku Razaleigh the Finance Minister then said the Bank Negara (the central bank) which he had overall control of, had no jurisdiction over Bank Bumiputra and its subsidiaries which effectively meant that neither he nor the government was taking any responsibility for the bank's problems. At the height of the scandal the government introduced a new Official Secrets Act which banned the dissemination of information the government considered official information. The Act was targeted on the media which stood to lose publishing permits, apart from a hefty fine and imprisonment if they pursued with reports on the case of the bank. Under pressure from the opposition in parliament, the government finally relented and offered a limited Committee of Enquiry to look into the case. But the committee merely acknowledged the bank's losses in its White Paper in November 1984 without assigning any blame to anyone. The committee's White Paper was not released until January 1986, four years after the scandal surfaced. The BMF saga ended when the government used Petronas to cover the RM2.5 billion losses (estimated US$1.2 billion in those days). It was not lost on anybody that the so-called Petronas rescue was a write-off of Carrian's bad debts by public money.

Conflicts with the rulers

One of the most poignant crises that confronted Mahathir was his showdown with the rulers in 1983. Mahathir found himself in the thick of a constitutional crisis that threatened to violate the very apex of tradition and unity symbolized by the Malay monarchy. Previous prime ministers had all properly acquitted their deference to the rulers

and had been careful to avoid any open confrontation with the rulers. They were discreet in their dealings with royalty, although disagreements such as in the appointment of chief ministers had on several occasions become public. The Sedition Act has also had a restraining effect on criticisms about the monarchy and the special rights of the Malays to whom the rulers are the spiritual protectors. Though the rulers lack substantive authority on governance, they are frequently informally consulted on matters of sufficient importance. This at least gives them the appearance of being included in the process of policy formulation.

However, the Malaysian Constitution obliges parliament to seek the *Agong's* (King) assent on the passage of constitutional amendments and federal legislation. The declaration of emergency is also the king's prerogative. The king's assent is normally given on the advice of parliament. However, the king is not constitutionally bound to accede assent if he chooses not to and there is the likelihood that his intransigence could hold parliament to virtual and indefinite ransom. Such a situation is obviously undesirable as instability can potentially lead to the collapse of a government as had happened under similar prerogatives with the Australian government of Gough Whitlam. It was obvious from the outset that Mahathir and possibly many in Malaysia were displeased with the reckless excesses and malfeasance of some of the rulers. Due to the protection the rulers had enjoyed under the original constitution, punishment for the most flagrant misdemeanour could not be meted out. There were also irritations, for example, at their persistent interference in the appointment of chief ministers, award of royal titles and even on such mundane issues as the official dates of *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* (marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan).

Mahathir had none or maybe few courtly pretensions of his predecessors who had always been well constrained in their dealings with royalty. During those trying times, battling for constitutional change, it must have occurred to many if Mahathir was making a statement about the point of royalty in modern government. He was certainly bothered by the thought that he had to acknowledge the King's constitutional supremacy over a popularly-elected parliament and maybe even over his leadership. What else could have motivated him to drive changes with such energy? Mahathir's quest for untrammelled power was the chief reason that motivated his confrontation with the rulers. He was conscious of the inevitable tensions that would follow on such a bold call for reforms in the constitution. He was equally determined

to remove parliamentary subservience to the rulers and obviously not unprepared for the painful consequences on his political future should his campaign fail. If his cause was seen as a quest for pivotal power, he would regard its success as just reward for the high stakes he had put in to risk everything. Equally, he had high expectations of success and knew there were enough anomalies in the constitution to provide him with the cannon fodder for his campaign.

Against this backdrop, Mahathir decided in August 1983 to challenge the prerogatives of the rulers by using the constitutional amendment process. He submitted twenty-two amendments of the constitution to parliament and proposed that they should be automatically gazetted if royal assent was not secured for them after fifteen days. He further proposed that the declaration of emergency should rest solely on the prime minister. If these amendments were accepted by parliament, it would mean the transference of the supreme power of the king to the prime minister and (within the states) of the rulers to the state chief ministers. Mahathir invoked the Official Secrets Act to curtail press coverage on the constitutional crisis. Apart from pockets of resistance from pro-royalists in the *Barisan*, the opposition was the most vocal in its objections to Mahathir's proposals on the constitutional changes. The opposition members were alarmed that the amendments were so audaciously presented without the due constitutional formality of prior consultation with the judiciary and the rulers. Lim Kit Siang, the DAP leader, called for the rejection of the amendments for their undemocratic consequences and decried the amendments as attempts to provide Mahathir with such wide powers that were far more dangerous than the exercise of royal autonomy.[248] Mahathir prevailed in parliament thanks to the two-thirds majority he had in the *Barisan* for constitutional amendments.

Predictably, the King delayed his response given the implications the amendments would have not only on his constitutional authority but also on the powers of the state rulers. Besides, the rulers had promptly and unanimously opposed the amendments and the King appeared unable to proceed independently without their blessing. Mahathir was summoned to a rulers conference in October 1983 but the meeting ended without a solution to the impasse. During the stand-off, Tunku published an editorial in the *Star* offering suggestions to resolve the crisis. Mahathir took his cue from Tunku's defiance of the press blackout, and since the news of the crisis had already been widely reported in the foreign press, to relax his own control on the press. While he did not care to respond to Tunku's suggestions, Mahathir

could thank Tunku for defying the press ban because the press played a significant role in Mahathir's campaign. At the time he called off the press moratorium he simultaneously unleashed an all-out publicity blitz to promote his case. Pro-royalists too entered the fray with large public rallies in Kelantan and Terengganu that many believed had been the furtive efforts of Tengku Razaleigh. Pro-Mahathir rallies were held around the country including East Malaysia.

The UMNO-owned *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Melayu* gave such wide coverage to Mahathir that many began to imminently accept his success. As the crisis became more public the government was pressured into taking decisive action. In reaction to a resolution by UMNO Youth to gazette the delayed bills and amendments without royal assent, Mahathir said he would consider it if the rulers prolonged the delay for much longer. The resolution, obviously a ploy put by Mahathir through UMNO Youth's President Anwar Ibrahim, did the job as it was intended to. The impasse was finally broken not long after on 15 December 1983 when a compromise formula was successfully negotiated. Non-assented monetary bills would be law after thirty days and the King had up to sixty days to sit on non-monetary bills. The power to declare an emergency was to stay with the King.

In essence, the victory was Mahathir's since parliamentary paramountcy had been assured. On the matter of the emergency, there was no loss to Mahathir since the King could not act unilaterally without parliament's behest. Should the King decline its assent, parliament's widened leverage in the constitution could now place the King's own position in jeopardy. Contrary to rumours, the new King Sultan Mahmood Iskandar Shah of Johor, who was inaugurated a month after the constitutional amendments were passed by parliament, gave public approval of the revised constitution and promised in an interview to 'do whatever the Prime Minister advises me to . . .'[239] But this was not the end of Mahathir's problems with royalty.

Another royal conflict

During the 1990 general elections Mahathir had been concerned with the overt support the Sultan of Kelantan had shown for PAS/Semangat and his criticisms of UMNO. The fact that the Sultan is a brother-in-law of Semangat chief Tengku Razaleigh, made his support even more controversial. As a matter of tradition and protocol, the rulers would not normally engage in or comment on politics nor show any

partiality for any political party. The Kelantan Sultan had obviously broken this traditional pact. However, apart from the disgrace the Sultan had suffered by public criticism of his behaviour, evidenced by the wide publicity given to the controversy, no further action was possible for Mahathir to take against him. Mahathir had also been concerned with the increasing role of sultans generally in business activities that were frequently in competition with Malay businesses for government contracts and share offers. In this respect, the high profile Antah Group of the Negri Sembilan royalty was the most prominent in getting from Petronas some of the most lucrative contracts for its extensive businesses in oil-field equipment supply.

On the advice of Mahathir, Anwar Ibrahim who had succeeded Daim Zainuddin as Finance Minister in 1991 presented a Memorandum of Complaint to the rulers in February 1992. The complaint (which was later amended to the Proclamation of Constitutional Principles) achieved nothing beyond an expression of displeasure at royal behaviour. Nonetheless, it was a useful exercise for Mahathir to 'test the water', for at the end of 1992 an opportunity was presented to him to take his mission against royal excesses to the hilt. The occasion concerned the beating of school hockey coach Gomez, by the Sultan of Johor. The beating was over Gomez's decision to drop the Sultan's son from the school hockey team. As Gomez's police report was not acted upon, he brought his case to the press.

The loud public outrage that was heard against the errant Sultan triggered Mahathir to move a constitutional amendment against royal immunity from prosecution. As expected, the rulers refused to endorse the Amendment. As the stand-off conflict threatened a new constitutional crisis, Mahathir decided to go public with his cause, going against an etiquette he had only partially observed in his earlier crisis with the sultans. This time Mahathir was less subdued. In fact, as the momentum built he was openly scathing in his attack on the rulers; he had UMNO-owned newspapers published revelations of the rulers' excesses, their gambling debts, holiday retreats, etc. Under parliamentary immunity, UMNO members revealed in parliament the rulers' sordid personal lives, brutalities, etc.

The government started to trim many of the privileges they had enjoyed, such as timber concessions, duty-free luxury cars and preferential shares. While many had appreciated Mahathir's stance against the rulers whose disciplining they had felt was long overdue, several UMNO grassroots members were resentful of this breach of royal and Malay traditions. The opposition which was hardly known for any

royal sympathies, jumped on the bandwagon of protest accusing Mahathir of weakening royal prerogatives to advance his own power. Mahathir won again. Within a month of tabling the Amendment, the rulers agreed to give up their legal immunity but asked that their offences be tried in a specially-convened royal court.

National disunity – the UMNO crisis

In 1984 Mahathir decided to chance his leadership on a matter that had lingered on his mind since his ascension to leadership – the purge of a small but influential dissenting elements within his inner circle. He had pondered on this matter immediately after his first royal crisis. While he had been displeased with the group's intractability for his constitutional campaign, this group represented key individuals who had competed against him for leadership. Prime on this 'disloyal' list were Tengku Razaleigh and Ghazali Shafie, key cabinet ministers, holding the finance and foreign ministries portfolios respectively. Within months Mahathir removed every cabinet minister he considered disloyal to him such as Ghazali Shafie and Aisha Ghani. But he held back on Tengku Razaleigh's ouster until the next UMNO elections in May 1984. In that election he shrewdly pitted his right hand man Musa Hitam against Razaleigh for the deputy presidency of UMNO. Musa won by 59 percent of the votes cast. Mahathir's purge of rivals in his inner circle set the stage for a most divisive period of party politics.

UMNO delegates

UMNO divisions nominate candidates for UMNO's top positions then despatch their biennially elected delegates to the triennial UMNO general assembly Elections. These delegates numbering approximately 1,500, vote for a range of national party leaders: the president, deputy president, three party vice-presidents and twenty-five other members of the UMNO Supreme Council. The three vice-presidents elected are ranked according to the number of votes each won. They are followed by the co-opted vice-presidents of UMNO Youth and UMNO Wanita. An additional twenty-five UMNO Supreme Council members are elected by the UMNO general assembly. The president appoints the party's secretary-general, treasurer and information chief and seven more members to the supreme council.

Normally, all UMNO chief ministers in Peninsular Malaysia are selected from elected senior supreme council members. Cabinet positions are given according to the ranking in the supreme council, the president being the prime minister and his deputy the deputy prime minister and followed by the vice-presidents for the next three important positions. Under past prime ministers UMNO had been fairly free of factionalism partly because they were strong and there were no real challenges to the hierarchy. Also earlier members were accustomed by tradition to accept the wisdom of elders without question. The 1980s not only brought about a new kind of leadership under Mahathir they also introduced a more democratic and competitive atmosphere for party management. It was Mahathir who introduced the new experience of politicking. In the 1981 UMNO elections he invited the party's 1,500-odd delegates to freely vote on the election of the deputy president thus foregoing a custom that was the exclusive choice of the president. From then on procedures that are more democratic were introduced in UMNO affairs to discourage party manipulation, the very kind that caused Tunku to dismiss Mahathir and Musa Hitam for their criticisms of the UMNO leadership in 1969.

Unfortunately, the democratic procedures Mahathir initiated encouraged a trend of unrestrained and often offensive exchanges at UMNO gatherings. Such tendencies were exhibited in the 1984 UMNO elections as internal tensions reached a new high when Musa Hitam again won over Tengku Razaleigh by the Mahathir-initiated free delegate voting system. Factional alignments that had arisen since their first encounter in 1981 now clearly demarcated a dividing line separating the Razaleigh camp from that of Mahathir (since Musa was his choice). Party loyalties were further complicated when Mahathir expelled Musa in 1986 and elevated Ghafar Baba to the post of deputy prime minister, a prerogative he still held. Since Musa was still holding the position of deputy president, a position he had won by virtue of the delegate ballot, Mahathir's popularity was thinned down quite considerably by the widespread resentment of his arbitrary treatment of Musa.

UMNO members reacted with expected unhappiness since Musa's expulsion as deputy prime minister was in violation of a party norm that automatically entitled the deputy president to the job of deputy prime minister. The tension was further compounded by Mahathir's appointment of Daim Zainuddin, as Finance Minister over incumbent Tengku Razaleigh who, like Musa, commanded wide popularity in

UMNO. Though Razaleigh was given the Ministry of Trade and Industry portfolio, Mahathir decreed that ministers were prohibited from holding the leadership of UMNO state branches which meant that Razaleigh had to forego his presidency of the Kelantan UMNO. Against this scene, factionalism hardened in the run up to the 1987 UMNO general assembly.

In a most unusual move, Tengku Razaleigh and Musa Hitam agreed on an alliance to challenge Mahathir and Ghafar Baba for the presidency and vice-presidency respectively. Since the effort involved the votes of the 1,500 delegates, who in turn had to be elected by the ordinary members, the Mahathir–Ghafar Baba team faced an awesome election campaign that was riding on the gloom of an economic recession. Mahathir cleverly concentrated his strategy on the Malay chief ministers whose positions as well as federal patronage depended on him. It was therefore not too difficult for Mahathir to exact public pledges of support from them. Mahathir's coup with the chief ministers was especially pleasing as it persuaded the great majority of UMNO grassroots members notably the school teachers, who had always looked to their respective chief ministers for guidance, to vote for the pro-Mahathir delegates.

Some speculated that Musa Hitam might have a better chance of defeating Ghafar Baba than Tengku Razaleigh would have of defeating Mahathir for presidency. If that should be the outcome, it would return to the *status quo* with Musa still languishing as deputy president without being a deputy prime minister, a situation that would no doubt be most chaotic to the *Barisan* and the government. The likelihood of Musa winning was no idle speculation as he was tremendously popular and was seen to have been robbed of his rightful ministerial position. Mahathir knew the odds for Ghafar and found himself fighting two battles – his and Ghafar Baba's – whose loss would mean having to put up with Musa for another term. The tension was nothing short of fever-pitched as the media played up on one of the most acrimonious election battles of all time. Each player in the elections, for their own selfish reason, naturally wanted nothing more than a most decisive result, no one more so than Mahathir because a loss would have ended his political future for good. In terms of ideology or public policy, neither team offered anything new or different.

The contest was clearly one about personalities. Razaleigh made an issue of the inadequacies of the NEP for the Malays and Daim Zainuddin's connections with big businesses, implying corruption in

the Mahathir administration. Mahathir also came under personal attack for his arbitrary style and his propensity for grandiose projects at the expense of Malay poverty. Mahathir vigorously campaigned with Anwar Ibrahim who was also contesting for one of the UMNO vice-president positions. Mahathir supported Anwar as he saw in him the dynamism of a popular politician: he had youth and an Islamic activism that appealed to the conservative and rural vote. He was seen therefore to have the qualities that could compete favourably with the princely and western-educated Razaleigh–Musa team.

Mahathir and Anwar promised 'to support Islamic resurgence and to oppose those who oppose it' and to intensify 'Islamic values' in the government. The campaign was expectedly fraught with furious allegations against the government; something Mahathir was not to forget after the heat of electioneering had abated. As the campaign ended Mahathir was suddenly hit with a bombshell when some of his ministers, namely, Rais Yatim, Shahrir Abdul Samad, Radzi Sheikh Ahmad and Zainal Abidin Zin, switched their support to the Razaleigh–Musa camp. At that point, it would appear that Razaleigh and Musa were ahead on the home stretch. The hour finally arrived at the UMNO general assembly but it was to be another eleven pulsating hours before the results were announced and the momentum still belonged to Razaleigh and Musa.

The official verdict was: Mahathir and Ghafar Baba had won with a forty-three and forty-vote margin respectively. Of the three vice-presidents elected, two, Anwar Ibrahim and Wan Mokhtar Ahmad were pro-Mahathir candidates. The third Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, a Razaleigh-Musa supporter, was won over to Mahathir's side not long after. Sixteen of the twenty-five supreme council seats went also to Mahathir's supporters. Mahathir was in no mood for compromise or reconciliation and, true to his word, purged all adversaries in his government right down to the disloyal *penghulus* and *imams*. In the cabinet reshuffle that followed, he gave himself the additional portfolios of the Home Affairs and Justice Ministries. Obviously bruised by changing loyalties, Mahathir was justifiably less trusting of his close lieutenants and adopted a more centralized and less consensual leadership posture.

However, even before the jubilation of victory could simmer down, Mahathir found himself facing yet another controversy that of election fraud. It was alleged that he had won the UMNO elections by vote tampering including his use of seventy-eight delegates from unregistered branches. Because of the narrowness of the delegate

votes, the charge caused wide consternation among party ranks and accordingly, twelve UMNO ordinary members filed a court injunction on 25 June 1987 to void the election. It was quite obvious then that the injunction was at the behest of Razaleigh and Musa. In the long period that it took for the High Court to deliberate on the case, it was apparent that tremendous pressure was brought to bear on the judiciary to offer a verdict that was amenable to the government. As all eyes were on the judiciary, Mahathir had hoped the verdict was pliable enough to assuage both parties and dismiss any thought of government bias.

While the verdict did fulfil his hope, it led to a major confusion of UMNO's status. Justice Harun Hashim declared that UMNO had operated illegally under the provisions of the Societies Act of 1966. Mahathir played down the court's decision and retorted that the decision was based on a minor technicality and was, presumably, well within the powers of his government to remedy through administrative and parliamentary prerogatives. The court went no further nor assigned any wrongdoing on anybody's part and the seamier aspects of the election were thus laid to rest. Some UMNO members took the opportunity of UMNO's illegal status to register the party as the reconstituted UMNO Malaysia. Led by erstwhile Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tengku Razaleigh the new party was however quickly hamstrung by bureaucratic legalities, apparently initiated by Mahathir since he was concurrently the Minister of Home Affairs and the Ministry pertinent to the application issue. Instead of retrospectively invoking the exemptions in the Societies Act and resuscitating UMNO to its original status which he could do under his ministerial jurisdiction, Mahathir decided to revamp UMNO.

Mahathir duly registered UMNO under its Malay name, *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (Baru)* and popularly referred to as UMNO Baru. Though party loyalists made up the bulk of initial membership, Mahathir was prepared to welcome disenchanted supporters of Razaleigh and Musa. Apart from the slight name change, UMNO Baru was the same party, except that its office bearers were now decidedly pro-Mahathirists. Significantly, the new constitution of the party enlarged the powers of the president, one of which was that he had the final say on the appointment of the leadership of UMNO Wanita and UMNO Youth. This change in the party's constitution from the old one further underlined Mahathir's centralizing leadership and his direct control over all key office bearers of the party. Mahathir's new-found popularity augured well for a period of power

consolidation that included also far-reaching changes in party voting procedures which included the highly controversial concession of ten free votes for the president and the deputy.

This concession which was obviously intended for the sole purpose of buffering against challengers' votes, was nevertheless approved by the party. To ensure wider support for his leadership, Mahathir elicited loyalty pledges from leaders of the *Barisan* and chief ministers. He launched government-funded loyalty rallies around the country under his Semarak Movement (Loyalty to the People Movement) which he sealed with a RM1.5 million 76-metre Menara Semarak monument as 'a permanent reminder of the bond between the people and the leaders'. Mahathir's clever use of these Semarak rallies was to captivate maximum impact from media coverage to boost his popularity. He often spoke in the tone of the simple man-in-the-street to appeal to the masses about the importance of upholding Malay political power to ensure Malay unity. The rallies took on a carnival atmosphere at the National Day celebrations with marching parades, dramas and speeches focussed on nationalism. UMNO Baru organized highly successful membership drives at these Semarak rallies and when the Registrar of Societies was satisfied that UMNO Baru had in its membership more than half of the old UMNO membership, no objection was made when Mahathir proposed that the party revert to the old name of UMNO.

Mahathir's efforts to entrench power in his leadership combined a punitive vindictiveness against old foes and their followers. In 1987 he shut down four newspapers and ordered the detention of 106 people including members of parliament and several prominent individuals. Mahathir said these people were detained under the provisions of the ISA for being a security threat to the country. The detention was derided by the foreign press as a propaganda ploy since the detainees had no history of political opposition and some, such as social activist Chandra Muzaffar, a close friend of Anwar Ibrahim had, in fact, been pro-government. Shortly after his release, Chandra and a few other detainees were appointed by Mahathir to the prestigious National Economic Consultative Council.[240] Meanwhile, opposition to the Mahathir government was again gaining momentum by the pro-Razaleigh group after its attempts to claim the old UMNO name was pre-empted by Mahathir.

Their 'Hidup UMNO '46', (Long Live the UMNO of 1946), meaning essentially the return to the founding principles of UMNO when it was established in 1946, adopted that slogan literally for the name of

their new party, *Semangat 46* (Spirit of '46). Semangat's membership came from the 'old' and the 'ultras' of the former UMNO who rallied around Razaleigh mainly because he led a party that appeared to have some credibility as an alternative Malay party to UMNO. But Semangat was never a united party, in that it was comprised of influential but single-minded personalities such as Tunku, Musa Hitam, Hussein, his brother Jaafar Onn and Harun Idris who saw themselves as potential leaders in their own right and obviously not as subordinates to the junior Razaleigh. The nature of the group was such that each prominent member had his own followers. There was a group under Musa Hitam until he defected back to UMNO and another under Tunku and Harun Idris. The biggest group was under Tengku Razaleigh and his nephew by marriage, the Sultan of Kelantan, Ismail Petra.

As Semangat was faced with increasing defections, the Razaleigh faction consolidated their strength behind the patronage of the Sultan who defied constitutional convention by showing open support to a political party. Kelantan made the headlines when its Sultan conferred the highest state honour on former Lord President Mohamed Salleh Abas shortly after the latter was removed from his position. The Sultan also played host to five sacked judges of the Supreme Court at a Kelantan royal banquet where they were praised for their impartiality and esteemed sense of justice. But Semangat had hardly the vim to match the prowess of Mahathir's UMNO that was getting more popular and identified with the success of a booming economy. Semangat retreated completely to Kelantan where, in 1990, it succeeded in pairing with PAS to control Kelantan.

Since the 1987 UMNO elections and the re-organization that followed it, the party was confidently settled with Mahathir's leadership. To take advantage of a booming economy and the relative stability in the party, Mahathir decided to call a snap general elections in 1990, a year ahead of schedule. The *Barisan*'s contest was mainly with the Semangat/PAS coalition which had also a number of minor parties. Semangat on its own, had also entered an electoral pact with DAP for the non-Malay constituencies. The return of the *Barisan* government was never in doubt. Still Mahathir was worried at the possible loss of the *Barisan*'s two-thirds parliamentary majority. As the general elections were the first under the newly constituted party, he considered it vital to re-establish itself as the premier Malay party by regaining as many of the 96 Malay-majority districts as the original UMNO had in previous elections.

As part of a plan to frustrate the opposition, Mahathir modified some electoral rules. He legislated some vote-counting procedures in a way that would make it impossible to identify outcomes in particular constituencies. This resulted in a number of *kampung* voters especially from Kelantan and Terengganu who were found to have duplicated their registration at other *kampungs* that were believed to be pro-*Barisan*. Allegations of vote rigging consequently became rife. With the exception of Kelantan, *Barisan* as expected, emerged with a landslide victory. The UMNO election that followed in November was a lacklustre affair. Mahathir and Ghafar Baba retained their respective positions, likewise the three vice-presidents – Anwar Ibrahim, Abdullah Badawi and Sanusi Junid; the only difference was that Anwar became first vice-president for polling the highest delegate vote. Mahathir finished 1990 with him firmly in control but the year was saddened by the deaths of Malaysia's previous prime ministers, Tunku and Hussein. Since the 1987 UMNO elections Mahathir had, in fact, been blessed with few leadership issues and the only excitement UMNO was to face was in the 1993 elections when he manoeuvered the dumping of Ghafar Baba,[241] and elevated Anwar Ibrahim to deputy president and deputy prime minister.

Ghafar had every reason to feel confident about the elections since he had impressed Mahathir and UMNO with his firm negotiating skills that won for the government the constitutional crisis with the rulers earlier in the year. Neither did he seem too worried when he heard rumblings about a possible Anwar challenge for the deputy presidency. Ghafar had conducted himself with exemplary loyalty to Mahathir especially in the 1989 Ampang Jaya by-election when he held the fort for the nation while Mahathir underwent heart bypass surgery. The by-election was especially important since Ghafar had to campaign for a MCA candidate, in a predominantly Malay constituency, who was pitted against Malay veteran Harun Idris who stood on a Semangat ticket. MCA won but many said it was a 'sympathy' vote for the unwell Mahathir. In contrast, Anwar Ibrahim, an UMNO vice-president, was overseas during the by-election campaign and played no part in the historic constitutional crisis.

Nevertheless, as Finance Minister, Anwar had the good fortune of being in the news often since he wielded enormous influence right across the business and economic spheres of the country. Consequently, he appeared to possess more social and intellectual flair to the ultra-elite than the simple Ghafar. As former ABIM head, he also attracted conservative Malays who perceived his Islamic image

moderated in his ministerial portfolio. Ghafar did too but more with the older set. It was a showdown which pitted a younger generation of politicians against veteran party leaders. The issue as it were, was a search for a successor to Mahathir who unfortunately for Ghafar, favoured the younger Anwar. In many ways the 1993 UMNO elections were a Mahathir campaign for change and marked a watershed in Malay politics that symbolized his modernizing vision of the future. He liked what Anwar said when the latter echoed his own views about 'parochial village politics' – the comfort zone of many a traditional leader whose politics revolved around immediate *kampung* issues.

Anwar campaigned on the Mahathir slogan of the *Melayu Baru* (New Malay) that envisioned a more dynamic and confident approach to national issues.[242] When nominations closed in September, Anwar received 145 to Ghafar's seven. Ghafar conceded defeat and Anwar was duly elected deputy president unopposed. Ghafar was naturally disappointed because he had been initially assured by Mahathir that he was his preferred deputy. However, in the run up to the nominations Ghafar was piqued by Mahathir's constant repetition of an Anwar bid rumour. It was to dawn later on Ghafar that Mahathir's stance during the campaign was veiled support for Anwar. The year 1993 greeted a refreshing forbearance for cross-ethnic relations – gone were the days of anti-Chinese rhetoric.

At the UMNO general assembly, members nodded with approval as Mahathir extolled the virtues of the English language; in his message, Mahathir said English education was 'a language of prosperity'. Proposals for branch campuses of Australian and English universities were enthusiastically endorsed by UMNO and welcomed by the Chinese who foresaw a trend towards more liberal education and flexibility on the use of non-Malay mediums of instruction. Apart from the *Melayu Baru* and the *Melayu Korporat*, Mahathir envisioned the 'global Malay' – a modern, faithful Muslim, competitive and committed to his vision of socio-economic development of *Wawasan 2020*.

The *Barisan* had another good year in 1994 when it won control of Sabah after four years in the hands of the opposition *Partai Bersatu Sabah* (PBS) or the United Sabah Party. The PBS loss was a technical default caused by the defection of three of its assemblymen to the *Barisan*. It had actually won twenty-five of the forty-eight seats in the state elections earlier in the year but its majority dissipated with the defections giving a majority of twenty-six seats to the *Barisan*. The four years that Sabah had been under PBS, had been a particularly

unpleasant time for the state due mainly to Kuala Lumpur's uncooperative attitude which resulted in bureaucratic delays for federally-funded projects in the state. The *Barisan* win also underlined a consciousness (for the obvious benefits) among Sabah's *bumiputras* for a closer alignment of their economic destiny with that of their counterparts in west Malaysia.

The *bumiputras* were finally to share and identify their lot with the NEP reforms which had been stagnant for them during the PBS tenure. UMNO on the other hand had also been concerned for the exclusion of Sabah's Malays in mainstream Malay power. Unlike Kelantan, the majority of Sabah's Malays were sympathetic to UMNO since they appreciated that the party was a component of the larger racially-mixed coalition of *Barisan* that had faithfully ensured Malay plurality and power in parliament – a long time agenda UMNO would obviously like to keep a tight grip on and of which the Sabah Malays wanted to be a part. Mahathir was not blessed with an easy ride in 1995. Beneath the buoyant economy lurked some uncertainties. Inflation was creeping up and productivity which had begun to falter since the previous year, began to drop. A less than desirable current account deficit and a sluggish stock market completed a picture of a Malaysia in need of revitalization.

To top it all, Mahathir had to contend with allegations of impropriety and corruption against some of his top officers. Two were his rising *Wawasan* stars namely, Vice-President Muhyiddin Yassin who was sued for misuse of powers over land acquisition when he was Johor's chief minister and the other was UMNO Youth leader and Melaka Chief Minister Rahim Tamby Chik over corruption and a serious criminal charge.[243] Minister of International Trade and Industry, Rafidah Aziz was also investigated for corruption over share transfers to her son-in-law. Even Mahathir and Anwar were not spared; their relatives were implicated in some share transactions as well. Burdened with the obvious loss of integrity, Mahathir wagered on a new mandate and called for fresh general elections in April of 1995 which the *Barisan* won with even greater victory – it took 65 percent of the popular vote – up 12 percent from the 1990 elections. It took 162 seats in the Federal parliament and all the states except (as expected) Kelantan.

The year was also rife with speculation that Mahathir would hand the mantle of power to Anwar sooner rather than later. In September Mahathir said 'I give the party to Anwar. Anwar is my heir apparent. He will take over from me'.[244] The year ended with Tengku Razaleigh

rejoining UMNO and lending credence to rumours of some impending shake-up in the UMNO hierarchy. However, there was nothing firm to indicate that Mahathir was going anywhere. Besides, at the UMNO general assembly the party renewed its loyalty to Mahathir by declaring that there would be no challenge to his leadership nor to Anwar's in the following year's UMNO elections. The UMNO 1996 elections were held in November just weeks short of Mahathir's seventy-first birthday. As expected, it was a non-event as he and Anwar were automatically re-elected. The three elected vice-presidents were Muhyiddin Yassin, Minister of Youth & Sports, Najib Tun Razak, Minister of Education and Muhammad Muhammad Taib, Selangor's chief minister. In the same month Semangat severed its links with PAS and went into opposition in the Kelantan state assembly. But prospects for an UMNO comeback in Kelantan remained only a distant possibility. Rumours that had been rife about leadership changes in 1997 were proved wrong when Mahathir emerged stronger in his leadership as he entered 1998.

Despite being badly bruised by the on-going economic turbulence, Mahathir still displayed remarkable energy in the opening months of 1998. He travelled around the country frequently and wherever he went, he appealed for understanding of the economic difficulties the country was going through. In a way the economic turmoil provided a digression from any imminent challenge to his leadership, as the party seemed unenthusiastic for any leadership drama in the circumstances of the gloomy economic environment. In fact, most people, including the opposition, seemed supportive of Mahathir's efforts to deal with the crisis. He was to comment later that the people were 'willing to set aside self-interest and solidly support the government in overcoming the country's economic problems'.[245]

In 1998 Mahathir was faced with the scandal of his Vice-President Muhammad Muhammad Taib over currency violations in Brisbane, Australia. Though Muhammad got off lightly, his possession of a large sum of money at Brisbane Airport raised the spectre of corruption in the government. While Muhammad was asked to relinquish his chief ministerial position, no action was taken over his position in UMNO nor was it debated at the party's general assembly held in June five months earlier than scheduled. For Mahathir, the UMNO general assembly was one of the most testing periods in his leadership. For months since the outbreak of the economic upheaval, there were allegations of cronyism and nepotism against him and the administration, from the foreign press, the opposition and principally from

UMNO Youth President Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.[246] It was revealed later that Anwar Ibrahim too had expressed similar displeasure to party members[247] especially about Petronas' bailout of Mahathir's son Mirzan whose company was central to the allegation of nepotism.

In spite of Mahathir's assurance that the bailout was purely a commercial decision by Petronas, many people remained unconvinced.[248] In a *Time Magazine* interview, Chandra Muzaffar said the bailout was Mahathir's 'biggest political mistake of his career'.[249] Tired of allegations of cronyism and corruption, Mahathir produced lists of recipients of public tenders, share allocations, etc., at the UMNO general assembly to rebut the allegations of wrongdoing by the government.[250] While Mahathir's response to the allegations was a clever piece of public relations, it did not allay continuing talk of government corruption since the lists had revealed, among the recipients, the names of political cronies and family members of both Mahathir and Anwar and including that of Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. Though it was not revealed how or why the names got to be in the lists, their disclosure confirmed the suspicion that the most privileged were among the recipients of government contracts.

But Mahathir appeared unscathed by the episode since his own name appeared nowhere in the lists but it did backfire minimally on the government because of favours it was perceived to have given to party loyals. Further talk of cronyism and nepotism abated quickly in the two most prominent newspapers, *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*, when their politically-appointed chief editors were removed from their jobs. Mahathir said later that he had been unhappy with the editors as they had allowed the papers to publish unflattering stories about the government and the allegations of cronyism and nepotism.[251] However, the general mood of the people in the tension-ridden period of mid-1998 was not easily appeased. Disapproval of government was manifested in its loss to PAS in July of a by-election in the UMNO-safe seat of Arau in the northern state of Perlis. Mahathir blamed the loss on 'foreign instigators' who, he said, had an agenda to discredit the government.

Though it was only a token loss, the by-election was an expression of the people's disquiet at political impropriety firstly by their rejection of the defeated candidate who was a brother of current Perlis chief minister and secondly by their reaction to Mahathir's continual denial of wrongdoing in his son's bailout by public funds. Hints of UMNO restlessness at Mahathir began to surface in August. The assumption that he would be returned unopposed in the 1999

UMNO elections seemed to hover in some uncertainty. Mahathir's attempt to rehabilitate disgraced former Melaka chief minister Rahim Tamby Chik, was followed quickly with an announcement by UMNO's secretary-general and cabinet minister, Sabbaruddin Chik that the no-contest ruling passed by the general assembly in 1995 was not permanent nor institutionalized. He added that 'we do not forbid any contest, propose any action against challengers or pass any resolution to curb contests for the post of party president or deputy'.[252] He said this inspite of the almost ritualistic reaffirmation of the Mahathir leadership that had been coming repeatedly from around the country. Sabbaruddin had also declared a few days earlier that the ten concession votes for president and deputy president that Mahathir had introduced in 1987 would be scrapped for the 1999 elections.[253]

Mahathir and leadership change

Talk of rifts between Mahathir and Anwar became on-going gossip throughout 1997 and 1998 despite repeated denials by both. Mahathir had assured the nation that Anwar would take over leadership when the time came but added that his 'first goal was to resolve the currency crisis'.[254] However, Mahathir had on many occasions indicated his desire to stay on the job for as long as it took. His personal ambition aside, Mahathir's recent remarks did not confirm a leadership transition to Anwar with the usual certitude. In May the Chinese who had been wary of Anwar publicly endorsed their confidence in Mahathir at the MCA general assembly whose members pledged their loyalty to him and President Ling Liong Sik said to Mahathir following rapturous applause 'We love you, we salute you, we are with you always'.[255]

Since the outbreak of the crisis the foreign press and the international financial community had heaped praise on Anwar for, what the media considered were, his moderate and realistic views and also for his adherence to the remedies suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In contrast, Mahathir continued to be on the receiving end of an international press that had been rarely partial to him. Disagreements between Mahathir and Anwar over the recovery policies had also been made public – always by Mahathir. Mahathir had expressed doubts about Anwar's tight monetary strategy and had called for a rejection of the IMF's recommendations. As the differences started to gnaw on leadership confidence, Mahathir decided to recall Daim Zainuddin, the former Finance Minister and the man best

remembered for pulling the country out of the 1985–86 recession. On 27 June he appointed Daim Minister for Special Functions to assist in the crisis. Which ever way Mahathir tried to mask it, Anwar was clearly subservient to Daim in the triumvirate that was charged with the task of steering the economy to recovery. Following Diam's appointment the persistent talk of a leadership challenge by Anwar dissipated quickly and ended speculation of any immediate plans for Mahathir to step down. But Anwar kept his composure still visibly confident of taking the high office that had been promised him. Meanwhile, Mahathir was praised for his decision by a number of ministers who said such things as Daim 'will be better able to tackle . . . more effective role . . . timely and wise move . . . has the experience . . . his sacrifice for national service . . .'[256] Rumours were again rife of leadership changes, only this time, the talk centred on the possibility of Anwar being side-stepped. There were strong signals that Mahathir was gradually diffusing succession hopes for Anwar.

By mid-1998 Mahathir's confidence was beginning to falter. His occasional outbursts betrayed a façade of a leader seemingly concerned about control and for the first time he displayed genuine worry about the future of his leadership. He had been visibly shaken by the fall of his friend Suharto in May and just two days before he announced Daim's appointment (27 June), he said, citing Suharto's demise 'What I have learnt is that it is possible for foreign people to influence people in the country, agitate them and cause them to overthrow the government'.[257] When his old faithful, Sanusi Junid, chief minister of his home state, Kedah, reported to him about a rumour of a coup against his leadership, he dismissed it[258] but the rumour was enough to spark a round of loyalty pledges.

Mahathir and Anwar's downfall

On 23 July UMNO chief ministers turned up in full force at Mahathir's residence to hear what they thought was about Mahathir's poor health and important party matters. But what awaited them was not altogether unexpected but was still a shock. They were summoned to hear Mahathir explain why he was getting Anwar sacked from his position as deputy leader, deputy prime minister and if the chief ministers concur, expulsion from UMNO. Anwar was inauspiciously overseas being at the time in Washington at a World Bank conference. The chief ministers agreed with Mahathir's decision when they were apparently presented with damning evidence of Anwar's 'inappropri-

ate behaviour'.[259] Mahathir announced the dismissal of Anwar a day after his announcement of the radical capital and currency controls. If he had counted on bigger media reportage on the currency controls than on Anwar, he was disappointed. The media preyed on Anwar as quickly as the hype on the currency controls dissipated. Anwar's dismissal shocked the nation for many different reasons. Because he had been upheld as thoroughly Islamic, the accusations of immoral improprieties that had been so luridly given for his dismissal were received with scepticism. His subsequent incarceration under the Internal Security Act was seen by many as a smokescreen for Mahathir's vendetta.[260] His eventual trial and imprisonment for six years was shrouded with even more political controversy. What was more perplexing was that Mahathir had hand-picked and personally groomed Anwar and declared him to be his successor on several occasions.

Mahathir and democracy

Our next discussion will be on Mahathir's ideas about democracy and how they were reflected in his case against the judiciary and the media. Mahathir said in London in 1987 'democracy has a distressing tendency to get out of control . . . [it] has come to mean individual rights . . . The individual hasn't the right to do what he likes if it hurts the majority.' Ten years later at the UN, he said democracy is 'forced upon everyone whether it is welcomed or not'.[261] Mahathir though avows democracy quite as much as any liberal leader of the west, argues that democracy must be appropriate to the society in which it is practised and may in consequence take different forms.

Developed liberal democracies in the west have often accused developing economies of human rights violations, media suppression and a lack of political transparency, charges that have often been levelled at Malaysia.

We can theorize that though these charges may not be without foundation, they reflect the west's Eurocentric ideals and ignorance of other social and political cultures. In defence of these charges, countries such as Malaysia often argue their justification in the name of political, security and economic stability. Democracy basically subscribes to the right of the citizen to basic freedoms.[262] However, it has come to mean many more things: from the right of access to liberal and alternative political choices, to a tolerance of extreme expressions in the name of human rights, etc. No one disputes however that there

ought to be limits on freedom but the extent of the limits is the issue that is most bothersome to leaders such as Mahathir. Variants of democracy – 'guided', 'responsible', 'liberal', etc. – have been used, examples of which we will see in the judiciary crisis.

The judiciary crisis

As an issue of democracy we will see how the judiciary, a component of the system of checks and balances, found itself relegated in the Mahathir executive. The independence of the judiciary had, in fact, bothered Mahathir for sometime. He did not believe in sharing his powers with anyone, much less with high court judges who had powers that could potentially undermine his leadership. Judges in Malaysia are appointed by the king on the advice of the prime minister and cannot technically be terminated except for gross misconduct. The constitution however has provisions for impeachment of judges by means of the Special Tribunal composed of judges appointed by the government. Malaysian judges enjoy enormous prestige and the government had traditionally avoided their public chastisement. The enviable security and immunity the judges enjoy contributed to their hubris and was partly responsible for their confrontation with Mahathir.

The constitution provides a basis of fundamental principles according to which Malaysia is governed. It gives to the Supreme Court the burden of final scrutiny for all constitutional issues and parliamentary statutes. By implication, the Supreme Court prevails over parliament. Mahathir however was not impressed by legal arguments about judicial autonomy or the omnipotence of the constitution. He held the view that supreme power should be in the hands of the parliament. He made this point in his success at exacting amendments to the constitution for the royal crises which he contended could not happen without the two-thirds majority his government held in parliament. In other words, since only parliament can change the constitution then the highest power of the land must lie with the Prime Minister and the parliamentarians. If provisions of the constitution or the law are used to revoke government acts, Mahathir can circumvent them legislatively by the majority he commands in parliament.

It seems Mahathir often wonders why parliamentary conclusions cannot be accepted over contrary legal opinions. This led him to problems with the media first then inevitably with the judiciary. In 1986 he expressed disdain when his orders as Minister of Home

Affairs to revoke the work permits of two *Asian Wall Street Journal* correspondents were overturned by the High Court on appeal. Breaching accepted norms, Mahathir openly attacked the decision of the judges who he said were 'fiercely independent'.[263] In response, retired Lord President Mohamed Suffian Hashim, not unknown for his criticisms of the Mahathir government, led a campaign for judicial inviolability that had the support of many people including former Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and former Lord President and later Sultan of Perak, Raja Azlan Muhibuddin Shah. However, Mahathir had reasons to worry even when High Court decisions were partial to him.

When the issue of UMNO and its elections went before the High Court in June 1987, there were anxieties for a balanced and impartial outcome. The highly sensitive nature of the case threatened to lay bare any latent judicial bias there might have been towards UMNO or the government. So when the court ruled in favour of the government, its integrity was called into question first by the defeated Razaleigh and second, strangely, by UMNO which had wondered if the mild rap over its knuckles might have betrayed a pliant judiciary. In an attempt to show their independence, the judges had gradually become bolder in expressing their views in public, some bordering on politics. Mahathir though was not impressed and implied the judiciary failed to be 'just and fair' in its duty. Additionally the Attorney-General, Abu Talib Othman, issued a public warning to the judiciary 'the independence of the judiciary does not give judges freedom to express their sentiments or personal opinions . . .'

In 1987/88 the government had been challenged in a number of politically sensitive cases that had arisen over changes in the Official Secrets Act, the Internal Security Act and the Criminal Procedure Act that greatly boosted the prerogatives of the state. The courts had also been inundated by a raft of cases involving corruption, malfeasance of office and over abusive and excessive authority. Mahathir had earlier lost his appeal to the Supreme Court when his appeal for the reinstatement of a revocation order against another foreign journalist was denied. Furthermore he had to resort to constitutional amendments to correct flaws in the ISA detention orders when well-known barrister and DAP stalwart Karpal Singh successfully argued his appeal against his detention. Mahathir said Karpal's appeal had been won by judicial bias. Mahathir justified the constitutional amendments on the ground that 'the courts have decided that in enforcing the law they are bound by their interpretations and not by the reasons

for which parliament formulated these laws . . . lately the judiciary had seen fit to touch on matters that were previously regarded as solely within the Executive's jurisdiction. When a judge feels he has first to prove his independence, then justice takes a back seat . . . we find incidents where some members of the judiciary are involved in politics . . . they often bend over backwards to award decisions in favour of those challenging the government'.[264]

Judicial propriety meant that public defence of criticisms against the courts was eschewed. Since the criticisms had raised serious questions about the personal integrity of the judges, the lack of response exhibited disturbing signals to the public. Firstly the judiciary was seen to be truly subservient to Mahathir. Secondly divisions among the judges were suspected since there appeared to be no unanimity for an appropriate response to repudiate the criticisms which in this case clearly warranted a response. For those who wanted to assert their independence, they ran the risk of provoking further rancour from an agitated prime minister and in the process unwittingly exposed themselves as elements unsympathetic to the government. For those who would do otherwise, they would be looked upon as mere apologists of the state. Public confidence in a taciturn judiciary was obviously at a low point and the task of 'damage-control' was left to Lord President Salleh Abas. What followed next was Mahathir's sleight of hand that changed the face of judicial autonomy.

A meeting of all the country's twenty judges was held in Kuala Lumpur in early 1988 and they decided that the best way to respond to the government's criticisms was for Salleh to write a confidential letter to the King and copied to all the Malay rulers. Salleh's letter which basically expressed concerns regarding the Executive's relationships with the judiciary, said the judges were 'disappointed with the various comments and accusations . . . those unfounded accusations . . . be stopped.' Unfortunately for Salleh the letter backfired when Mahathir demanded Salleh's immediate resignation. Salleh's refusal to resign triggered a crisis within a crisis for Mahathir. With the dispute out in the open now, the public and the judiciary reacted with disbelief at the severity of the attack on the Lord President. Mahathir's call for Salleh's resignation had no legal precedence and since the issue was relatively minor, it was apparent that Mahathir was out to control the judiciary.

When Salleh refused to go Mahathir initiated an impeachment Tribunal that was headed by Salleh's successor, Abdul Hamid Omar and a panel of six judges, two of whom were from Sri Lanka and

Singapore. The charges against Salleh generally alleged breaches of professional conduct by participating in politics and criticizing the government. The case was further complicated when five judges of the Supreme Court were dismissed by Mahathir when they allowed Salleh's writ of injunction against the Tribunal. The sequence of events surrounding the suspension and impeachment proceedings of what was now six justices was seen as having effectively emasculated the judiciary of autonomy. Three of the judges won their case and were reinstated. For Salleh his strong and often valid arguments against his impeachment failed to move the Tribunal and he was subsequently removed as Lord President. Three days after the end of the impeachment, the Supreme Court ruled against any further injunctions against UMNO and effectively paved the way for the restoration of UMNO to its original status.

To many the court's action was its final humbling gesture to the leadership of Mahathir. During his drive against the judiciary, Mahathir's skilful handling of the media minimized public airing of negative reactions and provided an impression of a nation generally approving of his cause. There was widespread belief that he encouraged the UMNO Youth to demonstrate against the Malayan Bar Council when over a thousand lawyers petitioned their disapproval of his tampering with the judiciary and the elevation of Abdul Hamid Omar to Lord President. All said and done, it must be said that Malaysians like strong leadership and they do not seem to mind if that meant dealing a firm hand to the judiciary. In a footnote to this, Lee Kuan Yew who also had his day with judiciary independence in Singapore, paid tribute to Malaysia's judiciary when, in answer to a question if the Anwar debacle could see an overthrow of Mahathir, he said that was highly unlikely due to the 'checks and balances' of the government.[265]

Media suppression

When Mahathir took office in 1981 the media was an established avenue for contrary views and he recognized it for its potential to undermine his leadership. He therefore did not appreciate a free press that is jealous of its right for unrestrained expression, neither did he see it as being essential to either good government or even to democracy. In an essay written for the *New Straits Times* in July 1981 he said that press freedom was unsuitable for Malaysia and claimed that 'journalists often distorted news for self-serving and nefarious

objectives'. In a speech to ASEAN journalists in 1985 he reaffirmed his distrust of press freedom and said 'freedom too can corrupt and absolute freedom can corrupt absolutely . . . so long as the press is conscious of itself being a potential threat to democracy . . . then democratic governments have a duty to put it right'.[266] Mahathir's bias might have stemmed from his observation of the west where its largely free press seems preoccupied with negative news about the government. But more accurately it has to do with his own view of democracy which he and his Asian contemporaries have frequently declared should be limited. One may wonder why Mahathir even fretted about the local media since virtually all of them are government-owned or controlled and none seems likely to have the temerity ever to step on his toes. Mahathir's views on the media go back to 1974 when as a senior member of the cabinet he was instrumental in introducing controls on the media. In that year parliament pushed legislation for Malaysian majority ownership of all newspapers.

In a nutshell, the legislation was intended primarily to facilitate the government's takeover of most of the country's major newspapers for the purpose of bringing about a more compliant media. The government's foray into newspaper ownership started innocuously enough in 1972 following its buying of an 80 percent stake (through state-owned Pernas) of the British-owned and Singapore-based *Straits Times*. The intention was eventually to establish a new Malaysian offshoot of the newspaper to be based in Kuala Lumpur. The acquisition looked logical from the point of view of the need for a national Kuala Lumpur-based press and for its viability under the NEP corporate ownership policy. With the onset of the 1974 legislation for majority ownership, Pernas acquired full ownership of the paper and transferred its entire interest to Fleet Holdings, an UMNO investment company which renamed the paper the *New Straits Times*. The acquisition of the *New Straits Times* started a trail of other media acquisitions so that by the late 1980s the government through its proxies in the *Barisan*, Fleet Holdings and Pernas brought its control of newspapers to twelve and three major television channels.[267]

Explicit in its extensive control of the media was intolerance of any dissenting views of the government and to that extent the media was expected to be supportive, if not sometimes, complimentary of Mahathir's leadership. What was still worrisome for Mahathir was that he had no control over foreign journalists operating in the country. For that he passed the Printing Presses and Publications Act in 1984 which contained punitive penalties apart from censorship and

outright banning of the offending publication. However, the Act did not entirely have the desired effect. Firstly Mahathir ran the risk of condemnation by the foreign press if he was seen to act too severely against the offending journalists. Secondly he wanted to show some semblance of democracy and that meant he had to overlook some infractions which he would not normally with local journalists. Since the issue of a fair press is often contentious and their conclusions subjective, the court can find itself at odds with the government, as it was in the case of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in 1986.

Mahathir banned the paper when it published details of a share swop involving Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin. The Supreme Court however overturned the ban and ordered the reinstatement of the work permits of the paper's two reporters, much to the chagrin of Mahathir. In despair, he alleged that the papers responsible were involved in a Zionist conspiracy against his leadership and vowed 'to take action against anybody whose thinking was not in line with the majority view'. Mahathir's remarks incredible as they were, received wide coverage in the *New Straits Times*. Mahathir's control of the press was given further force in 1984 by an amendment of the Official Secrets Act of 1972. The amendment which was first tabled at the time of the conflict with the rulers in 1983, broadened the definition of official secrets to any government information not officially sanctioned for public distribution.

It essentially stifled publication of any views other than that of the government's. For that matter the discretion of the law is so wide that the government can act *carte blanche* on any material it chooses and put the holder of information in serious jeopardy for mere possession. Several journalists of local newspapers and a correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* were prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act for reasons that were seemingly politically-motivated.[268] In addition to the Printing Press and Publications Act and the Official Secrets Act, the government also has at its disposal the Control of Imported Publications Act that empowers the Home Minister (Mahathir) to ban or censor any imported publication deemed to be indecent or prejudicial to the national interest. The Act has been used frequently to invoke short-term suspensions of a number of influential foreign publications such as the *Asian Wall Street Journal, Far Eastern Economic Review, Time and Asiaweek.*

But the law that is perhaps the most controversial and draconian of all for the local media is the Sedition Act. It was enacted originally in 1948 to forbid criticisms of Malay royalty but expanded over the years

to prohibit the mass media from any discussion of Malay special rights and maligning the judiciary. The weight of the Act was shown in a case involving a DAP member of parliament Lim Guan Eng who was jailed for three years in August 1998 for publishing and distributing a pamphlet that criticized the judiciary for dropping charges of rape and corruption against Rahim Tamby Chik, UMNO Youth Leader and former chief minister of Melaka.[269] Lim also had the book thrown at him under the Printing Presses and Publications Act for malicious and false news in the pamphlet. As a result of the conviction, Lim was stripped off his parliamentary seat and deprived of all his accrued pensions. The case was a highly charged one and in an earlier hearing, even Mahathir's daughter and well-known writer, Marina testified in his defence. Since Lim, who was promptly adopted by Amnesty International as a 'prisoner of conscience', was an opposition MP, a senior official of the party and son of DAP Leader, Lim Kit Siang made it all the more obvious that there was much more to his conviction than the mere pamphleteering he was accused of.

Mahathir though, is not all anti-media. On the contrary, he appreciates its role and his savvy of the media is taken for granted going by his characteristic alertness (or paranoia as some would have it) of veiled news reports. A case in point was his unease over the frequent and favourable reports on Anwar Ibrahim in the *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* which Mahathir viewed as an oblique campaign for an Anwar leadership bid. The resignations of the papers' Chief Editors that followed in July 1998 was believed to be instigated by Mahathir. He commented shortly after, coincidentally at the opening of an *Utusan Malaysia* facility 'I may be wrong in my observation but I found that we are always seeking for something unfavourable in the country to report . . .'[270] Mahathir had successfully manipulated public opinion through the media over a number of leadership and constitutional issues and saw the media as crucial to his hold on power. However, he expected the media to be unquestionably supportive of his government. To realize this, he believed it was well within his rights to prohibit by legislation where such support was denied him. Unfortunately, the outside world and the opposition did not see it quite that way but so long as the Malaysian public was indifferent, Mahathir was arrogantly unapologetic.

Mahathir, Islam and politics

Mahathir probably had done more than his predecessors in exerting an Islamized image in his government. He was eager to identify his leadership with the fervour of Islamic politicization that had become increasingly pertinent in world politics. At home he was pressured by disillusioned but well-meaning Muslims who felt it was time for the government to adopt a more modern political economy that was based on Islamic socialism and universality. The merits of a globalized exchange of ideas appealed to Mahathir as he appreciated their worth in educating local religious leaders and as an intellectual counterweight against extreme *dakwah* revivalist movements. But Mahathir was caught in a dilemma of his own. Like so many leaders of his era, he too was caught at a crossroads that saw religious purity and modern secularism part company. He had shown by his many actions that he had agreed with V.S. Naipaul who says in his book, *Among the Believers* 'It was the late twentieth century modernity – and not the faith – that would supply the answers in institutions and economic systems.' When Mahathir took office in July 1981 he did not place Islamic reforms high on his agenda despite a resolution calling on the 'purity of Islam' at the UMNO general assembly a month earlier. Until he brought Anwar Ibrahim into his government some nine months later, his apparent lack of initiative was put down to his own inability to drive the reforms himself. Anwar's credentials as former leader and founder of ABIM, fitted well with Mahathir's scheme to orchestrate a moderate view of Islamic principles in government, politics and the economy. With Anwar's help, Mahathir was able to quickly formulate new Islamic policies that were received with wide approval from the country's *ulamas* (Muslim scholars) and, at the same time, mollified republican Islamists who saw his policies as less partial to royal prerogatives.

At the following year's UMNO general assembly Mahathir took centre stage and announced his commitment to Islam to 'ensure that the Malay community truly adheres to Islamic teachings'.[271] In the same year the Islamic Teachers Training College was established. As promised, the International Islamic University was founded in 1983 with substantial grants from the government and the Saudi Arabian government. Due to its multinational student body and academic staff, the language of instruction in the University is English. It has earned an international reputation since it is recognized as a leading centre for Islamic legal studies and the humanities. Mahathir further

sanctioned the setting up of the Islamic Development Foundation in 1984 and the Islamic Insurance Company in 1985 which year also saw the incorporation of increased Islamic studies in the secular school's curricula.

The establishment of the Islamic Bank was perhaps the most important milestone in the Islamization process. Established in 1984, the bank had been eagerly waited for by rural and devout Muslims who had frequently expressed their distaste for conventional and usurial banking. So strong was the support for the Islamic Bank that it became the nation's third largest bank within four years. The bank and the university lifted Malaysia's international Islamic profile but it was not matched by extremists' demands for a more rigorous religious administration in the Mahathir government. For example, the new laws that prohibited Muslims from entering gambling casinos did not however disallow Muslim investments in gambling establishments such as in the country's Genting Highlands. Likewise, Malay ownership of beer halls was allowed although alcohol consumption in public places by Muslims was, strictly speaking, not permitted. Case argues rather unfairly that Islam is 'intrinsically anti-developmentalist' and points for evidence to Malaysia's generous expenditures on religious buildings, conference centres and 'overseas travel' (presumably, he means the *haj*) rather than on capital accumulation and productive investment.[272]

Most of Malaysia's institutional buildings are concentrated appropriately in the capital Kuala Lumpur and they are a relatively recent phenomenon but most, if Case cares to note, are private-sector generated developments. On a per capita basis, Malaysia has, in fact, fewer mosques than Singapore[273] and certainly a fraction of the 8,000 religious buildings there are in Bangkok, Thailand. But it is true as Case implies that the Malays have a propensity for style that, in a way, coincides with Mahathir's own view of modernization of the administration in the capital where in the era of booming property development, government religious offices are housed in modern high-rise complexes, some tempered with elaborate Islamic arches and motifs. Major hotels are similarly decorated and some have gone fully *halal* in response to an increase in Malay and Muslim clientele.

But not everything went according to Mahathir's plan. Non-Muslims were upset by what they saw as an overzealous application of certain regulations they maintained had no religious significance, such as the suspension of school meals for all students during the Ramadan fasting month. Non-Muslims also felt that the increase in social

services such as in the broadcast time for Islamic programmes, the extravagant spending on mosques and handsome prizes for the Koran Reading Competition, were an unfair burden on their taxes. The expansion of the religious bureaucracy under the Religious Affairs Department (*Jabatan Hal Ehwal Islam)* of the Prime Minister's Department was reflected in its size: in 1968 it had just 8 staff, by 1987 it grew to 608.[274] Mahathir assumed a more pro-activist role in Islamic affairs by exercising direct oversight over Islamic matters in the National Council for Islamic Affairs that had the absolute right to interpret Islamic law and jurisprudence. In 1983 the council recommended amendments to the penal code and the criminal procedure code that provided punishment for religious disharmony among Muslims. While Malaysia allowed freedom of worship, non-Muslims were prohibited from proselytizing amongst Muslims. Over the years however there had been instances of *murtad* (Muslims adopting another religion or backsliders) and the government had reacted with some degree of tolerance. But the government had since taken a sterner view and sought to punish converts and proselytizers alike under the proposed Apostasy Bill.[275]

In response to a call for compassion for Muslim *murtad* by the visiting Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University, Mohamed Sayed Tantawi, a minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Abdul Hamid Othman assured that 'Muslims need not fear persecution if they wish to renounce Islam'.[276] Mahathir's attempts to shape his long-term preoccupation of modernization to conform with the demands of conservative habits of Islamic orthodoxy, did not always have the expected outcome. In one case, his rebuke of religious officers for their audacious arrest of three contestants in a beauty pageant was reacted to with some disbelief by the *ulamas* who thought that he ought to be supportive than be critical of the arrest. Mahathir's intervention subsequently saw the removal of the Mufti of Selangor, Ishak Baharom. Malaysia's multi-religious population demands of Mahathir his firm hand in ensuring forbearance between the religions but more acutely on the Muslims whose religiosity has in the past given him cause for concern.

The frequent invocation of Islam for many public ceremonies exemplifies the people's solidarity with the ideology and spiritual leadership of the state. Mahathir's presence at religious ceremonies where he was always appropriately attired in Malay *baju* (long-sleeved baggy shirt) and *songkok*, demonstrated superficially his moral and religious rectitude, something the Malays consider crucial in

leadership legitimacy. In the early 1990s the government introduced greater Islamic politicization in its bureaucracy as issues of religious appropriateness in government policies came under intense scrutiny. In 1990 for instance, as Mahathir reviewed the results of the NEP, Malay elites were concerned that Malays were being 'refashioned' to meet the objectives of the NEP at the expense of Islamization. They said a drive for modernization in the NEP failed to address Islamic injunctions about *riba* (the earning of interest) or Muslim employment in businesses whose practices were against Islamic law, e.g. banks, restaurants that served non-halal food and gambling establishments, principally the turf clubs, where Malay employment was quite large.[27]

The government really had no answer; there was no quick solution to the problem as it concerned the important economic need of employment and one's free choice. On 17 July 1991 the NEP was replaced by the NDP (National Development Policy) which expired at the end of 2000. Over the years the government had built its Islamic image by lifting its international profile, staging grander conferences and Koran Reading Competitions. Through the mass media and Friday prayers, religious officers exhorted the virtues of *ibadah* (worship or religious duty) and counsel Muslims to discard the perceptions of *takdir* (fate), as their existence on earth was not merely in preparation for *dunia akhirat* (the next world) but should also be forward-looking and enterprising. Mahathir attributed the weak socio-economic position of the Malays to their over-indulgence and their misunderstood fatalistic view of Islam that, he said, was responsible for the lack of competitive spirit in the Malays.

That is the view he articulated in his book the *Malay Dilemma* written nearly three decades ago. There is little evidence to suggest if his views have undergone much change since then. Although he preferred to treat religion as a private matter, he found Islam, as did his predecessors, to be a rallying call for unity. He frequently cited the inventive glory of Islam in the sciences and literature to support his modernist vision of the nation. In the final analysis, Mahathir appeared to be an upright Muslim but he did not want to portray his leadership as just that of an Islamic conservative.

Mahathir and the economy

Mahathir's vision of economic growth was to combine rapid industrialization with active Malay participation including, a more Islamized socio-political outlook. The emphasis was on modernization, with

newer technology and management systems and a competitive attitude – these made up the essence of his new Malay *korporat* integral to his Vision 2020 and in more practical terms, the cornerstone of his Multimedia Super Corridor that saw fruition in the 1990s. He did not accept that business was the domain of the private sector and perceived the government to be among active market players. He sought also to privatize government business but in quite a different way.

Privatization

Mahathir's push for the privatization of state-owned enterprises was spurred by the static performance of several *bumiputra* enterprises that had been acquired under the aegis of the NEP. He announced in January 1983 the transfer of some government enterprises to the 'private sector'. His policy was summed up with two slogans: 'Malaysia Incorporated' and 'Privatization'. He explained that the former means that 'Malaysia should be viewed as a company where the government and the private sector are both owners and workers together . . .' The latter he says, means 'the transfer of government services and enterprises to the private sector . . . private business(es) and enterprises are usually profitable . . .'[278]

Unlike privatization policies initiated in Britain, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, where whole industries were sold to private investors, Mahathir's privatization pursued a policy of minority private equity in publicly-owned enterprises. The policy was at first received with cynicism and speculated as a disguise of impending government monopolization of profitable private sectors such as public transport, telecommunications, television, etc., with private equity participation. However, the government's release of its first television licence for commercial operation TV3 to Fleet Group, an UMNO-majority owned company showed that, while there seemed overt support for UMNO's interest, there was some genuineness in the policy. The government was actively seeking minority shareholders and indeed it had, for joint-ownership of a number of major enterprises such as Khazanah Holdings, HICOM, Renong, UE and all the major newspapers under the Fleet Group umbrella.

A disturbing feature of the privatization policy was its implication of crony capitalism where party faithfuls were favoured with substantial if not controlling interests in these companies. Government divestiture of its majority interest in Renong to Halim Saad was an

example. In 1985 Malaysia's national carrier, Malaysian Airline Systems (MAS) was privatized but the non-tender of the 40 percent stake in the company landed in the hands of its Chairman, Tajudin Ramli whose purchase of the equity was widely believed to have been funded by UMNO. Riding on the back of steady economic growth, public reaction was minimal.

Recession and restructuring

After four years in the job Mahathir achieved a GDP of 19 percent, a jump of more than twice the figure of 1960 the vitality of which was driven by the petroleum industry. However, a worldwide slump in mid-1985 resulted in recession for Malaysia as commodity prices plummeted followed by drastic losses in foreign exchange resulting in a drop in per capita GNP from RM4,937 in 1984 to RM4,327 in 1986. Mahathir argued for a major initiative by the government to boost industrial growth. He formulated an Industrial Master Plan and under it came the primary instrument of government policy – the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (HICOM) – for the purpose of channelling capital investments into industries. To stimulate foreign investment some categories of investors were exempted from the 70 percent local equity requirement of the NEP.

Some companies manufacturing products without local raw material were allowed 100 percent foreign ownership and permanently exempted from the requirement to restructure their equity to local or *bumiputra* investors. An example is the British Petroleum-owned giant Malaysian Tioxide facility at Cherating, Terengganu that opened in 1994. In its efforts to stem the effects of recession, the government put in place a policy of constraint in its spending – the operating expenditure in the 1986 budget was scaled down by 6 percent and development expenditure reduced by a quarter from the previous year's budget. More significantly the military budget was slashed by close to 40 percent thus putting on hold many of the modernization plans for defence. The timing of the recession could not have come at a worse time for Mahathir, as we would recall, the 1985–86 period was fraught with major political problems – the royal crises, the Musa-Razaleigh challenge and the critical UMNO elections. Besides, not unjustifiably, the government had also been accused of widespread conflicts of interest and crony capitalism.

Still Mahathir came out of the recession relatively unscathed – GNP rose from the minus 1.0 percent in 1985 recovering modestly to

2.1 percent in 1986. Considering how quickly the economy was able to recover there was approval across a wide spectrum of his leadership. Daim Zainuddin, the then Finance Minister who was credited with the recovery was, ironically, at the forefront of conflict of interest allegations which invariably rubbed off on Mahathir's reputation. By January 1988 it was realized that among the sixty weak state-owned enterprises, HICOM had been the biggest drain on government resources losing to the tune of RM278 million. Plans were made, if it was not possible for restructuring, to either close or privatize it. Though some of the problems with HICOM had to do with low productivity and poor plant utilization, currency values were largely responsible.

Generous Japanese loans that were provided for the company at low interest rates initially, translated later to as much as 30 percent at rising *Yen* values against the *ringgit* crippling HICOM and many other industries during the recession. The government eventually pumped in RM532 million in HICOM for debt repayment and restructuring. Kedah Cement, a HICOM subsidiary was the largest recipient of the government bailout. Another was the Perwaja Steel in Terengganu, a highly integrated steel mill that had been built with Japanese money and Nippon Steel technology. What was expected to be a profitable operation since it is fuelled by low-cost natural gas produced from offshore Terengganu, it turned out to be an investment disaster as the plant's design was inappropriate for Malaysian low-grade and lumpy iron-ore.

After restitution from Nippon Steel and major modifications to the mill, Perwaja accumulated by 1989, liabilities of over RM2 billion that was too big to absorb by HICOM and became consequently, a company under the Finance Minister Incorporated. The most ambitious of all projects to come under review of the Industrial Master Plan was the Proton national car project that was launched in 1983 with a 70 percent HICOM and 30 percent Mitsubishi partnership. The first car was unveiled two years later on 1 September 1985. In 1988 the company managed to sell only about 24,000 units of the 90,000 units it had projected.[279] The dwindling domestic market due to the recession, poor design and the inability to break into the huge American market were some of the reasons given for its progressive losses from RM46.5 million in 1986 to RM52 million in 1988.

Charged with drastic restructuring of Proton, Mahathir agreed to the replacement of its top local managers with Mitsubishi's Japanese personnel and provided further subsidies for a 25 percent increase in

production in response to a reviving domestic market. HICOM's 70 percent interest in the Proton auto project could conceivably be the largest state funding for a so-called privatization undertaking. Mahathir was criticized for proceeding with the project unilaterally without adequate consultation. As its most enthusiastic patron, Mahathir ordered the Proton project be given the highest priority that included a continuous injection of public funds to meet persistent budget shortfalls. Although the public found national pride in Malaysia's first car, concerns were expressed for the high public subsidy that had been put in to sustain production. To protect its domestic market, the government raised duties on imported vehicles but critics say the Proton prices were not within easy reach of ordinary Malaysians.

Recovery

In September Mahathir went to Europe to promote the Proton and for continuing free access for Malaysian trade when the European Common Market was to come into being in 1992. In London Mahathir reciprocated a British promise of access with a £2 billion purchase commitment for the sophisticated Tornado fighter-bomber and the Rapier anti-aircraft defence systems and other advanced weaponry that had been on hold since the onset of the recession in 1985. By early the following year the economy was well on its way to complete recovery as success on restructuring began to show and the prices of commodities trended upwards. Malaysia's seemingly unassailable path to another economic boom however was stopped in its tracks by the threat of American trade barriers under the US Generalized System of Preference (GSP). At stake was the imminent loss of the American market as Malaysian exports would no longer enjoy tariff concessions and, at home, the news threatened the possible loss of some 75,000 jobs. For some time Malaysia had been under scrutiny for alleged unfair trade and labour practices. While the US Trade Policy Staff Committee began hearing Malaysia's GSP petition in Washington, Mahathir gave assurances, in his address to the United Nations general assembly and to investors in his travels around the United States, Malaysia's commitment to democracy and fair trade. Eventually, Malaysia's GSP status was renewed with hardly any dissent. By 1988 Malaysia achieved a GNP of 8.6 percent and was truly on its way to phenomenal growth.[280]

The NECC and the NEP reconsidered

In 1990 Mahathir announced that the NEP had fallen short of fulfilling its objectives in *bumiputra* equity ownership but despite that, introduced changes to relax foreign ownership and allowed full repatriation of foreign capital. Though short on corporate ownership, the Malays had made impressive inroads in economic power. Some were better able to capitalize on the new opportunities and gained quite unfairly, far more advantage than others. The wide disparities of wealth that were manifested caused the less advantaged Malays to suspect that the inequity of the NEP was due to their lack of party affiliations. Another disgruntled group was a large majority of non-*bumiputra*s who complained that the benefits of the NEP reforms to which they were also entitled did not materialize and suggested that this was due to the over-generous concessions accorded to the *bumiputra*s. In the mid 1980s as *bumiputra* enterprises began to bloom, Chinese capital began to lose ground and non-Malay businesses wondered if any further protection for the Malays was absolutely necessary.[281]

Non-*bumiputra*s had questioned government statistics on the ethnic share capital, wealth distribution and the NEP's 30 percent corporate targets for the Malays.[282] MCA and Gerakan had estimated that the NEP had already achieved its Malay corporate target by 1983. The non-Malays had also said that they had understood the NEP was to be a temporary and remedial policy and that once the NEP objectives were achieved, the system of ethnic 'affirmative action' quotas should gradually be dismantled in fairness to all citizens. The government was not unconscious of the shortcomings of the NEP. Just two years before when it became clear that the NEP was biting far too much at the expense of the non-*bumiputra*s, the government convened an all-party, social and professional groups into the NECC (National Economic Consultative Council), with the primary task of putting in place a policy to replace the NEP.

The NECC was divided into five committees – Tan Peng Khoon from MCA was made chairman of the Committee on Data Standardization; Royal Professor Ungku Aziz was Chairman of the Committee on Poverty; UMNO Vice-President Abdullah Ahmad Badawi headed the committee on Social Restructuring; MIC secretary-general D.P. Vijandran was Chairman of the Committee on the Economy; and finally the Chief Executive of Permodalan Nasional Bhd., Khalid Ibrahim became the Chairman for the Committee on Human Resources. However, as was the case with the NEP, issues of data collection and statistical

techniques and analyses of the NECC became a closed-door affair and fell under the same cloak of secrecy with attendant penalties for any violations of the Official Secrets Act. Except for very general press statements, very little was known about the workings or the progress of the NECC until Mahathir decided when a report could be made public.

That report finally came at the end of May 1989. Apart from reporting on the accomplishments and shortcomings of the NEP, the NECC recommended priorities on issues of national unity, economic growth and productivity. However, the general tenor of the report was received with some dismay for it still emphasized the primacy of *bumiputra* economic upliftment rather than on the multi-ethnic development that was widely expected in the NECC going by its multi-party and – ethnic composition. It was believed that a speech Mahathir had made two weeks prior had influenced the final release of the report. He said 'The Malays have not yet achieved a standard of development that will enable them to compete well with the other communities in the country, or with the rest of the world . . . As long as the achievements of the Malays have not reached a level . . . we have not achieved the full targets of the NEP . . . UMNO is still around to ensure that the Malays are protected'.[283]

Mahathir was not unmindful of the political cost of the tiresome rhetoric of Malay rights and especially of Chinese capital support that could dwindle if he continually proved too partisan to UMNO special interests. Fortunately the eventual implementation of the NECC recommendations was quite impartial in tone and pointed to the very balance he needed for all-round acceptance and viability. In 1990 Malaysia chalked up an impressive 9 percent growth and a jump of 76 percent in foreign investment over the previous year. The economy sailed smoothly throughout the early 1990s except for a glitch in 1993 when the Bank Negara reported a 'paper loss' of RM12.8 billion in foreign exchange trading. Shortly after, the government announced cutbacks in official spending leading many to suspect that the foreign exchange losses were significantly higher than reported.[284]

In 1993–94 Malaysia concentrated on trade with the booming economies of Japan, Taiwan and Singapore which represented by 1995, 75 percent of its total world trade, up 26 percent from the previous year. In the following year, coinciding with the inauguration of the metropolitan Kuala Lumpur's LRT (Light Rail Train), the government sold KTM (*Kereta-api Tanah Melayu* – Malayan Railways) to Renong Consortium for US$800 million. The sale sparked controversy as it was seen, yet again, as another example of favourit-

ism to the Halim Saad company as it was the sole bidder for the purchase.[285] The year ended with the completion of the national showpiece and big-budget Petronas Twin Tower said to surpass the height of every megalith in the world. In early 1997 shortly after the government announced its plan to assume control of the multi-billion Bakun Dam Project, credit agency Standard and Poor's downgraded Malaysia's credit rating in the wake of a weakening *ringgit* and the banks' holding of large non-performing loans. Malaysia's fortunes seemed poised to slide downhill from then on. In July it was hit by the biggest financial crisis ever.

The 1997–98 Asian economic crisis

In July 1997 Malaysia was shocked when its *ringgit* plummeted sharply on the foreign exchange market amidst huge sell-offs of shares on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE). The financial crisis which had only days earlier hit other Asian economies, impacted profoundly on Malaysia's economy with a suddenness that was neither expected nor its reasons completely understood.[286] The crisis continued unabated for months and reversed the once robust economy to woeful negative growth within a year.[287] One year on there was still no respite to the onslaught. For Mahathir the crisis was one of the greatest challenges he has had ever to face in his long political career.

The crisis was of such epochal dimensions that it called into question the very nature of Mahathir's leadership that had been sustained on the probity of economic development. As the crisis continued to enfeeble the economy, the more desperate the cries became for quick remedies and the more the pressure on Mahathir to deliver. Mahathir blamed the country's woes on outside influences – from Jewry to the flaws of the international monetary system. He said with despair that there was 'total anarchy' in the international financial system and recovery for his country was uncertain since it was in the hands of 'outside forces' and therefore beyond his control.[288] His frequent eclecticism and refusal to acknowledge some responsibility for the inherent flaws in his government, led the foreign media to suggest that he was a leader in a state of self-denial at the reality of the crisis.[289] The largely unfriendly foreign press though resentful of his government's strict controls on press freedom, continued to give him inordinate but not always critical coverage.[290]

Thirteen months into the crisis Malaysia was still grappling with the turmoil. The economy had contracted by 6.8 percent in the second

quarter and was predicted to be in negative growth for the rest of the year. Malaysia's per capita income had dropped dramatically to US$1,500 from US$5,000. The country's credit rating by Moody's was downgraded to junk status just slightly above Thailand and Korea's. Nearly RM600 billion (US$150 billion) had been wiped out of the KLSE (Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange). In July 1998 the MTUC (Malaysian Trade Union Congress) reported that 40,000 workers had been retrenched since the start of the crisis. The government predicted unemployment hitting 300,000 within a year if the economy faltered further. Ironically, Malaysia had about a million foreign workers and, as of July, was processing applications for 60,000 more for the manufacturing and plantation industries.

The mood in the country was surprisingly upbeat as Malaysia put in place final touches for what was expected to be the most spectacular Commonwealth Games ever to be staged by a Commonwealth country. Suddenly on 1 September Mahathir announced the suspension of all foreign exchange trading effectively rendering the *ringgit* non-convertible overseas. An estimated RM11 billion from Singapore alone was returned within two weeks.[291] It was later revealed that while Malaysia's entire cash holding in the country was RM20 billion at the time, Singapore held RM32 billion on time deposits in its banks offering considerably higher interest rates.[292] Mahathir regarded Singapore's holding of such a huge amount of Malayian currency hostile to Malaysia's economic recovery. When the cash holding was ultimately returned to Malaysia, upon Malaysia's imposition of the currency controls, it followed with a dramatic recovery of trading on the KLSE.

To ease liquidity in the banking system the Bank Negara lowered its SRR (Statutory Reserve Requirement) to 6 percent from 8 percent thereby allowing banks to make available RM8 billion more in loanable funds at a lower rate. The capital controls that had been put in place brought a much needed respite to the economy and registered by 20 September a RM20 billion surplus in Malaysia's current account. Though financial pundits have decried the curbs as impractical for a long-term cure, Mahathir was nevertheless elated at their immediate returns and declared 'Malaysia has chosen to become a heretic . . . we are going to do our damnedest to succeed, even if all the forces of the rich and the powerful are aligned against us . . . for the capitalist free markets, it did not matter if the unfettered and unregulated free market had destroyed the economies of the whole region'.[293] Debate on the options for monetary policy in the prevailing economic and financial crisis divided the Mahathir cabinet.

The erstwhile Anwar camp favoured a tight credit-squeeze and its attendant high interest rate regime to discourage borrowings. This was the IMF prescription for embattled Thailand, Indonesia and Korea, all recipients of massive IMF loans. The alternative, advocated by Mahathir and Daim, was an interventionist one that said the government had the moral duty to control the cost and supply of money to ensure the survival of the productive sectors of the economy. This Mahathir–Daim option was primarily for the release of more money to prime a limping economy and was justified on the back of the lack-lustre, year-old Anwar-type policy. But for the immediate resignations of the governor and deputy of the Bank Negara in protest at Mahathir's intervention, the currency controls elicited hardly any public reaction and if there were any, it counted little as the public appeared ready to accept any panacea as offering hope.

To gain international confidence, Mahathir appointed on 11 September top US merchant bankers Salomon Smith Barney as advisers to the government. Part of the assignment was to raise some RM41 billion in international capital markets through the government's vehicle Danamodal to fix troubled banks and public companies. To advise on the acquisition of bad debts, he appointed J.P. Morgan and UBS, another well-known US investment banker which was also charged with the task of raising US$2 billion by a global bond sale (previously intended as an Anwar–Daim roadshow until pre-empted by Moody's downgrading) through the other government's vehicle Danaharta. In reply to questions about his change of heart about foreign influence (the foreign advisers), Mahathir said 'We are not anti-foreign; we appreciate any help . . . as long as it will fit in our scheme of things'.[294]

It is believed that Salomon Smith Barney was brought in to drive internationally the soundness of Malaysia's capital controls which apparently was a philosophy the merchant banker shared with the Mahathir–Daim option for Malaysia's troubled economy. No one, of course, pointed out that he could not get any one more Jewish than Salomon et al![295] The downside of the controls was their impact on customary free trading patterns, import payments and most worrisome of all, the one-year freeze on the repatriation of foreign investment profits. But Mahathir seemed unafraid of the negative consequences as he thought the problems were administrative and temporary in nature and they would be more than offset by the gains achieved.

Since being saddled with the economic and financial turmoil, he has eschewed the free-market economy and once remarked 'Free market is fine but devaluing other people's currency and moving out capital

rapidly, resulted in great destruction of our economy'.[296] Days after Anwar's dismissal, Mahathir decided to take on the additional responsibility of Finance Minister and for a while everything seemed to fall into place as the country appeared re-assured by Mahathir's leadership and mollified by moderate gains in the financial restructuring. But all did not really augur well for the economy as the nation was roused with political uncertainties following the arrest of Anwar amid his riotous *reformasi* street demonstrations on the eve of the closing of the Commonwealth Games. Mahathir said cryptically in his maiden speech as president of UMNO on 28 June 1981: 'My burden is my burden and the burdens of others too shall be my burden . . . I am proud to hold this post. A person who holds such a post would normally strive to perpetuate his position or at least his influence on it. Often too an attempt would be made to establish a dynasty. If at all such a post is relinquished, it would normally be through pressure and compulsion from certain quarters'.[297]

Economic colonization, nepotism and cronyism

By early 1998 the economic contagion seemed to have run its course but not public impatience. The people went on a fault-finding spree, raking up facts that were previously condoned or ignored. In Indonesia such a spree culminated in the downfall of President Suharto amid bloodshed and an economy in total disarray. Malaysia wondered with trepidation if its neighbour's fate would befall on its leader, as allegations of nepotism and cronyism invited unabated, furious media publicity. They were also raised at UMNO's general assembly in June 1998 by UMNO Youth President Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, an Anwar loyalist, in an atmosphere of bitter debate that later led to unpleasant consequences for him. Mahathir tried to calm the tension by diverting to his usual diatribe against western economic domination.

He warned: 'All Malaysians should work together to defend the sovereignty of our nation. What we are doing is actually defending our independence . . . those who created the economic turmoil that we are facing are just like the colonisers, who once colonised us . . . colonial control of land by military strength can no longer be accepted by societies worldwide . . . Control through currency trading has similar effects . . . there are people who believe that only by changing their government that the economic problems could be resolved . . . attacks will not cease until power is surrendered to foreigners, until the country is colonised again'.[298] He dismissed claims of corruption, cronyism

and nepotism as reasons for the turmoil in Asia since other more prosperous countries in East Asia, he said, too had these problems but conceded that Malaysia lacked adequate transparency. He maintained that if a country had shown healthy growth, it must mean sound economic policies and competent management. Implicit in this argument was that any lack of transparency in the government was irrelevant in a climate of general prosperity. Mahathir managed to wriggle safely out of the smouldering cauldron of the UMNO general assembly but not without copping a few dents on his reputation.

Non-political alliance

Though beleaguered by a series of crises, Mahathir was so far quite composed; his long experience had taught him to deal with problems proactively and hedged his bets for a worst-case-scenario. While it was well within his power to silence opposition drastically and constitutionally, there was an area that was beyond politics and outside his immediate jurisdiction which could cause his quick demise – the military. We might take a moment briefly to see what Mahathir had done to isolate the military. One of the things Mahathir's predecessors had done early in their career and he had done likewise, was to cement a tight alliance with the military. Imperial Britain had imparted a tradition that excluded the military in its political process. In Malaysia, a strict demarcation of civilian-military jurisdiction had existed over a wide area of social activity – the military for example had its own shops (after the old British NAAFI), designated housing and other social amenities. The military had often been called to assist in civil emergencies and occasionally in civil disturbances. So, the military besides its defensive role had the arsenal and manpower to influence political outcomes if it wanted to. The non-political traditions of the military and police meant that there had never been open political participation by police or military officers. But that did not mean that the political leaders of Malaysia were naïve about possible military political ambitions. For that reason successive Malaysian leaders had established close relationships with the military elite through the appointment of relatives and trusted associates to the most senior military posts.

The reasons justified for establishing such relationships also gave cause for allegations of nepotism and favouritism. For example Tunku appointed his nephew General Tunku Osman Jewa the first Malayan Chief of Staff. Razak appointed his wife's cousin General Ghazali

Seth to General Officer Commanding Peninsular Malaysia who was also brother-in-law to Hussein who later promoted General Ghazali Seth to Chief of Defence Forces. Hussein appointed his brother Lt-Gen. Ja'afar Onn to deputy Chief of Army. When Mahathir became Prime Minister, he appointed his brother-in-law, Maj-Gen. Hashim Mohamed Ali to General Officer Commanding Peninsular Malaysia and later promoted him to full General and then to Chief of Staff. Since three-quarters of the nation's military officers and 80 percent of other ranks were Malays, the political security of the government was seemingly assured. However, divisions among senior military officers during the royal crises bothered Mahathir enough for him to re-vamp the military high command. He made sure that there was a solid and reliable military force always on his side and he ensured that by the appointment of more close friends and relatives to top military positions.

Mahathir and foreign affairs

In diplomacy, Mahathir's record had been remarkably controversial. He had the dubious reputation of a 'love-hate' relationship with several countries notably, the USA, Great Britain, Australia and Singapore. Mahathir was utterly unpretentious and spoke his mind, often bluntly and usually about western ideas. But he always appeared polite and friendly to foreign visitors with whom he often displayed his keen sense of humour. While he appeared like that publicly, he apparently avoided the trappings of social clubs, golf, etc., the sort of things that one associates with the diplomatic social circuit. But he seemed more relaxed with Asian and Middle Eastern leaders and maintained an almost brotherly relationship with Indonesia's Habibie and Brunei's Sultan Bolkiah. Mahathir cannot be counted as one who had a lot of diplomatic savvy and as such was indifferent to international image-building.

Though his English speaking style lacked the flair of his predecessors, his speeches were entertaining since he revelled in controversial topics and that might explain his frequent invitations to international speaking engagements. Despite his constant tirades against the foreign media, he was a popular target for news people with whom he relished brief repartees. Mahathir had been critical of the western influence on Asia Pacific nations and took the occasion of the Asian economic crisis to launch one of his usual diatribes against the west. At a World Bank/IMF meeting in September 1997 he lashed out at American

currency speculators calling currency trading 'unnecessary, unproductive and immoral' and declared to the alarm of the financial community that currency trading should be made illegal.

His bellicose ways won him little sympathy from the western media, in the US in particular. A diplomat in Kuala Lumpur says 'He's fighting too many fights on too many fronts'.[299] Bearing under the strain of the economic flare-up since it began in 1997, Mahathir had more than his share of outbursts. For instance, in response to western criticisms about human rights, he said on July 27 that Malaysia would propose a review of the outdated Universal Declaration on Human Rights as it was no longer suitable. Washington reacted angrily to the suggestion while Asian countries were receptive to it. A couple of months later he took a swipe at the European Union for barring Myanmar in the Asia-Europe Dialogue. But many western companies, including American, were grateful to Mahathir for standing up to the US government for its threat to impose sanctions under its Iran–Libya Act on countries that had signed a multi-billion dollar gas development contract with Iran.

A US Senate team that had visited Kuala Lumpur to investigate Petronas' involvement in the contract came away convinced that the sanctions were inappropriate and believed the sanctions had also deprived sagging American oil equipment companies of the opportunity to engage in one of the biggest contracts in recent years. Consequently, American companies whose expertise would see them taking the lion share of the business, promptly linked with the project consortium comprising France's Total, Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's Petronas. US Republicans dismayed at their government's softening position towards Iran, were appeased by arguments that support for the project dispelled US anti-Islamic sentiments and showed American approval for Malaysia as 'a force for moderation in Islamic circles', in the words of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.[300]

Mahathir's dare with Cuba though did not translate into similar success as the businessmen he had taken with him on a visit there in early October, were still wary of the threat of sanctions on their firms under the US' Helms–Burton Act. Malaysia however was amply compensated with the goodwill Mahathir had generated with Cuba and the several African countries he had toured in August 1998. Diplomatic relations with South Africa were especially good where Malaysia had substantial investments. Mandela was also to recall Malaysia's generous contribution of US$13 million to his ANC (African National Congress).

With ASEAN, Mahathir's style was more subdued and typified the

cautious behaviour seen in neighbourly relations in recent times. And like most leaders of the region, Mahathir was upbeat about ASEAN and East Asia whose per capita income he predicted would be equal to that of Europe and North America within a couple of decades of the new millennium.[301] At the 1997 opening of the 29th ASEAN Economic Ministers' meeting Mahathir reflected this optimism when he reminded his audience that the ASEAN Free Trade Area had helped boost intra-ASEAN trade ten-fold to US$155.2 billion since 1987 despite 'the dangers . . . of the exploitation of the weak by the strong and powerful . . . a distinction between speculative short-term hot money operations and serious investments . . . in the name of free, . . . longer term vision . . . towards greater economic integration amid future uncertainties'.[302]

Admittedly, Mahathir had come a long way from those heady days of his 'buy British last' policy precipitated by a hasty British policy that curtailed preferential trade benefits for Malaysia[303] against which he had retaliated by refusing to attend the 1981 and 1983 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), a stance that disappointed many of the Commonwealth leaders who held Malaysia to be a leading and respected member of the Commonwealth. Called 'recalcitrant' for shunning the 1993 APEC by Australia's then Prime Minister Paul Keating, Mahathir wondered why a similar rebuke was not levelled at John Howard, Australia's Prime Minister for his snub at both the 1998 APEC and the South Pacific Forum. Instances such as these, though seemingly minor, give Mahathir cause to hit back at the west for its condescension of Asian leaders. Mahathir's early anti-western bias underpinned a trade policy that shifted its focus away from the west to what he called the 'Look East' policy.

However, given Malaysia's heavy reliance on western trade, the policy shift was seen more as an attempt to court closer ties with Japan and Korea rather than an attack on the west. He had long admired the work ethic of the Japanese and the South Koreans and their government-corporate network in the *keiretsu* and the *chaebol* respectively which he had hoped to emulate for his country. He rapidly established various trade and technical agreements with Japan and South Korea. The Malaysian government encouraged the learning of Japanese and Korean and urged workers to adopt the work ethic of these countries while Malay businessmen were advised to learn Japanese management practices. Japanese and South Korean companies were favoured for the construction of major projects notably, the US$233 million Penang Bridge to Korea's Hyundai (inspite a lower

French bid) and the UMNO headquarters and the prestigious Dayabumi high-rise to Mitsubishi which also later collaborated with HICOM to form *Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional* (Proton) – the Malaysian national car project initiated by Mahathir. As Malaysia's economy surged ahead with the steady inflow of Japanese and Korean investments, it vindicated Mahathir's 'Look East' policy and silenced those who had scoffed at the policy as mere ranting and grandstanding. In keeping with Malaysia's Islamic image, Mahathir takes special care to maintain the best of relations with Muslim and the third world countries to which he travels frequently. Malaysia is a strong voice for Islamic welfare and was one of the first countries to speak out against injustices to Bosnian Muslims to whom Mahathir offered resettlement in Malaysia. Mahathir's diplomatic priority though is closer to home and with his immediate neighbours. Among all its neighbours, Malaysia probably has the best ties with Indonesia. Indonesia's President Habibie once described the two countries as 'one breath, one racial group' and added that people of both countries 'were very close and even looked similar'.[304]

With Singapore, Mahathir had, in fact, got on quite well with its leaders until recently. Up until the official joint-opening of the Second Link in April 1998 – the shared-ownership of the second causeway linking Singapore to Malaysia – when Singapore's Premier Goh Chok Tong declared Singapore and Malaysia were 'like brothers', relations had been good.[305] A month earlier Mahathir reported that he would study a proposal from Singapore for 'an economic union'.[306] Relations however suddenly deteriorated. Ominous signs of tensions started when ministers on either side got into what was a relatively minor spat over the exclusion of Malaysia in an excursion brochure produced by Singapore's Rotary Club for a forthcoming international event. Both also aired their respective unhappiness on the provisions of the two existing Water Agreements that have expiry dates in 2011 and 2061.

While this was debated, disagreements broke out over Malaysian Railway's refusal to re-locate its customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) from its leased base at the Tanjong Pagar Railway Station, in inner-city Singapore, to the new CIQ facility at Woodlands which sits at Singapore's immigration departure point leading to the Johor Causeway. Malaysia took exception to a series of Singapore exhibitions showing Malaysia in an unfavourable light which it said were staged at an inappropriate time of their relationships. Tensions came

to a head on 16 September when Lee Kuan Yew launched his memoirs, *The Singapore Story: The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*. Lee admitted to a question by a journalist that the key theme running through the book is 'the fight against Malay extremism'.[307] The book which had been extensively excerpted in Singapore's *Sunday Times*, hit a raw nerve with Malaysia and provoked a barrage of protests from a number of Malaysian ministers for its 'distortion of facts' 'hidden agenda', etc. Mahathir who up to then had rarely gone public with his feelings about Singapore was clearly aggravated and remarked that Singapore had been 'undermining Malaysia' for some time and its actions would have a 'bad effect' on Malaysia.[308] In contrast, Goh Chok Tong, since his 'brotherly meeting' with Mahathir at the opening of the Second Link last April, had kept himself well away from the fray.

Summary

A thumb-nail sketch of Mahathir would depict him typically as the urbane, winsome Malay bureaucrat, rather than the cantankerous, impatient autocrat that he is often seen to be. He is, of course, all of that. He is calm and reticent in public but quite the opposite in small groups. He is highly opinionated and sometimes inclined to uncompromising eclecticism. What makes him 'untraditional' is that, he is almost obsessed with modernization. He shuns the niceties of *adat-kehalusan* for its perceived passivity and its sanctimonious inflexibility that characterizes die-hard traditionalists. But despite his emphasis on modernity he includes traditionalists within his inner circle too. In national unity, he performed admirably to hold UMNO together after the Musa–Razaleigh debacle and is seen as a pillar of strength in the eyes of his partners in the *Barisan*.

But he defied the subtlety of *adat-kehalusan* when he publicly disgraced former faithful and heir-apparent, Anwar Ibrahim. His move against Anwar gives weight to the belief that he is vindictive and merciless towards political foes. But he was equally praised by some for decisive courage and quick action against Anwar. He believes in a highly centralized management system that has worked well but at the expense of initiative and independence among his subordinates. His is a crisis-driven leadership: hardly a year passes without him being caught in some controversy. But equally he revels in crises. He sees his battles as necessary steps in asserting the values of his particular brand of leadership. He believes in untrammelled power and is subservient to none. For that he was in strife with the sultans and

the judiciary – two institutions that were humbled by constitutional re-writing. His confrontation with the rulers was seen as a bold defiance of the ruler-follower convention, a sacrilege to tradition. Yet he was quietly applauded for his guts and for the discipline he instilled on royalty that many thought was long overdue. He brought the full weight of the law against DAP's Lim Guan Eng for a minor judicial slurring but allowed himself to overhaul the judiciary with utter impunity. But far from being simply the uncompromising patriarch, there is a humane quality in the man. He cares for the ordinary person in the street, the poor and the old. He travels around the country frequently with little fanfare. He is immensely popular especially so with the Chinese and the Indians. Unfortunately, his treatment of former friends and political foes has caused many to regard him with suspicion especially among conservative Malays. His control of the media, general suppression of criticism against him and the government and his increasing authoritarian style has not endeared him to the public. He says Malaysia is democratic but many of his practices, including his free use of the ISA, show otherwise. Mahathir however does claim to believe in democracy albeit by his own selective definition.

In diplomacy, he has certainly made an impact. While he is well-known for his anti-western diatribes, he maintains a professional relationship with foreigners at home and abroad. Contrary to a misconception, Mahathir is actually liked by many foreign governments and the multi-national companies for his 'straight-shooting' style. It would be fair to say that he has not made many friends in the diplomatic circle though he has maintained extraordinary relationships with Brunei and Indonesia. However, comments by past Presidents Estrada and Habibie about Anwar's arrest had caused a strain in his relations with them and expressed by their absence at the 1999 APEC meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Anwar's arrest and also of his assault by Malaysia' police chief, Rahim Noor in prison drew loud protests by many people far and wide. The US reacted by downgrading Clinton's presence at the impending APEC meeting to 'unofficial' which was wildly believed to mean that there was not going to be any official meeting with Mahathir.

His biggest difficulty in foreign relations remains with Singapore. Due to his centralizing approach to management, he tends to involve himself with every diplomatic issue. He has the tendency to reproach foreign individuals in the same way he ticks off his own people. As a result in the on-going spat with Singapore over a number of minor

issues, he has found himself the brunt of criticisms levelled at him from Singapore and the foreign media. Mahathir's performance in the economy has been stupendous and this is the single most important reason why the people's faith in him has been so steadfast. Partly also he has always kept his focus on the need for the NEP that was at the heart of Malay interests, something every Malay politician realizes is imperative for political survival. His plans for rapid industrialization did not take off as quickly as he had hoped for because, paradoxically, of the NEP's idealistic but unrealistic demands for Malay primacy in economic development. While he soldiered on he made incremental changes, slowly deferring from the single-minded approach that had provoked such hostility from his elite ranks to a more consensual unity. Mahathir's changing style was demanded by his realization of Chinese economic input and the political patronage of his closet allies. His 'Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy' image soon gave way to talk of capital cronyism. Mahathir now became the target of the very kind of smears he had accused Tunku of. Except that now such crony practices are justified as necessary political patronage which really was not inconsistent with the brotherly spirit of Tunku's time. Mahathir is after all a breed of the Tunku era though the 'moulting' process had bleached him into a far more successful *Melayu Baru*.

In postulating the hypothesis, Mahathir displays tremendous 'mana' and tenacity in overcoming near political oblivion. While on the sidelines he acted with a certain degree of resignation that he had missed the chance of ever regaining prominence. But that was a superficial observation for, if a leader were truly destined, he would emerge regardless. He learnt his lesson well so that his rehabilitation was carried out with the greatest quality of *kehalusan* and *cerdek*, ultimately earned for him the greatest reward he could wish. One could put it down to predestination, even divine intervention to explain the turning of fortunes. But to the Malay psyche there was valid acceptance of an innate perception of predestination of leadership. Because, after all, if the people had not believed that he was leadership material, he would not qualify no matter what he did.

However, we also need to reflect on the fact that nobody knew just how Mahathir was going to turn out. This is one of the paradoxes of leadership selection. So, what else is there to go on besides an intuitive judgment and an intrinsic sense of perception. That perception is obviously innate and combines a fatalism, one would argue, to accept and believe that he 'had' to be and indeed was the manifestation of

predestination. How much of the Mahathir idealism is going to be passed on to his younger brood of western-educated Malay *korporat* of his *Wawasan 2020* team is hard to say. How much of the modernizing vision is he left with is best assessed by the events of the new millennium.

Chapter 8

Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (1981–)

Beyond enduring power

Moody's upgrading of Malaysia's financial health in October 1999 boosted not only the stock market it also triggered even more speculation of a snap election since Mahathir could go to the people with more confidence as it were. But a number of issues had bothered Mahathir and he had to tread cautiously. Prime among them was the business community notably heavily-indebted *bumiputra*s who had looked to Mahathir and Daim Zainuddin for redemption not unlike the generosity of NEP. It would have been politically inexpedient for Mahathir to help them while allegations of bailout for his own son, Mirzan, and Halim Saad of Renong and MAS' Tajudin Ramli were still fresh on everybody's mind. He pleaded with the Chinese to help salvage Malay business, and the Chinese business community responded positively and said that 'it's only right that the stronger help the weaker'.[109]

The Chinese in return exacted concessions on the issue of the banks' merger by asking that there should be a total of eight which Mahathir readily conceded. That effectively put paid to Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin's recommendation of six which he had previously declared was the government's official position. In a country where the Chinese virtually own most banks, the question of merger was an obvious concern because it literally meant that some banks were asked to close down. Daim felt that the proliferation of banks in recent years was the cause of unhealthy competition that had contributed to the large non-performing loans that had emerged during the financial crisis and for which Malaysia had been severely criticized by the IMF. Daim no doubt felt rather undermined being over-ridden so publicly by Mahathir.

The issue may look innocuous enough but it provoked unease in the public's mind as such public disagreements, reminiscent of events

leading to Anwar's dismissal, underlined uncertainty in economic reforms. But more importantly to the Malays, Mahathir's hand on the issue of banks' merger was seen as yet more pandering to Chinese interests. Certainly it did nothing to alleviate rumours that he and Daim were at odds. Mahathir has always regarded himself as the one and only spokesperson of the government and has frequently, much to the annoyance of the public, given conflicting and contradictory statements on areas he clearly could not articulate. Mahathir despises challenges of any kind from his colleagues who have long learned never to cross swords with him in public. Whatever differences there were in the cabinet, they were kept under wraps for Mahathir was more concerned about easing himself into election gear with as little friction as he could possibly bear.

The 1999 general elections

The 10th parliamentary elections that were called on 29 November 1999 were a showdown essentially between Mahathir's *Barisan Nasional* and the new opposition coalition of the *Barisan Alternatif* (BA) led by its *de facto* leader, Anwar Ibrahim. In a country where voting is compulsory for the ten million registered on its electoral register, there was obvious interest in the contest which had been eagerly waited on after two years of bitter campaigning for the 193 parliamentary seats at stake. A win for the ruling coalition would be a clear approval of Mahathir's efforts at restructuring the battered economy and a vindication of his treatment of Anwar. It would also be seen as an endorsement of his continued leadership and would put to rest any initiative of a leadership change. Besides, there was no speculation that a *Barisan* win or loss was going to see him abdicate his UMNO presidency. This was all good for Mahathir as it offered voters an image of stability in the UMNO-led government coalition.

As the economy was showing strong signs of recovery, the focus was firmly on an emotional Mahathir-Anwar contest. Mahathir's election campaign that was conducted during Anwar's on-going trial was largely incident-free and fairly well received around the country. Meanwhile, Anwar who was serving a six-year jail sentence for corruption since convicted in April 1999 faced a further trial on a charge of sodomy. As in the first case this charge too received worldwide publicity. By then the Malaysian public had seemed quite fed up with the Anwar saga as they were resigned to another guilty verdict for what was widely seen as a sham trial of relentless malice by Mahathir.

There were questions of natural justice and even the need for this second trial since the allegation of sodomy was *subjudiced* and given extraordinary publicity (in almost comical fashion)[310] during the first trial on corruption.

Malaysians had had to endure yet more unwelcomed publicity, this time on a matter they considered too distasteful and coy to discuss openly, considering also the grave sin sodomy is in Islam. In any event, Anwar's *Keadilan* (Justice) Party made the most of his incarceration especially on the issue of the black eye he received at the hands of police supremo Rahim Noor. Much of *Keadilan*'s campaign was directed at Mahathir personally, on his authoritarian style and his alleged conspiracy against Anwar. Anwar's decision to team up his party with the Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the partisan Malay Islamic party PAS gained wide appeal as it offered an assurance for a more moderate and racially-balanced coalition in the *Barisan Alternatif* (BA). But PAS had its own agenda and ran a campaign that projected itself as a party that was more Islamic than UMNO. In the process, it managed to lure many UMNO members especially the more devout and those sympathetic to the Anwar cause.

Anwar's allegations of corruption and cronyism against the Mahathir government had won the sympathy of rural Malays who had been disillusioned over still unfulfilled objectives promised by the NDP (National Development Policy when expired at the end of 2000 was replaced by the Vision Development Policy) and the widening income gap between them and the urban Malays. *Keadilan*'s campaign against Mahathir's cronyism struck a chord with rural and poor Malays who were angry at the persistent patronage of the same few Mahathir sycophants. This was the issue Anwar had raised (through UMNO Youth President Ahmad Zahid Hamidi) at the 1998 UMNO general assembly which triggered the open signs of his discord with Mahathir.

As the economy turned the corner, Mahathir directed his energy to corporate restructuring and strengthening of his middle class rather than to rural concerns where several development projects had been at a standstill since the economic crisis thereby alienating him even further from his grassroots support. Despite the show of optimism by the BA coalition, most people expected a *Barisan* win but with a much reduced margin than the four-fifths majority that it won in 1995.[311]

The results

Mahathir's *Barisan Nasional* won 148 of the 193 parliamentary seats but its percentage of the vote fell to 56.5 percent down from 65 percent previously. Not unexpectedly, UMNO came away with fewer seats winning only seventy-two seats, some sixteen seats less than in the 1995 polls. UMNO seats in eleven state assemblies shrank to 175 from 231. Most of the losses were at the hands of PAS which gained twenty-seven more seats. Not only did PAS retain Kelantan, it also snatched Terengganu from UMNO making it the single largest blow against the government. DAP won nine seats, Parti Bersatu Sabah three and the biggest disappointment was *Keadilan* which won only five seats, one being Anwar's former seat that was contested by his wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. Mahathir blamed the poor showing to 'the lies, bribes and ungrateful Malays'.[312] The Mahathir government was obviously grateful for the strong support of the non-Malays especially the Chinese without whose votes the *Barisan* would have surely lost its two-thirds majority in parliament.

But the fall of Kelantan and Terengganu to PAS and its impressive penetration in Perlis and Kedah were seen as a personal setback for Mahathir. The message to him was that the Malays there had been won over because of their belief that PAS was more Islamic and more representative of Malay concerns. But Mahathir acknowledged that he had ignored signs of discontent that had been made plainly and loudly during the campaign. He had misconstrued them to be part of the Anwar hype. He had promised more development to Kelantan and Terengganu but the people there rejected it in favour of an administration rooted to Islamic fundamentalism. Mahathir sensed that there was now a real threat that PAS would displace UMNO as the flagbearer of the Malays. Ironically, PAS's perceived unity in the BA coalition seemed to have dissipated almost immediately after the elections. The non-Muslims who account for about 35 percent of Malaysia's twenty-two million people obviously viewed the party with some disquiet since PAS had overtly called for an Islamic state administered by the *syariah and hudud* laws. The Chinese and Indian coalition partners in the *Barisan* also worry that the struggle to regain Malay support would drive UMNO politicians to sport a more Islamic outlook, a development that would not go down well for the multi-party partnership that has prided itself for racial and religious moderation for nearly five decades.

Time to go?

At the height of the economic plight in 1997 Mahathir did the honorable thing, it appeared, and declared that he would step down once the economy stabilized. Since introducing his far-reaching capital controls a year later, the economy did, in fact, recover albeit sluggishly. Throughout most of 1999 rumours were rife that he would announce his retirement ahead of the elections since the country was clearly on a recovery phase. When he did not, the country seemed reconciled that Mahathir had every intention to stay on indefinitely since he had not openly endorsed his deputy Abdullah Badawi as successor. The Mahathir leadership appeared on the wane in early 1997 but paradoxically the elixir that was needed to re-energize his jaded brilliance came also in 1997 with the economic crisis for it provided him just the opportunity to introduce a range of aggressive but risky range of capital and currency reforms. The risks were worth taking since their success at halting the menacing path of the crisis must have rejuvenated the 'old man' shown by the furious pace he kept in the election campaign. With this renewed vigour he deservedly staked a claim for a further mandate of his premiership in the general elections of 1999. Since the Anwar debacle Mahathir has shown ever-increasing resilience of his staying power mainly to prove that he is a good judge of people or is probably afraid that a withdrawal from power is somehow perceived as defeat. He counters rumours of retirement by even more public appearances and overseas travel. He makes no secret of his intention to enjoy power in his new and dazzling prime ministerial residence at Putrajaya for as long as it takes.

The outcome of the 1999 general elections had something to do with his vacillation, if indeed he had harboured any thought of retirement. Firstly he thinks he owes UMNO the duty of winning back those Malays lost to PAS and to a lesser extent, to *Keadilan*. The ignominious trouncing at the hands of PAS he realized had less to do with any Islamic re-awakening but rather it was an expression of resentment against UMNO and to him personally. He also upset his Malay followers for his willingness to listen to Chinese concerns over issues of parity and for his attempts to salvage selected Malay businesses.

But Mahathir was caught between two priorities; one to win the elections for which he sorely needed Chinese support and two to set the economy on an even keel and for that he needed to help rebuild Malay businesses devastated by the economic crisis. Mahathir's

credibility and the very idea of NDP and its agenda for Malay betterment were not only under threat but were severely tested as he had to decide what was more important to win the elections.[313] Mahathir thought Malay economic issues were on-going and not a prime election issue. He therefore placed his bets on the Chinese and won. But winning the elections was only the first step towards resolving his problems – there were more to come.

Towards the new millennium

As the new millennium dawned he was again faced with disturbing signals of his leadership; this time he had fewer options. He is ever mindful that to remain at the top he has to be propped up by his loyal elite many whom he had nurtured during the halcyon days of economic growth but whose wealth these days are somewhat in disarray. This is an issue he has to address fairly quickly. He also needs the Malay grassroots without whose numbers the UMNO at ground level will be in even more strife. The allegations of cronyism and corruption still humming since Anwar's arrest seemed to have affected Mahathir in a positive way as he had shown that he is not beyond acquiescing to change. He ensured that UMNO Supreme Council members were elected for their clean reputation and had no baggage that could embarrass UMNO at its most crucial time of its struggle for Malay unity.

To make his point he appointed Datuk Dr Mohammed Khir Toyo, a political lightweight but known for his honesty, to the job of *Menteri Besar* of Selangor, a position that was vacated by the disgraced incumbent Muhammad Muhammad Taib former UMNO vice-president who was, to everyone's consternation, re-appointed to the UMNO vice-presidency. Mahathir has always been supportive of big business dreams such as Malaysia's Silicon Valley, the Multimedia Corridor and the National Car project but he has never been known to have a personal interest in any business and as such, he is above the fray of misdeeds that had long swirled around UMNO bigwigs. The disturbing factor is that a lot that he has tried to achieve is viewed as partiality to the interests of corporate kingpins and for his own power-building that does not translate into the kind of earnestness the ordinary Malays look for in economic equity.

The UMNO general assembly staged in May 2000 to elect the top brass of the party was virtually a non-event as UMNO's Supreme Council had earlier agreed that the positions of both the president and

deputy president that is, Mahathir and Badawi were not to be contested. That the party had endorsed his leadership without a fight, further reinforced Mahathir's belief in his own resilience and the wide support he thought he still had in the Malays. But he is not unaware that there are now less Malays who hold him in high esteem as seen by the occasional public protests in sympathy for Anwar that has since taken on an international 'Free Anwar Campaign' to free him of his fifteen years' imprisonment. The nation and the world were shocked when a nine-year sentence was handed down to Anwar; the sentence to run consecutively to the six years of the first conviction. When asked if the sentence was fair, Mahathir answered brusquely 'because the court thinks that is the right punishment'. And when asked if there was a political conspiracy against Anwar, he replied 'We know and the general public knows that he is the one who is involved in some conspiracy to try and promote himself to be the prime minister sooner than it was thought possible for him.'[114] As if exonerated of all blame, Mahathir was praised just days later by IMF of his handling of the economy and particularly of his capital controls.

With the economy poised to hit above 6 percent and a further upgrading by Moody's anticipated, Mahathir appeared to have finally earned a respite. While he prepared to consolidate unity within UMNO, he was confronted by a claim for payback from his Chinese supporters. The Chinese and the older party guard had always wanted him around because he could be trusted to keep his loyalty but more importantly, he stood for *status quo* in his dealings with the non-Malays and they therefore felt confident that he would treat their claim in the spirit it came. But they were wrong. Their payback call was a bombshell as it hit at the core of Malay rights. A Chinese lobby, through Suqiu an apolitical group comprising some 2,000 Chinese organizations, made some eighty-three claims on a whole range of Chinese interests.

Said to have been presented to Mahathir in August 1999, the Chinese petition became public nearly a year later in 2000 when an MCA executive member, David Chua, gave an interview in Hong Kong. What irked the Malays was a part of the petition, the now-famous 17-point that asked for parity rights and the phase-out of special Malay rights. Long considered an out-of-bounds issue and sacrosanct in the constitution, Malay rights have for the first time been questioned. The Malays hurled innuendoes of treason at the Chinese and threatened to stage a massive rally to show their displeasure. Mahathir played down the emotion by publicly declaring the inviolable right of the Malays to

keep their special rights. Mahathir reportedly viewed the claim with disdain and likened it to the claims made by the communist during the Malayan Emergency.[315] But during a visit overseas he said the Malays should get rid of their 'crutch mentality'.

As the controversy prolonged, a *Barisan* safe seat of Lunas in the state of Kedah suddenly became vacant when its member of parliament, an Indian doctor, was gunned down in his car in broad daylight. In a predominantly Chinese electorate, the Lunas by-election held in November 2000 was won by a Malay candidate of *Keadilan* with a 530-vote margin turning around the 4,700 votes *Barisan* had won in the 1999 elections with its Indian candidate. It seemed 30 percent of the Chinese in Lunas had crossed over to *Keadilan*.[316] The *Barisan* defeat was a telling blow for Mahathir not only for the fact that it was a safe seat but also because the defeat had for the first time deprived *Barisan* of its two-thirds majority of Kedah, Mahathir's home state. Fortunately, at another by-election at Teluk Kemang, in the state of Pahang, a *Barisan* strong-hold, its UMNO candidate slipped through but with a narrower margin, the lost votes having gone to PAS this time. Mahathir had always known that the east coast states were vulnerable to PAS and was not too surprised with the loss of some Malay votes. But his big worry was still the Chinese.

It had dawned on him that he could no longer take the Chinese vote for granted. The defeat was a clear message that Chinese politics was entering a new phase in which the Chinese would be willing to open alliances with any Malay party if Chinese parity concerns could be accommodated. The Chinese acceptance of a Malay candidate in Lunas was ample proof that they were willing to give *Keadilan* a chance to work out its alliance with PAS, a dominant Malay party and the Chinese-dominated, DAP, in the *Barisan Alternatif*. UMNO insiders attributed their loss to Mahathir's insensitivity to Chinese grouses and minimalizing such important issues as the future of Chinese schools under the 'Vision School', a reform proposal to integrate all vernacular schools. And more importantly the off-handish way he handled the Suqiu petition.[317]

The year-long controversy ended when Suqiu eventually withdrew the contentious sections of the petition on demand by UMNO and following Mahathir's conciliatory offer to consider the remaining parts of the petition. But a few weeks later in January 2001 a strident Mahathir warned the Chinese not to raise issues of Malay rights again.[318] A point to note: the Chinese position should not be viewed as a retreat. Firstly the petition was by a non-political group meant for

private discourse and the Chinese knew that, as it contained constitutional issues, it could not have any chance of resolution through its parliamentary process. We would be naïve to think that there was no political input by interested parties. But there was none at least officially underlined the fact that the Chinese were careful not to drag in any Chinese political party to avoid possible friction in the *Barisan* coalition.

Secondly Chinese position in 1999 was quite different and much stronger than it was during the racial Riots of 1969. Thanks to the disunity of the Malays since 1998, the Chinese were well aware that they held the trump card to *Barisan* victory in the 1999 general elections. That they put in the petition at the height of the election campaign was to signal to Mahathir that he should be aware of Chinese concerns since their votes were crucial amidst dwindling Malay support. The Chinese through the Suqiu petition, it would appear, were merely interested in making a statement and testing of Malay reaction on issues that had long been held taboo. But it had certainly impacted on future Malay-Chinese relations one that could see the Chinese seeking guarantees for parity.

Mahathir has to take some responsibility for the state of affairs. He shocked the nation by declaring that it was possible (it still is) for Malaysia to have a non-Malay prime minister.[319] This, of course, goes against the grain of Malay power. The Chinese and Indian partners in the government coalition were quick to play down this scenario obviously sensing the sensitivity of the Malays over such talk. His seeming willingness to listen to Chinese concerns especially over issues of parity at a time of continuing allegations of cronyism, went down badly with the Malays. No one can disagree that he did test Malay patience when he was seen pandering for Chinese votes in the last general elections. And now this talk of a possible Chinese prime minister? Continuing Malay impatience was responded with a rally of about 4,000 people on 4 February 2001 organized under the banner of the *Barisan Bertindak Melayu* (BBM) or Malay Action Front by the UMNO rank and file. Speakers at the rally included former deputy prime minister Ghafar Baba and UMNO Kelantan activist Ibrahim Ali who said that 'increasingly unresponsive leadership that seems preoccupied with self-preservation and helping crony businessmen . . . UMNO leadership . . . dismal performance.'[320] The BBM which is a Malay affirmative action group seeking to reinforce Malay supremacy claims among its supporters several former ministers including Musa Hitam.

But a more pressing problem for Mahathir was the sudden resurgence of Islamic extremism that was marked by a bloody confrontation with the Al Ma'unah cult during which two policemen were brutally killed. Investigations later showed that the group is a new name for Darul Arqam, a militant group that was banned a few years ago. This happened at the time when several of the country's *ulamas* were demanding the government to clamp down on western lifestyles. The timing of the incident was particularly bad for Mahathir as the more zealous members of UMNO had also agitated for a more Islamic image in the government which PAS has been more successful in making. PAS has shown that it is more than just an Islamic party. Kelantan which has been under PAS control for many years is a model for clean, efficient, corrupt-free administration. What was once one of the poorest states of Malaysia, Kelantan has shed its poor backward image. It appears as a people's party, egalitarian and eschewed of the highbrow, title-flaunting of UMNO. Reputed to have some 800,000 members, the party has attracted many young, western-educated intellectuals who see politics mixed with a strong dose of Islam as the way of the future for Malaysia. Since its showing at the elections, PAS seemed confident to take on UMNO on its own without the support of its coalition partners DAP and *Keadilan*.

However, the call by PAS for an Islamic identity for the country modelled according to stringent *hudud* laws, has divided Malays not only along religious lines but also politically as PAS has shown republican tendencies as it did recently in its spat with the Sultan of Kelantan over the withdrawal of royal award for two senior PAS members.[321] PAS pronouncements towards a more religionist administration for Kelantan and Terengganu has also upset non-Muslims and a reason why many feel its presence in the multi-racial, multi-religious coalition in the BA is opportunistic and insincere. There were concerns if PAS had unwittingly allowing itself to breed Malays as martyrs of Islam instead of Malaydom as it launched into a hateful anti-government campaign especially among the young. This has caused doubts of its fitness to serve a multi-racial electorate and its ability to ultimately wean away Malay support in UMNO. Even so it has emerged as the most potent leading opposition element in the BA while both DAP and *Keadilan* were strickened by in-fighting. *Keadilan* had also faced defections due its decision to merge with *Party Rakyat* a party reputed for its left wing leanings.

Mahathir dreads the dangerous trend of disparate Malay groups pitting against each other on religious grounds for the obvious reasons

that many people would be reluctant to show open support for UMNO for fear of their safety against Islamic extremists who are known for their violence as seen recently with the Al Ma'unah. He must wonder if UMNO is capable of playing its role according to old rules. UMNO it appears wants to play the religious card as well. It announced a campaign of *ceramah* (religious talks) circuit under the leadership of its Information Chief Datuk Mustapha Mohamed with the objective of showing that UMNO is no less Islamic than PAS.[322] This roadshow campaign included a number of ex-PAS members and targetted religious teachers, students and civil servants principally in PAS strongholds in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. UMNO also took steps to spruce up its religious image and put in the forefront in its publicity cause a number of lesser known members reputed for their religious uprightness. Among them was Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who was recently brought back to the UMNO fold and re-elected in May to the UMNO Supreme Council. A recanted former Anwar ally, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi is a known *warak* (a religious zealot). In a press statement he implied that his obedience to Mahathir and his 'clean' religious image was what earned him the top job at *Syarikat Perumahan Negara* the national housing company.[323] For one disgraced and be given a plum job had invited the usual howls of cronyism. There was also the re-appointment of Muhammad Muhammad Taib to one of the three prestigious posts of vice-president of UMNO in the May elections after what was seen as an eye-wash investigation into his corruption despite a conviction in Brisbane for currency violation.

And there was more talk of rescue attempts for mega-entrepreneur Halim Saad who admitted in an interview in a web-only version of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that he had been helped by the government.[324] But the issue that took the cake was Mahathir's decision in December to buy back debt-ridden Malaysia Airlines from Daim's protégé, Tajudin Ramli who had bought the state-owned airline in 1994 at RM7.00 a share. Mahathir announced that the buy back price would also be at RM7.00. The market reacted with alarm as the price offered to Tajudin was twice of MAS' trading price of RM3.50 prevailing then on the stock market. In the words of outspoken UMNO maverick, Shahrir Abdul Samad 'We have to save the airline but need we save Tajudin too?'[325] But the price was not as outrageous as some think.

Just two months before in October 2000, Moody's had upgraded Malaysia's credit rating by one notch to Baa2, its second within a year. This has encouraged government planners to push bonds whose

appeal in the international market had been sluggish for sometime. With more credit likely to be available and revenues boosted by healthy export receipts, government spending was going to be stepped up. This was all encouraging news too to investors and the time seemed opportune to shed off some state assets to lessen debt and top up treasury liquidity. It was also about this time that feelers for a possible foreign stake of MAS for up to 49 percent were made known to the government.

Qantas and British Airways were the first to show interest but Swissair seemed to be favoured.[326] As Mahathir had publicly said that he was paying RM7.00 a share to Tajudin, it was obvious that he was signalling Swissair or whoever else what his starting price would be. And there is every chance that a higher price than RM7.00 could be achieved given the cash cow position of all the three potential buyers. And given that these airlines had somewhat been sidelined by a flurry of alliances and acquisitions that had taken place by rival airlines in recent months, MAS seemed like a good catch. Mahathir it appears is in a seller's market position and could not be too far wrong with his price.

In his interview with *Asiaweek* that appeared in the magazine's issue of 26 January 2001, Mahathir revealed that Malaysia's national car, Proton, was in negotiations for a partial acquisition deal with Ford USA. He brushed off rumours that he was ready to dismantle his capital and currency controls since foreign investments had not been put off by those controls. Obviously, buoyed by an optimistic economic outlook he remains unconvinced by any argument to return to a free exchange regime despite the *ringgit* being worth more than its artificial peg to the US dollar. But he neglected to mention that foreign investors withdrew US$500 million alone in November 2000.[327]

In the international front, Mahathir continues to attract a lot of attention but his image is faring no better as he is still eyed with apathy by the west particularly its media. World leaders reacted with outrage at the sentencing of Anwar with many still believing that it was Mahathir's sleight of hand that caused Anwar's misfortune. But there is no denying that he enjoys respectability and enormous popularity in many third world countries who are impressed by his frequent gutsy tirade against perceived western domination. He blames the rich west for his economic ills in 1998, who he said had impoverished developing economies under the guise of globalization.[328] But such rhetoric is pleasing to the ears of his fellow Malaysians who see him as the true traditionalist unspoilt by western influence.

Ties with Singapore turned for the better when Singapore's former

Prime Minister and now Senior Minister, Lee Kuan Yew made his first trip to Malaysia in ten years. Both countries made optimistic statements that the several outstanding issues that had caused much tension between them were on track for resolution. It was probably easier said than done as many of the issues that were long outstanding were not even close to agreement during the best of times. Many of the problems concerned sovereignty issues such as Malaysian government property in Singapore, air space breaches, water supply to Singapore, superannuation funds of peninsular Malaysians that are locked in Singapore's Central Provident Fund. Lee Kuan Yew's second volume of his memoirs *From Third World to First* which was released on 16 September (again on his birthday) and within a couple of weeks of his return from Kuala Lumpur, had again stirred the same feeling of disquiet with the Malaysians as with his first one. As before, Mahathir refrained from making any comments especially since, at his book launch, Lee was all praise for Mahathir.

Malaysia's concern for its fellow Malay brethren in Singapore which has often been an issue in cross-straits relations came under scrutiny again. It was over a speech Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong made to a Malay audience in which he claimed that Singapore Malays were doing much better than the Malays in Malaysia.[129] The speech was in defence of a Malaysian media blitz on the marginalization of Singapore Malays, their lack of opportunities in public and private sectors and their complete absence in the top echelon of the Singapore Armed Forces. Mahathir again gave wide berth to any controversy with Singapore but as usual gave his ministers the discretion to respond to any statements from Singapore politicians and the media. Lee Kuan Yew too was muted in this controversy especially when he had only recently praised Malaysia for its economic turnaround which he said was owed to Mahathir's able leadership.

It is not only Lee who has a favourable opinion of Mahathir; African states to where Mahathir visits regularly too think well of him. He is also thought well of in Latin America, Japan and Indonesia but is particularly admired in South Africa where Malaysia is its largest foreign investor. He is beginning to play the roving ambassador much the same way as Lee Kuan Yew and whether this is a way to allow Abdullah Badawi more exposure to the day-to-day problems back home, or to get away from domestic politics to avoid the bad press he has been having lately is hard to say. In any event he has publicly said that he wanted to spend more time rebuilding UMNO and would leave the running of the government mostly to his deputy Abdullah

Badawi. The task ahead for Mahathir is indeed daunting. If he wants to stay on, it is clear that he has to appease the Malays as much as the Chinese to whom he has much to thank for giving him a new lease of leadership. Mahathir has still to play a delicate balancing act and in the foreseeable future, he seems the only one capably trusted to accomplish it.

In summary, if we reflect on the leadership style of Mahathir going into the new millennium, we can see that he is more the modern reformer with a genuine sense of multi-racialism instead of the consummate Malay nationalist as he often tries to project himself. He owes little to tradition though he legitimizes it continually with rhetoric of tradition in response to a new initiative of Islamic Malay unity. Beneath Mahathir's modernity is a veneer of conservatism that is sometimes confused with traditionalism, for Mahathir is nostalgic of traditions, not for the sake for traditions but, rather for the past when times were more predictable and when he was more in control. He has rarely said anything particularly praiseworthy of the Malays or of Malay pride. Recently, he decried the inability of the Malays to compete with the Chinese.[330] Of the practice of traditions, he said 'people who hold strongly to traditions may not develop and prosper or become wealthy'.[331] He called on the new breed of educated Malays to be forward in their outlook and be wary of Islamic scholars who invented traditions to justify un-Islamic practices.[332]

He knew the tradition card he had played for so long was a façade he could no longer mask in the face of a more informed, young western-educated Islamic political force. The mould he has cast himself into is beginning to crack as a more consultative style is demanded of him – a cleaner and a more fundamentally Islamist leadership. Mahathir has yet to respond to this – his re-election to the UMNO presidency gives him little reason to. He thinks it is a vindication of his leadership style. In terms of traditional legacy, Mahathir certainly typifies the strong charismatic patriarchal leadership. Like his predecessors and the sultans, he too believes in strong paternalistic, benevolent governance. If tradition means an obedient regard for the established institutions of the nation, Mahathir seems to have a different view. His forays with the judiciary, the sultans and religious traditionalists underlined a leader impatient with arguments about symbolisms and traditions.

With royalty, he found himself in the thick of constitutional crises that demeaned the traditional supremacy of the sultans. He appealed to the sultans to help unite the Malays in an obvious attempt to keep

an appearance of tradition but it sent confusing signals on how he regards the sultans whose mana he had so seriously eroded.[333] And why is he feeling so powerless about Malay unity? The answer probably lies in the on-going spat with PAS that UMNO and indirectly Mahathir are un-Islamic, something that is deeply offensive to any Muslim. He shuns the *songkok* or Malay cap as much as he could and his wife is no believer in the *tudung selendang* (a head scarf that covers the hair) that is commonly worn by Malay women. He thought he would emerge as the virtuous traditionalist over the Anwar saga but was instead cursed for his ruthlessness. So far Mahathir has had no skeletons in his cupboard and has shown himself to be the upright, moral leader. And that has been his drawcard upon which he often asserts his moral authority.

Malaysia lacks a distinct ideology and this adds to the confusion between the schism of Islamic obedience and secular unity. The *Rukunegara*, the national ideology introduced by Tun Razak in 1970, is inadequate in facing new challenges. It needs to be revitalized to inject new ideas for national unity especially among disparate Muslim groups. But Mahathir has done little in this area. His selective ideas of democracy, the media, world opinion and human virtues are often seen as a swipe at the west rather than at any real attempt to articulate ideological arguments.[334] He snaps at criticisms and in his cantankerous way, depicts a man utterly authoritative and intolerant of dissenting views best exemplified by his treatment of Anwar and before that of Tengku Razaleigh and Musa Hitam, all best remembered for their leadership challenge. Whichever way one views the case, Anwar's prolonged ordeal strikes at the very chord of Malay and Islam's forgiving nature. The case also views Mahathir negatively as un-Malay and uncharitable to a fellow Muslim brother. Mahathir's predecessors had treated more severe miscreants leniently and tactfully. But to the purists of Malay traditions any attempt to dislodge Mahathir was seen as disloyalty, something they consider a grave sin. This is the Malay and traditional way of doing things.

Finally with this in mind, how does Mahathir join the ranks of global leadership and push Malaysia towards his vision of *Wawasan 2020* – the year he envisioned the country would be developed? He enjoys a favourable international image but would also like to be recognized as a modern Islamic leader. He is mindful of his position with Islamic world leaders with whom he enjoys tremendous popularity. While he revels in international praise, he is mindful also of the Islamic conservatives back home who are apprehensive of their Islamic

leader shedding too much tradition for globalizing the western way. Mahathir is an enigma of the twenty-first century. Though Malaysia's political leaders have never claimed any divine calling, there is a perception that they possess the *wahyu* or the divine radiance. Or that they have been decreed by *kismet* or Will of God for their *takdir* or fate. This is what perceptual knowledge is all about. And there is every reason to believe that it is also intrinsic in Mahathir who no doubt believes he still has the *wahyu*. A fatalistic remark one often hears in Malay when someone is elected to office is '*Tuhan sudah di-takdirkan*' meaning god has decreed it or its god's will. As he implies in his book, Mahathir must think he is genetically superior and believes it is incumbent on him to uplift the weak. And Musa Hitam seems to believe this when he said of Mahathir's capacity for hard work that it is 'humanly impossible to go at the pace he's kept going'.[335] There is no question that Mahathir has had a remarkable leadership despite all that have been said to the contrary. As the political horizon looks poised for change, there is an inclination to stay with the Mahathir leadership for the predictability it represents rather than on a newcomer who can only offer the perception of supposed predestination. But then again the Mahathir enigma started with an *innate* perception.

Chapter 9
Conclusion

This book has attempted to explain notions of Malay political leadership in terms of historical, cultural and political-economic experiences. Underlining these notions, the book hypothesized, is an innate quality in Malay psyche that perceives leadership with a sense of predestination. While this quality is not distinctive only to the Malays since there are similar experiences in other messianic disciplines, it is the Malays' ability to harmonize old ideas with the new transcending successive experiences to a discernible western secular leadership. That is the uniqueness about Malay leadership. That this has evolved into a rich hybrid of culture rests on the atavistic perception that all things are ordered and pre-determined. Since perception is intrinsic, it follows that we can form attitudes about people by instinct.

We frequently do form perceptions about people and experts believe we are innately predisposed to this behaviour by our 'perceptual knowledge' as they call it.[116] Therefore, it is possible that we could perceive certain phenomenon such as the emergence of a prophet or a leader as a sign of fate. We could go as far as believing innately that this could be the work of some unexplainable, cosmological revelation of predestination. If we say something is innate, we take it to mean it is in-born and that it has no prior experience. Innatism says that ideas like certain intellectual tendencies are 'inherited' or 'soul-explicit'. And all ideas 'exist in the mind without having been derived from previous experience' and they are seen as latent knowledge 'waiting to be aroused by the stimulus of experience'. This is the view of Descartes and Leibniz.[117] Cynical of this view is the empiricist John Locke who contends that the mind is rather a *tabula rasa* or blank slate at birth.

The neoplatonist doctrine of innatism is getting greater currency in the light of new scientific findings on genetics, particularly in its

relation to Leibniz's dispositional innatism that says that genetic ideas are innate but may not manifest themselves at birth.[338] In other words, while a genetic predisposition exists, say, in the case of a disease, it may not manifest itself until several years later, or not at all. If this is true of the physical body, could the mind not also be so cognitively predisposed? We accept that the extent of awareness aggregates with development and maturity that is stimulated by some environmental conditioning both social and physical. But the stimulation has to begin from some point in its basic raw form. That is the essence of dispositional innatism the basis on which we uncover perception – that we have a natural disposition to 'rely on our perceptions to learn'. We are inclined to form ideas and beliefs that derive from 'the nature of the mind itself and [are] not dependent upon experience'.[339] The empiricist concedes that 'there can be no learning without perception . . . perception can instil the universal in us . . . we need perception if we are to learn the universal'.[340] Therefore, it is entirely possible then to 'innately perceive' leadership quality in a person without the benefit of experience or pre-qualification (only perceptively, of course). The pre-knowledge of the leader's suitability or the lack of it is therefore irrelevant and it confirms the premise that we 'need perception to learn'.

Malay society had a belief system that was rich in the perception of spirituality, one of veneration for its rulers. Early rulers of the Malay World also had perceptual knowledge and this sense of predestination. The difference was that they only perceived themselves as those pre-destined and this was by virtue of their supposed divine descent. It was believed that the ruler was the embodiment of celestial powers that should be worshipped as through him permeated all forces of life. With the coming of Hinduism, leadership traits evolved as the Malay rulers take on the mystique of reincarnates of the Hindu gods. Over time these practices were absorbed into traditions, re-interpreted and adapted to new social circumstances.

Whether successive generations have been so conditioned by these ancestral concepts or traditions to influence leadership values in a certain way is hard to say but they are certainly part of our civilizing heritage. In its extreme form, tradition has been touted as pristine virtue for social control. It claims ideological and historical merit and in the case of religious authority, moral judgement. Unfortunately, tradition can be manipulated to reinforce parochial preferences in plural communities such as in Malaysia, over leadership choice. In its subtle form, tradition represents a legacy that is

majestic and sacred, handed down by wise men of our ancestral past. It is a norm for propriety, spirituality goodness, ethical behaviour and basis for customary law. Like religion, tradition has strands of rigidity that must be followed for moral duty or be punished by its terrifying authority.

The difficulty of tradition is that it purports truth that is difficult to verify or rationalize. Tradition by its very word commands a kind of order that is impious to question. Besides, it is so seductively persuasive as it offers a tremendous sense of belonging and fellowship if respected and followed. So if we re-trace tradition to its origins of perceptual knowledge, we are back to the uncertainty on how we are to perceive leadership merit. It follows the argument that the verdict of our choice of leaders it seems is at its conclusion, in a post-mortem. We would agree that the objective values of leadership – power, control, authority, etc. – have persisted in roughly the same form throughout the evolutionary process. Behavioural patterns also differ little – traditional demands for polite mannerisms, fairness and loyalty are natural human attributes no less important to modern society. The area that is different is in the method of leadership ascension. Presently it articulates generally as a competitive and rationally elective one. Enduring also in modern leadership are the colourful symbolisms of archaic concepts that persist in pretending hereditary power. Islam and other modern religions have also been used to manipulate such symbolisms of tradition for political ends despite their apparent contradictions. Transcending this mysticism is the fatalism,[341] which holds that the blessed leader is presaged by fate and predestination. Malay society is culturally conditioned to respect such symbolisms as part of their tradition which also plays a spiritual role in their hierarchical relationships at three levels – civil, religious and family.

At the apex, Malay society personifies leadership in the collective triumvirate of the ruler, the father and the *imam* (head priest). It combines with a fatalism that accepts absolutely all actions of the leader to be for the ultimate good of society. For one to be so ordained to regulate human destiny, suggests subliminally a higher calling reserved for the predestined or *kismet*, the Islamic tradition of the Will of God. We would remind ourselves that these are qualities we *intuitively* see in a leader. They are, of course, not proven qualities since we will know only *after* the leader has attained office. You could argue that potential leaders have normally risen through the ranks and there was therefore ample evaluation of his suitability for higher office. The

response to this is that, the initial entry into the leadership quest at the primary level was achieved by this intuition people have of potential leaders. And this includes impressions of personality, gift of the gab oratory, etc. But there is only one among them who gets to be leader and ultimately the people will have to defer to their perception for leadership choice.

Leadership continuity and the functional perspective

The perceptual concepts that are proposed in this book can also be viewed empirically and practically in a functional perspective and it is explained here in the 'realist' terms of the psychological and sociological. Psychological factors are intellectual instincts and in the context of leadership perception, they can range from any emotion, passion and inhibition to respect (or fear) of authority. Unlike traditional leadership where power was understood as being both tangible and inherently metaphysical, the power of the modern leader is less nebulous as it is entrenched in a political system which provides him with fearsome coercive force some of which he will apply for self-preservation. The more positive of the leader's powers are in its psychological aspects of the traditional, wise, kindly and with unifying charm. Some would argue that the rationale of alluring psychological traits has more to do with negotiating, bargaining and winning than about keeping traditions of supposed mystique. Furthermore, they would say that a quality such as loyalty is the psychological bond that ties the leader and follower for mutual benefit rather than for the construed homage of the faithful to the exalted. Unlike the hereditary ruler who was secured in his position for a lifetime and revered for his divine leadership, the survival of the modern leader is not assured by psychological attributes alone.

Sociological factors are the physical and corporeal manifestations of prosperity, reward and economic benefits. They also include the visible consequences of oppression and injustice. As in the traditional Malay World, rewards for followers are also customary in modern leadership practices. However, loyalty in modern leadership is generally expressed by intra-party alliances and the ballot. But shame or pain is rarely suffered these days by anyone who elects to switch loyalty to another leader or party. Psychological and sociological factors have co-existed in leadership perceptions with varying intensity in the history of the Malay World. For example, the psychological factor was dominant during the Hindu-Buddhist periods when the affairs of

economic welfare were almost entirely concentrated in building the wealth of the ruler in return for subsistence.

In the Islamic period, the sociological factor began to dominate as the sultan turned trader in a mutually-benefitting relationship between him and his followers. In the colonial period, the Malays perceived the British purely in sociological terms for their economic well-being, while the ruler retained all the psychological qualities. Therefore, for leadership to be manifested and sustained, both factors must be present. In other words, one would not choose a leader for the promise of an attractive economic policy without giving weight to the leader's character or some aspect of his personality such as charisma, wisdom, etc. – all those psychological/sociological attributes that work in tandem for ideological coherency. This is the assumption of a rational leadership choice. What remains to be said is that the psychological and sociological factors of leadership are a two-way perception: the leader and the masses intuitively perceive each other for mutual benefit. Ideally they should be in perfect balance but the reality of modern leadership is that the sociological tends to predominate.

Typology of the modern Malay leader

Malay leadership is evolving and is still in the throes of finding a proper mix within its cultural diversity for a leadership that can truly be a Malaysian amalgam. For the moment it does not seem to be within reach in the foreseeable future. This task is exacerbated by complex non-secular demands and now, by assertion of affirmative action by non-Malays. So, it seems we will have to settle for a Malay leader though a Muslim leader of some other racial origin is not an impossibility. Modern Malay leadership has a relatively young history and there is no recognizable standard by which we can form a mental image of the 'typical' Malay leader in the way we can, with some predictability, on the leader of a two-party system in many western democracies. What about past leaders?

Unlikely, take Tunku for instance. His leadership experiment was perhaps the most daunting of all. He had to invent a standard without the benefit of political experience or a preceding role-model. His style was a cross between his yearning for princely respectability and the dressed-up colonial civil servant. Although humble, he approximated his supercilious masters and was as care-free and lackadaisical as the aristocrats of the time. He belonged to an era when westernization

was in vogue and when there was no shame for a Malay to cavort in European merriment. That was also a time when custom and religion played a limited role in leadership. He created the Alliance for the purpose of forging a parliamentary majority, not for any great craving on the part of the Malays for racial togetherness with others. He drew Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia for numerical advantage over the Chinese. But he certainly pioneered and sealed an enduring racial partnership. But in the end he misjudged Malay politics. He seemed to have all the right attributes – consensual, paternalistic, compassionate, etc. But his dominant and favourable psychological attributes were not sufficient to satisfy the sociological demands of the party at large. But the legacy he left behind remains the strongest of all past prime ministers.

If there were a leadership benchmark that Tunku had set, it was not even remotely emulated by Razak. As such, Tunku's fatherly charm that had been so captivating was not even mildly discernible in the often dour Razak. Although Razak shared the leadership embryonic process with Tunku, he emerged radically different; maybe he wanted to be that way; to disassociate himself from Tunku's failures and the imagery of docility that Tunku portrayed. The laconic Razak had always carried on without the slightest hint of his subservience to Tunku – a mark of the wide autonomy that characterized Tunku's delegating style. Razak was quick to capitalize on Tunku's shortcomings and proceeded perhaps too ambitiously to close ranks with the Malays. He reawakened Malay consciousness and will be remembered most for driving Malay political primacy which obviously did enough to compensate for his lack of charisma and psychological magnetism.

Hussein had the benefit of observing Razak at close range and he certainly picked up many of Razak's ways. Hussein soon developed his own style and before long, emerged as the first modern Malay corporatist leader.[342] He saw the sense of combining his corporatist outlook with the leadership merits of Tunku and Razak. But Hussein tended towards congeniality and collegiality that suggested a lack of individualism. Khoo says that Hussein was known for his 'self-effacing demeanour'.[343] This is probably true because Hussein must have been humbled by the circumstances of his succession. Though Hussein balanced his psychological and sociological attributes remarkably well, his gradual selective distribution of the latter accentuated favouritism.

Mahathir saw little or no inspiration in the leadership style of his

predecessors though he had the privilege to work under all previous prime ministers. He could be jealous of the warmth Tunku enjoyed; proud in the way Razak was held so morally; or perhaps bothered that he does not have Hussein's urbane, smooth English-speaking style. In short, he was none of the above and brought with him to office his own distinctive style; though Kedah-born himself, he does not know how to put to good use of his accent the way Tunku did so well. Mahathir's climb had by no means been easy. The resilience that he had developed as a result provided him with the enthusiastic energy of the power he so revels in. None of the previous leaders had displayed Mahathir's extraordinary idealism that was both iconoclastic and irreverent of contrary views.

While in the political wilderness, for instance, Mahathir proposed a rather fantastic fusion of inscrutable breeding theories among the Malays. The implication is that the offsprings of mixed descent, as he is himself, are less likely to have mutant genes and are therefore conceivably superior. His rehabilitation proceeded from a position of exoneration that entitled him, he thinks, to the right to lead Malay redemption. Only Razak shared the intensity of this passion with Mahathir. Mahathir's ideas are not all sophistry, of course. What is written off for its heterodoxy initially became palatable text for Malay rightist views. Mahathir radicalized Malay leadership – he may be reticent in public but can be brash and as beguiling as an astute businessman. Mahathir represents a new leadership that sees its success in entirely, inordinate sociological terms. If Mahathir retires in glory, his successor would be inclined to emulate him to sustain the continuity of his sociological legacy. But if he wants to be remembered, he has to temper his character with the psychological trait of a caring, benevolent statesman.

To summarize: in conceptualizing leadership, some basic questions may be asked: what makes a leader, how is leadership achieved or what are the characteristics of leadership? These answers would tell us about leaders *after* they have attained leadership and may not match the prescription of a model leader we have in mind. Will leadership conceptualization always remain experimental because we seem uncertain of the final product as a *pyrrhonism* (certainty of knowledge is unattainable)? Gardner's analysis of eleven leaders shows no common dimension of character. Personality-types can be as varied as the ascetic Gandhi to the likes of Stalin and Hitler.[344] There is no suggestion in the literature nor is there genetic evidence that leaders are 'born'. According to Kellerman most leadership theories

tend to be prescriptive[345] and as such do not offer satisfactory scientific analysis of leadership.

Kellerman also suggests that Weber's theory of the charismatic leader is out of fashion.[346] Leadership theorists tend to view leadership in the narrow Weberian sense of coercion or authority as extrinsic and 'requires social legitimization' to wield it. Socratic purists would say it is unthinkable to associate the austere virtues of a philosopher-leader (who Socrates deems to be the ideal leader) to the heroics of a soldier-leader. There is a tendency to conceptualize leadership along the lines of the historical imagery of real leaders. As a social phenomenon and an element of human behaviour, leadership typology poses some difficulty in accuracy. Current leadership theories are divided on this issue and are scant in their links to culture and power. As concepts are bound to be as diverse as cultures, it would be futile to try to agree on criteria for universal approbation. We have a natural disposition to perceive things *innately* and we do perceive about people and their attributes, about their greatness, piety and even their destiny to lead us. As natural as human nature itself, perception will continue to have its uses; subjective as it may be, it is the only tool we have to make assumptions about a future leader.

Notes

Chapter 1

1 Bennis, Warren G., 'Managing the Dream: Leadership in the 21st Century', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1989, p. 7.

2 Barth, Frederik (ed), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1970; Judith Nagata, 'What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in Plural Society', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1974, pp. 331–350.

3 Roff, William, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur, 1994, pp. 242–245.

4 The older generation migrant Arabs usually married local-born and distantly related Arabs; they rarely mixed socially with Malays but would enthusiastically participate in religious functions. Most spoke bazaar accented Malay. Roff also observed that early Arab migrants resisted assimilation with locals, see Roff, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

5 Hussein Alatas, Syed, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Lazy Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*, London: Frank Cass, 1977.

6 As in the Malay *orang ulu*, *sinkeh and mamak* are not polite terms of address. *Sinkeh* is a term for China-born Chinese. *Mamak* literally means uncle and usually refers to an elder Tamil Muslim and can be offensive to a Tamil Hindu. *Ayah* or *Anae* (older brother) is more appropriate to address an elder Tamil Hindu. However, both these terms took on rather derisive implications. Another example is the Tamil word *tamby* which is an endearing term for a younger brother or person but since colonial times usually refers to Tamil office boys. In the same way, 'Ahmad' is referred to Malay office boys and chauffeurs.

7 A practice that has prevailed in Malaysia and Singapore is the adoption of the father's race as the race of the offspring. Therefore, a child born to an Indian father and Chinese mother is an Indian. If the future male generations of the Indian child were to marry Chinese, it is conceivable that they would look every bit Chinese but are racially Indian. Incidentally, Malaysia and Singapore it seems are the only countries in the world that

have 'Eurasian' as a distinct racial category. How this came about is a mystery. Singapore has now allowed children of Eurasian mothers to classify themselves as Eurasians.

8 The majority of the senior administrative officers in the colonial service were English-educated and spoke more English than Malay. Conversation with Tun Hamdan, Governor of Penang.

Chapter 2

9 Dancy, Jonathan, *Perceptual Knowledge*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 1. Dancy actually talks about 'perceptual knowledge' – by inversion it means knowledge through perception. If perception is something we sense or imagine it is debatable if it qualifies as knowledge. It is not clear if Dancy means that the 'ability' to perceive is inherently knowledge.

10 Grice, H.P., 'The Causal Theory of Perception' in Jonathan Dancy, *ibid.*, pp. 74–77.

11 Popper, Karl, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 347–349.

12 Sanskrit literally meaning colour applied to the Indian caste system – fairer-skinned Brahmins the priest class and are the highest in the system. Kings and rulers though are kshatriyas second class. But in the old Malay World, kings were venerated as gods and therefore conceivably higher than the Brahmins.

13 Ayer, S.P., 'Jawaharlal Nehru and Charismatic Leadership', in A.B. Shah (ed), Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Critical Tribute*, Bombay: Manaktalas, 1965, p. 51.

14 Brown, C.C., 'Malay Annals', translation, *JMBRAS* vol. 25, parts 2 and 3, October 1952, p. 24; for a fuller discussion on Srivijaya in the context of Malay heritage, see L.Y. & B.W. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982, pp. 18–36; for reference to Saivite-Buddhism, see D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981, pp. 46–83; O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Srivijaya*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967, pp. 25–26, 34, 247.

15 Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25, p. 59.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 193. Also in Barbara Watson Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 19–20 and Genealogical Table in p. xviii.

17 Gullick, J.M., *Malay Society in the late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 363.

18 Moertono, Soemarsaid, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the later Mataram Period 16th to 19th Centuries*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, pp. 81–82.

19 Anderson, Benedict R.O'G, 'The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture', in Claire Holt (ed), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 66–67.

20 Coedes, C., *op. cit.*, p. 9; B.J.O. Schrieke, 'Ruler and Realm in Early Java',

Part 2, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1957, pp. 236–7.

21 An indigenous kingdom of Devavarman who reigned in 132 AD preceded the first Hindu kingdom of Jayanasa (683 AD), see D.G.E. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 970 and Richard O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Marican, 1968, p. 33; the earliest Sanskrit inscription, the Mulavarman dates back to the fourth century and it is doubtful if Devavarman (132 AD) was Hindu though his name was Indian, see Coedes, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 52; besides Javanese script derived from the Tamil Pallava was used before the coming of Hinduism, see Coedes, *op. cit.*, p. 31; it is possible that Javanese rulers had ventured to India and we can surmise from this that names and other ideas could have been influenced through first contact with India while conversion to Hinduism was a much later phenomenon, see Wolters, *op. cit.*, p. 247; most scholars believe that Hinduism started to trickle into the Malay World sometime after 2 AD, see Wolters, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33. See also Mus, Paul, *India seen from the East*, Melbourne: Monash University, 1975, p. 9.

22 Anderson says 'while the Javanese may have utilized elements from Indic cosmology for formal classificatory purposes their intuitive sense of the historical process was fundamentally a logical corollary of their concept of Power', see Anderson in Claire Holt (ed), *op. cit.*, p. 20.

23 'Sa-telah itu maka baginda pun beristeri . . . perumpuan yang baik . . . diperisteri baginda . . .', W.G. Shellabear, *Sejarah Melayu*, transliteration, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur, 1967, p. 24; and Brown, *op. cit.* p. 26.

24 Winstedt, A History of Malaya, p. 53.

25 Anderson, in Claire Holt, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

26 Moertono uses *wahyu* arbitrarily to describe a quality of kingship in pre-Hindu times, see Moertono, *op. cit.*, p. 56; he attributes the meaning of *wahyu* to Pigeaud's translation as 'Godly spirit, force', Pigeaud, *op. cit.*, Glossary, but has no evidence to show that *wahyu* was actually the word used in indigenous history.

27 Andaya, *Kingdom of Johor 1641–1728*, p. 45; *abiseka* is a ceremony to reinstate the status of rulers who were made *Kshatriyas* by Indian Brahmin priests under a special rite for foreigners called the *vratyastoma*. This rite was performed by South Indian priests from the Saivite sect of Agastya, see Coedes, *op. cit.*, p. 24 and van Leur, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

28 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

29 For a fuller description of the Hindu concept of the cosmos and Mount Meru, see Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 42; for references of Bukit Si Guntang to this concept, see Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Richard O. Winstedt, *Malaya and its History*, London: Hutchinson's Library, 1951, p. 27; Paul Wheatley, *Impressions of the Malay Peninsula in Ancient Times*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1964, pp. 67–182; Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 33; Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 45.

30 Hang Tuah was ordered to kill his bosom friend Hang Kasturi by Sultan Mansur Syah as a condition for his reprieve from exile and reinstatement to his former job as *laksamana*, see Brown, *Malay Annals*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

31 Moertono, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–81; for a fuller discussion of goddess *Kali*, see

Richard O. Winstedt, *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*, London: Routledge and Paul, 1951, pp. 31–35.

32 Skeat, Walter William, *Malay Magic: Being an Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsula*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1967, p. 89. Sometimes the shaman can be the ruler himself, see Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, p. 7. In the Minangkabau tradition, the shaman is also the spirit-keeper or *bisa-kawi*.

33 Gullick, J.M., *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, 1988, New Jersey: Athlone Press, p. 142.

34 Wilkinson, R.J., 'The Melaka Sultanate', *JMBRAS* vol. 13, no. 2, Oct 1935, p. 29. A parallel would be of Muslim rulers of Mataram who for years wore the imperial crown of Majapahit as a sign of continuity of their Hindu past, see B. Shrieke, 'Ruler and Realm in Early Java', Part 2, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1957, p. 7.

35 Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire*, Lahore: (publisher unknown), 1949, p. 323.

36 'lagi pun raja itu umpama ganti Allah di-dalam dunia . . .', see W.G. Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 183; *ibid.*, p. 80; R.J. Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', *JMBRAS* vol. 10, no. 1, Jan 1932, p. 78.

37 Wake, Christopher H., 'Malacca's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam', *JSEAH* vol. 5, no. 2, September 1964, p. 118; Wang Gung-wu, 'The First Three rulers of Malacca', *JMBRAS* vol. 41, no. 1, 1968, pp. 11–12.

38 Andaya, L.Y., 'The Structure of Power in 17th century Johor', A. Reid & L. Castles, (eds.), *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, Kuala Lumpur: *JMBRAS*, Monograph Series, 1975, p. 8.

39 'memerintahkan istiadat takhta kerajaan baginda', see Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

40 'Maka ciri yang amat indah-indah bunyi-nya di bacha orang di-hadapan raja. Daripada anak chuchu Bat itu-lah yang mambacha ciri itu', see *ibid.*, p. 76; for description of the ciri, see R.J. Wilkinson and R.O. Winstedt, 'A History of Perak', *JMBRAS* Reprint, vol. 12, pt. 1, 1934, republished 1974, pp. 175–6.

41 Drewes, G.W.J., in A. Ibrahim et al., *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, p. 17; Shrieke, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

42 Marrison, G.E., 'Persian Influence on Malay Life', in *JMBRAS* vol. 28, 1955, pp. 54–55. The doctrine of the Perfect Man was developed by 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. 1428) in his famous book *al-Insan al-Kamil*. He accepted Arabi's conception of the Unity of Being which traces the descent of the Pure Being which in itself is without name and attribute. Through three stages of manifestation – Oneness, He-ness and I-ness and three corresponding stages of mystical illumination, the mystic may retrace the order of his descent. Finally as the Perfect Man he is stripped of every attribute and returns again to the Absolute which is in Oneness with God – a hint of the potential divinity man is able to reach, see Arthur John Arberry, 'The Theosophy of Islamic Mysticism', A.J. Arberry (ed.) *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London: Allen & Unwin, London, 1965, pp. 104–5.

43 'raja adil dengan nabi . . . umpama dua buah permata pada sa-bentok chinchin', see Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 183; A. Milner, 'Islam and the Muslim

State', M.B. Hooker (ed), *Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: Brill, 1983, p. 35.

44 Milner, A.C., in Hooker, *ibid.*, p. 37.

45 Wake, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

46 Wake, *op. cit.*, p.121; for descriptions of Islamic adaptations of Hindu practices, see R.O. Winstedt, *The Malays*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950, pp. 35–36; Gullick argues that the division of these two classes 'was one of the basic elements of Malay political and social structure', see J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of western Malaya*, New Jersey: Athlone Press, 1988, p. 65.

47 Sartono Kartodirdjo, 'Agrarian Radicalism in Java', in Claire Holt (ed), *op. cit*, pp. 79–83.

48 Anderson, in Claire Holt (ed), *op. cit.* p. 25.

49 Wake, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

50 'engkau lah kelak jadi raja Melaka . . . insha Allah ta'ala hasil-lah perkerjaantuan hamba', see Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

51 Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Centuries*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, p. 60. *Wahyu* is sometimes confused with *sakti*. There is a tendency especially in Indonesia to describe *wahyu* as 'magic power' which, of course, describes *sakti*. Shortly after his wife's death, President Suharto of Indonesia appeared demoralized and somewhat disinterested in his job prompting Permadi, a leading Indonesian mystic to say 'The people know the President has lost his *wahyu*. Suharto knows his days are finished' (*Time Magazine*, 26 May 1997). In almost exactly a year he was deposed.

52 'Hendak-lah pada akhir zaman kelak anak chuchu bapa hamba jangan durhaka pada anak chuchu kita', see Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

53 Wilkinson, *Some Malay Studies*, p. 80.

54 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

55 Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

56 de Josselin de Jong, 'The Rise & Decline of a National Hero', *JMBRAS* vol. 38, no. 2, 1965, p. 105.

57 Endicott, Michael Kirk, *An Analysis of Malay Magic*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 94; Richard O. Winstedt, *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951, p. 19.

58 Winstedt, Richard O., 'Kingship and Enthronement in Malaya', *JMBRAS*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 1947, p. 120; William Walter Skeat, *Malay Magic: Being an Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsula*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 3rd edition, 1984, p. 62.

59 Winstedt, *Malay Magician*, pp. 74, 78; Endicott, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

60 Kartodirdjo, in Claire Holt (ed), *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

61 Skeat, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 31; Skeat mentions *ubat guna* for charm and spell in his 'list of mythical and religious terms' and this is the literal translation for shamanism but nowhere in the book did he use this term. Neither did Winstedt nor Endicott. Colloquially speaking if someone is charmed he or she is said to be *kena ubat guna* or being charmed, see Skeat, *op. cit.*, p. 589.

62 Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, pp. 38–69.
63 Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', p. 100.
64 Wilkinson and Winstedt, p. 135; Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, p. 10.
65 Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', p. 96.
66 Wilkinson and Winstedt, 'A History of Perak', pp. 172–174 has a full account of the 'Birch' seance; Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, p. 19.
67 Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', p. 87.
68 Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 31.
69 Brown, p. 24.
70 Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', p. 28.
71 Wolters, O. W., *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*, London: Lund Humphries, 1970, p. 174.
72 Malay custom dictates that a woman in *najis* (ritually unclean or the Arabic *haidh*) is excused from praying and fasting. It appears that there is no religious basis for this practice and it seemed to have originated from a similar Indian practice. On the question of public homage, it is now more common, it seems, for subjects to clasp their hands in the fashion of the Indian *namaste*. This change was introduced because the old custom is thought to be demeaning to modern, emancipated Malay women who, in recent years, have increased their numbers for royal awards. Unlike their Indian or Arab counterparts, Malay women seem to enjoy better status despite the Muslim stress on patriarchalism, see Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 48. Also unlike Muslim monarchs elsewhere, Malay sultans are commonly accompanied by their wives on public occasions and have titles bestowed on them. The Malaysian king for instance bestows the title of *permaisuri agong* on his queen.
73 Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', p. 79.
74 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
75 de Josselin de Jong, P.E., *op. cit.*, p.151.
76 A picture showing the former Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Azlan Shah with such an armlet, is shown in V. Sinnadurai, *His Majesty Sultan Azlan Shah, The Yang di-Pertuan Agong IX, Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Professional Law Books Publishers, 1989.
77 Even now only Islamic family laws of inheritance, religious custom and divorce are the only ones incorporated for Muslims in Malaysian law which owe its origins to the Indian Law Code and the British Law of Evidence, see Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 117.
78 Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
79 Regarding the reprimand to Tun Jana Fakil, see Brown, p. 118; 'Tiada berbudi tuan hamba orang hutan, maka tiada tahu chara adat bahasa. Benar-kah membunoh orang tiada memberi tahu ka-Melaka? Hendak merajalela tuan hamba di-Siak ini', see Shellabear, p. 177; regarding the pardon of the Raja of Siak (Sultan Ibrahim), see also Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 118; 'Paduka kakanda empunya sembah, datang kapada paduka adinda, jikalau ada khilap bebal paduka kakanda, melainkan ampun paduka adinda banyak-banyak akan paduka kakanda', see Shellabear, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
80 Brown, *ibid.*, p. 63.
81 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

82 In this instance the *laksamana* disobeyed the orders of the Raja of Pahang to punish the former's man for murder because the dead man had himself offended the sultan of Melaka, see *ibid.*, p. 117.
83 'jikalau besar dosa-nya di-bunoh, itu pun jikalau pada hukum Shara', see Shellabear, *op. cit*,. p. 25.
84 Andaya, B.W., 'The Indian Saudagar-raja (ruler's merchant) in Traditional Malay Courts', *JMBRAS*, vol. 51, no. 1, 1978, p. 16.
85 Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 63.
86 *Ibid.*, p. 91.
87 For an account of the origin of the *ciri* genealogy of ancient kings and its use in the lustration of the first Malay king, see Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 25; for description of the enthronement ceremony of Sultan Muhammad Syah in traditional Srivijayan style during which the *ciri* was also used, see Brown, *ibid.*, p. 56; Perak apparently still keeps this custom in its enthronement ceremonies, see R.O. Winstedt, 'Kingship and Enthronement in Malaya', *JMBRAS* vol. 20, 1947, pp. 129–139; for extract of the *ciri*, see R.O. Winstedt and R.J. Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', *op. cit.*, p. 175.
88 Gullick, J.M., *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginning of Change*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 34–35.
89 Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, *The Hikayat Abdullah* (The Story of Abdullah), translation by A. Hill, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 269.
90 'pada hukum-nya patut di-bunoh-nya. Daripada ia hamba Melayu tiada mau durhaka, maka demikian laku-nya', see Shellabear, p. 186.
91 Milner, A.C., *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982, p. 113.
92 Brakel, L.F., 'State and Statecraft in 17th Century Aceh', in Reid and Castles, *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, p. 58.
93 Heine-Geldern, Robert, 'Conception of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. 2, 1942, p. 22.

Chapter 3

94 Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad, *Tuhfat Al-Nafis (The Precious Gift)*, edited and translated by Virginia Matheson & Barbara Watson Andaya, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 43; Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor 1641–1728*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press 1975, p. 75.
95 Andaya, L.Y. & B.W., *A History of Malaysia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982, pp. 71–72.
96 Meilink-Roelofsz, M.A.P., 'European Influence in SEAsia 1500–1630', *JSEAH*, vol. 5, no. 2, September 1964, p. 196.
97 Cowan, C.D., *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 1.
98 Sadka, Emily, *The Protected Malay States 1874–1895*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1968, pp. 41–46.
99 Cowan, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

100 Francis Light claimed Penang belonged to no one, see D.K. Bassett, 'Anglo-Malay Relations 1786–1795', *JMBRAS*, vol. 38, no. 2, July 1966, pp. 183–187; and R. Bonney, *Kedah, 1771–1821: The Search for Security and Independence*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 170.
101 Bassett, D.K., Anglo-Malay Relations, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
102 Sadka, op. *cit.*, pp. 47–79, n. 2.
103 Sadka, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–53.
104 *Ibid.*, p. 156.
105 *Ibid*, *p.* 47; Cowan, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
106 Residency agreements however did differ for the 'Federated' and 'Non-Federated' states.
107 Conversation with Raja Nong Chik (since deceased), former state secretary and speaker of the Malaysian parliament.
108 Khasnor, Johan, *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 8–15.
109 Darwin's epic *On the Origins of the Species* (1859) theorized that the human race had not evolved completely with some primitive people and this was the basis on which early colonizers had perceived the need to civilize 'sub-human' natives. But Social Darwinism went further to suggest that non-Christians too were mentally inferior. J.D.Y. Peel (ed) *Herbert Spencer, On Social Evolution: Selected Writings*, 1972; Elman R. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*, 1975.
110 Gullick, J.M., *Malay Society in the late Nineteenth Century, The Beginnings of Change*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1987, p. 73; Meilink-Roelofsz, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
111 Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 196.
112 Gullick, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–75; Cowan, p. 227.
113 Sadka, *op. cit.*, p. 340.
114 In March 1873, Tengku Zai'u'ddin of Selangor entered into a complex contract which granted exclusive mining rights to a company which 'became a real power in Selangor', see Cowan, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
115 Meilink-Roelofsz, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
116 Turnbull, Mary C., *A History of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989, p. 228.
117 Tarling, Nicholas, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in Southeast Asia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 170.
118 Turnbull, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
119 Civil strife and bloodshed preceded independence in almost all British and European colonies in Asia. Elsewhere, the British Caribbean Islands and Fiji were spared. The Malayan Emergency was not a nationalist struggle for independence.
120 The Malayan Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) unfortunately turned against the Malays who it claimed had collaborated with the Japanese, this led to several racial riots. This turn of event was due to the fact that the MPAJA, had after the War, been infiltrated by the communists and later became the Anti-British League which the Malays, quite naturally, rejected.
121 As opposed to business leaders, leaders of guilds were not always

businessmen themselves but organizers of *kongsis* (guanxi), secret societies, *kangani mandors* (overseers), compradors and other business intermediaries and political emissaries.

122 Case, William, *Elites and Regimes in Malaysia: Revisiting a Consociational Democracy*, Melbourne: Monash University, 1996, p. 48.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

124 Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Evolution and Development of the Political System in Malaysia', in Robert Scalapino, Seizaburo Sato, Jusuf Wanandi (eds), *Asian Political Institutionalization*, Berkeley: University of California, 1986, p. 224.

125 The Muslim Property Administration Act, for instance, does not allow automatic transfer of deceased property to a sole female next-of-kin. Other relatives and if there are younger male siblings, would quite frequently get large entitlements.

126 Quoted in Muhammad Ikmal Said, 'Ethnic Perspectives of the Left in Malaysia', in Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah (eds), *Fragmented Vision – Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, p. 261.

127 White, Nicholas J., *Business, Government and the End of Empire*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 298–299.

128 Quoted in Muhammad Ikmal Said, *ibid.* p. 261.

129 Sopiee, Mohamad Noordin, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974, pp. 13–21.

130 Allen, James de V., *The Malayan Union*, Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series No. 10, 1967, pp. 70–71.

131 Sopiee, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

132 Roff, William R., *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 232.

133 Its leaders replicated speeches of D.N. Aidit, secretary-general of PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia).

134 A Federation of Malaya-Philippines-Indonesia, an expanded alternative to the idea of Malaysia favoured by Philippines' Macapagal and Indonesia's Sukarno. Tunku led them up the 'garden path' and quietly concluded the Malaysia deal with Britain much to their chagrin.

135 Malaya was cross with Sukarno for his continual claim of moral leadership in Southeast Asia. At the April 1955 Bandung Afro-Asia Conference, he reproached colonized states for cowering meekly under western imperialism, see Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, London: Orion Books, 1992, pp. 477–479.

136 Nearly all the publicly-listed companies were British-owned. Companies such as Sime Darby, Harrisons Crossfield, Guthries, London Tin, Boustead and Pahang Consolidated dominated the Stock Exchange for many years after independence. Malaysian control of London Tin did not come about until the late 1970s.

137 Quoted in Wheeler, L.R., *The Modern Malay*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1928, p. 155.

138 Shaw, William, *Tun Razak: His Life and Times*, Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malaysia, 1976, p. 15.

139 Roff, William R., *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994, 2nd edition, pp. 112–113.
140 Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–26.
141 Gullick, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–55.
142 Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 152.
143 When the late Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, well-known reformist and chief judge of the Syariah Court in Johor, returned home after a trip to England with the Sultan of Johor, he abruptly resigned his job saying that he was disgusted with the sultan's indulgence in alcohol, womanizing and gambling. He agreed to return to his job when the sultan promised to give up his vices. Conversation with Tun Hamdan, Governor of Penang and son of the late Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin.
144 Sadka, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
145 *'tak lapuk di-hujan, tak lekang di-panas'*, see Young, Ken, 'Minangkabau Authority Patterns and the Effects of Dutch Rule', J. Maxwell (ed), *The Malay-Islamic World of Sumatra: Studies in Politics and Culture*, Melbourne: Monash University Winter Lectures, 1982, p. 67.
146 Brown, C.C., *Malay Sayings*, London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1959, p. x.
147 Gullick, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
148 Brown, Malay Annals, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
149 Milner, A.C., *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982, p. 114.
150 Healy, Allen, *Tunku Abdul Rahman*, St. Lucia, Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1982, p. 10.
151 Since its war-torn economy was no longer able to sustain financial support for the colonies, Britain initiated an autonomy dialogue which was also used as a counterweight to pre-empt Japan's histrionics of freeing colonies from western domination.
152 Tunku Abdul Rahman, *Viewpoints*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1978, p. 9.
153 Pye, Lucien, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, Cambridge, Massachussetes: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 121–126; cited in Case, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
154 Weiner, Myron, 'Empirical Democratic Theory', in Myron Weiner and Ergun Ozbudun (eds), Competitive Elections in Developing Countries, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1987, p. 20.
155 Nair, Shanti, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 17.
156 The term *bumiputra* which was used, ostensibly meant 'Muslim Malay' much more than its true meaning of 'sons of the soil' which, with the advent of Malaysia, has caused contradictions with the non-Islamic *bumiputras* of Sabah and Sarawak. UMNO policy now accepts these peoples including the Melakan Portuguese Eurasians as *bumiputras* but not quite into UMNO membership.
157 Shaw, William, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

Chapter 4

158 The job of a district officer was not commonly given to a local in colonial times. There is every reason to believe that he secured the job on his own merit and not through his royal connections as some would have it. He also did a very efficient job with the people – his elevation as chief of *Seberkas Pena* was proof of his popularity.

159 Healy, Allen M., *Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957–1970)*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982, p. 10.

160 Conversation with Raja Nong Chik (since deceased), former state secretary and speaker of the Malaysian parliament. Tunku according to Lee Kuan Yew was a 'reasonable' man who was shrewd but worked rather slowly, see Han Fook Kwang, et al., *Lee Kuan Yew: The Man and His Ideas*, Singapore: Times Editions, 1998, pp. 72–73.

161 Tunku Abdul Rahman, *Viewpoints*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Books Ltd., p. 82.

162 Economic expansion in the colonial field called for the set up of a colonial products committee in the colonial office in London. Increased demand for Malayan rubber and tin and other exports that by 1950 Britain enjoyed a surplus economy, see Henry Pelling, *Britain and the Marshall Plan*, London: MacMillan Press, 1988, pp. 49, 110, 115; and Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 435–436.

163 Of the total of 544 estates (rubber, oil palm, coconuts), only sixty-four were non-British, see 'The Plantation Industries – The Estates' in *Malaysia: A Survey*, edited by Wang Gungwu, London: Frederick Praeger, 1964, p. 238 Table 24. Agency House and Other Interests in Malaysian Estate Industries.

164 Healy, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

165 *Ibid.*, p. 276. communist terrorist activity declined markedly after the 28–29 December 1955 Baling Talks. The Emergency was declared officially over on 31 July 1960. However there were unofficial reports of clashes with terrorists up until 1963. Chin Peng MCP leader said in an interview with BBC World Service on 19 June 1998 that the communists fought until 1989.

166 *Straits Budget*, 21 June 1967, p. 4 cited in Gullick, J.M., *Malaysia*, London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1979, p. 239.

167 Tunku Abdul Rahman, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–129.

168 *Ibid*, p. 82.

169 The failures of FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) set up in 1956 by Tunku's Federal Legislative Council and other rural development projects including RIDA (Rural and Land Industrial Development Authority) are some examples, see Gullick, *op. cit.*, pp. 245–6.

170 Gullick, *op. cit.*, Appendix 2, Table 10, p. 286.

171 Bowie, Alasdair, *Crossing the Industrial Divide: State, Society and the Politics of Economic Transformation in Malaysia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 69.

172 Cash income for a family of tenant rice cultivators was about RM50

p.m. whereas rubber smallholders could make about RM330 p.m., see Gullick, *op. cit.*, pp. 230, 248.

173 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

174 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

175 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

176 Healy, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

177 Stubbs, Richard, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, Oxford University Press: Singapore, 1989, p. 35.

178 Malcolm MacDonald's adventures into protected Iban territory, his womanizing and an affair with Christina Loke wife of millionaire Dato Loke Wan Tho did seemingly little to damage his reputation. After his tour of duty he lived intermittently in Malaysia and Singapore.

179 Josey, Alex, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974, pp. 170–171.

180 Lee Kuan Yew, *The Battle for Merger*, Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1961, p. 77.

181 Minchin, James, *No Man Is An Island*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin Australia, 2nd edition, 1990, p. 112.

182 Lau, Albert, *A Moment of Anguish: Singapore in Malaysia and the Politics of Disengagement*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998, pp. 240–242.

183 Han Fook Kwang, et al., *Lee Kuan Yew*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 77–78.

184 Minchin, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

185 Singapore Government memorandum on the Commission of Inquiry into the 1964 riots cited in Minchin, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

186 Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

187 *Straits Times*, 10 December 1964, cited in Minchin, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

188 It was generally believed that Lee and Tunku had signed the Separation Agreement since he was summoned to Tunku's residence the night before the Separation was announced but it was recently revealed that this was not the case. The initial Agreement was, in fact, signed at Razak's residence, see Albert Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

189 Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

190 Gullick, *op. cit.*, p. 280 Table 1. Currently, in the total Malaysian population, Malays are approximately 50 percent and the Chinese 40 percent.

191 In Kuala Lumpur, Malays avoided the Chow Kit or Pudu Road areas. The Chinese likewise in Kampong Baru. Similarly in Singapore, young Malays rarely roamed in the Chinatown. Though Chinese shops dotted the periphery of the predominantly Malay area of Geylang Serai, young Chinese people tended not to venture into the Malay Settlement (Kampung Chai Chee/Kampung Melayu in Jalan Ubi).

192 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

193 It was a proxy system whereby the Chinese, the Baba, had enlisted the Malay, the Ali, to obtain on their behalf licences for which only Malays were eligible to receive. The Malay only made a one-off commission on the deal and had no further part in the project, usually timber extraction for which the licence was needed.

194 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 August 1974, cited in Case, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

195 Toh was deeply disappointed with Separation and was kept in the dark until the last moment, see Lau, *op. cit.*, pp. 258, 262. Tunku felt Separation was the only way to get rid of Lee, see Lau, *ibid.*, pp. 251, 257.

Chapter 5

196 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
197 The Chinese parties accepted Malay dominance in *Barisan*. MCA was given only 23 seats on the *Barisan Nasional* ticket though it had contested for thirty-three seats in the 1969 General elections. This was generous since MCA lost twenty of those seats in the election.
198 Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
199 Tunku Abdul Rahman, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
200 PAS eventually withdrew from the *Barisan* in 1977 and its place was taken by the UMNO-Berjasa partnership in Kelantan.
201 Means, P. Gordon, *Malaysian Politics: The Second Generation*, Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991, pp. 28–29.
202 Datar, Kiran K., *Malaysia, Quest for a Politics of Consensus*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1983, p. 67.
203 Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 281.
204 Means, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32.
205 The term *ultra* was actually introduced by Lee Kuan Yew during his riotous time in the Malaysian parliament to describe Malay extremists in particular Syed Dato Ja'afar Albar.
206 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
207 For a comprehensive account of 'government-in-business' read Peter Searle, *Rent-Seekers or Real Capitalists?: The Riddle of Malaysian Capitalism*, PhD dissertation, Australian National University, 1994, pp. 52–54, 70–81; and Alasdair Bowie, 'The Dynamics of Business-Government Relations in Industrializing Malaysia', pp. 170–175, in Andrew MacIntyre, *Business and Government in Industrialising Asia*, St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994. For reference on UMNO's control of business read Edmund Terence Gomez, *Political Business: Corporate Involvement of Malaysian Political Parties*, Townsville, Queensland: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1994, this is an updated version of his *Politics in Business: UMNO's Corporate Investments*, Kuala Lumpur: Forum, 1990.
208 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
209 Yoshihara, Kunio, *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-East Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 22.
210 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
211 University Malaya Yearbook 1974–1975, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, p. 175 cited in Datar, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
212 Means, p. 70.
213 Dr Ibrahim Saad, deputy minister, Prime Minister's Department, announced that all squatters in Kuala Lumpur will be cleared by the year 2005, *Straits Times*, 12 June 1998.
214 Antholik, Michael, *ASEAN and the Diplomacy of Accommodation*, New York: M.E. Sharp, 1990, p. 22.

215 Minchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 169, 182. Singapore's connivance in the US Vietnam War effort in the extensive use of Singapore as logistics base was clearly a breach of the ZOPFAN spirit of no 'interference by outside powers' in Southeast Asia.

216 Similar zones of peace were suggested in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Chapter 6

217 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 May 1981, p. 11. Hussein preferred Mahathir over Razaleigh for the former's higher education and not because the latter was less matured as it was generally believed. Knowing Hussein's dislike for Tunku and his royal pretensions it is possible that he had reservations about royalty at the helm of government.

218 Conversation with Mansor Wahab (since deceased), former New Straits Times marketing director. Mansor said Samad had never exhibited any left-leaning views in his work neither did the company suspect him of engaging in such activities although his past was known to the company. Samad was a confidante of NST's former managing director Junus Sudin who was closely associated with the UMNO leadership. Samad was promptly reinstated in his job upon release from prison. It is interesting to note that Samad Ismail, Abdullah Majid and James Puthucheary (the future ideologue of the PAP) were arrested in Anti-British League raids in 1951 in Singapore; read Minchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–65.

219 Minchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–65, 170.

220 Datar, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201.

221 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

222 In 1990 a small group of Darul Arqam members mostly visiting students in Auckland were deported from New Zealand for questionable religious practices. Per conversation with Zainal Harun, a senior manager of Canon NZ, who first raised the issue with the police in Auckland and subsequently liaised with the governments of Malaysia and New Zealand for the deportation of the group.

223 Conversation with Nadzru Azhari, senior executive with the Kelantan State Development Corporation who was himself a product of such a group.

224 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

225 Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

226 Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, pp. 289–290.

227 Actual drilling operations are normally carried by drilling contractors that is companies that own and operate the drilling rigs on contract to the oil companies. As a rule in offshore operations oil companies do not own movable drilling rigs. But Petronas went against convention and was the first oil company in the world to own and operate such drilling rigs (through its subsidiary Carigali). Conversation with Datuk Brian Chang founder of Singapore-based Promet, the builder of Petronas' first drilling rig.

228 Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, pp. 289–290.

229 *Ibid.*

230 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

231 Datar, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
232 Minchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–171.
233 *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 10 September 98, by Professor Jamie Mackie.

Chapter 7

234 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
235 Doctors were actually educationally superior as they were required to have at least Cambridge Grade 2 Science before being accepted, whereas legal students were accepted in the Inns of Courts with at least Grade 3 or even the Junior Cambridge if they had articleship. Most of the postwar lawyers were 'barristers' without academic titles.
236 Means, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–123.
237 *Ibid.*, p. 121.
238 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
239 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
240 Conversation with Dr Chandra Muzaffar, one of the detainees.
241 Conversation with Tun Hamdan, Governor of Penang. Ghafar's marriage to a nineteen year-old became the butt of snide remarks which, apparently, affected Mahathir.
242 *Asia Year Book, 1994.*
243 He was among 13 charged for statutory rape of a thirteen year old girl. All confessed and were convicted except Rahim Tamby Chik who was acquitted. His acquittal became a subject of a pamphlet by DAP's Lim Eng Guan (Lim Kit Siang's son) which questioned the court's decision and other matters that were considered seditious – he was charged and jailed for three years when his appeal failed in August 1998.
244 *Asiaweek*, 20 October 1995.
245 *Straits Times*, 31 May 1998, in a speech at the annual MCA general assembly.
246 *Straits Times*, 22 June 1998.
247 *Straits Times*, 3 September 1998. It was revealed only after his dismissal that Mahathir had been upset mainly with Anwar for raising the issues of cronyism, etc.
248 *Straits Times*, 1 May 1998; see also Mahathir's interview with *Time Magazine*, 15 June 1998. Under the deal Malaysia's Petronas subsidiary and Malaysia's national shipping line, Malaysia International Shipping Corporation (MISC) paid US$220 million in cash and assumed US$311 million in debt for Mirzan's two shipping units of Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd. (KPB). MISC also paid US$1.58 billion in stock to Petronas for another five ships in related purchases.
249 *Time Magazine*, 'Mahathir Slips', 22 June 1998.
250 The lists were revealed at the close of the UMNO general assembly 18–20 June 1998 and had names of many prominent individuals, including 10,000 lesser known people, mostly Malays. *Straits Times*, 22 June 1998. There were a total of four lists called 'Basic Information on Privatized Projects', numbered 70–114, 1–69, 65–171, 1–64. *Asiaweek*, 6 July 1998.
251 *Straits Times*, 19 July 1998.
252 *Straits Times*, 30 August 1998.

253 *Star*, 27 August 1998.
254 *Straits Times*, 4, 20, 22 June 1998.
255 *Straits Times*, 31 May 1998.
256 *Straits Times*, 27 June 1998.
257 *Straits Times*, 25 June 1998.
258 *Straits Times*, 26 June 1998.
259 *Star*, 3 and 4 September 1998; *Straits Times*, 4 September 1998.
260 Lee Kuan Yew revealed in a press conference in Kuala Lumpur on 17 August 2000 that when he asked Mahathir why he had Anwar arrested under the ISA, Mahathir replied he 'did not know'. *Straits Times*, 18 August 2000. But it was well-known that Anwar was arrested for staging illegal rallies, a common reason in ISA detentions.
261 In a speech at the UN Assembly, 18 August 1997.
262 It is more useful to speak of democracy in its common usage in terms of basic freedoms, rather than its classical definition – 'rule by the people' from Greek *demos* the people and *kratein*, to rule. Freedom and democracy are used interchangeably.
263 *Time Magazine*, November 1986.
264 Means, *ibid.*, p. 237.
265 *Straits Times*, 21 September 1998, in a question and answer session at a Foreign Correspondents Association gathering in Singapore.
266 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
267 Including the *Straits Times* were the *Berita Minggu*, *Berita Harian*, *Utusan Melayu*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *Star*, *Straits Echo*, Chinese papers, *Nanyang Siang Pau*, *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, *Sing Pin*, *Shin Min* and Tamil paper, *Tamil Malar*. A total of 12 newspapers.
268 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
269 *Star*, 26 August 1998.
270 *Straits Times*, 19 July 1998.
271 Mahathir himself has been known to hold independent views as expressed in his book, *Malay Dilemma*. With regard to the headscarves commonly worn by Muslim women in Malaysia, it is likely that he does not approve of them as part of everyday attire since his wife is never seen in one in public and she appears quite uninhibited amongst ladies with headscarves. He clearly disapproves of the full-faced purdah and has totally ban its use by civil servants.
272 Case, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
273 In Singapore, every district has at least one mosque – there are some 28 postal districts and approximately 500,000 Muslims. There are an estimated 71 mosques that are affiliated to the Islamic Council of Singapore (MUIS), this would be the mosques that had been substantially funded by the Singapore government.
274 Nair, Shanti, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 34.
275 *New Straits Times*, 23 May 1998. It was reported in the *Straits Times*, 19 September 1998 that there are 55 deviationist Islamic groups in Malaysia.
276 *Straits Times*, 23 August 1998.
277 Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
278 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 98

279 Case, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
280 Real GNP growth between 1981 and 1988 Source: Treasury Economic Report 1988; *Bank Negara Annual Report 1988*.
281 Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Grand Vision: Mahathir and Modernisation', in Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah, (eds), *Fragmented Vision – Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, p. 60.
282 Case, *ibid.*, p. 268.
283 *Ibid.* p. 270.
284 *Asia Year Book* 1994.
285 *Asiaweek*, 27 September 1996.
286 *Straits Times*, 2 July 1998. The crisis actually began with the devaluation of the Filipino Peso sometime in June 1997. On 2 July, the Thai Baht devalued and was floated. The Malaysian Ringgit was hit on 8 July. By 24 July, the Asian meltdown of currencies and the stock markets was in full swing.
287 *Straits Times*, 8 July 1998, six private-sector economists polled by the *Straits Times* had an average forecast of a 3.2 per cent contraction in gross domestic output for 1998, based on a range between – 1.5 percent and – 4.8 percent.
288 On 'total anarchy' interview with *Time Magazine* on 15 June 1998; 'outside forces' *Straits Times* 22 June 1998.
289 *Time Magazine*, 22 June 1998.
290 A quick scan of the *Asiaweek and Far Eastern Economic Review* in the past few months shows this to be true. The *Economist's* 'Survey of East Asian Economies', 7–13 March 1998, has more on Malaysia than the other countries.
291 *Straits Times*, 18 September 1998.
292 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 June 1999.
293 *Straits Times*, 10 September 1998.
294 *Straits Times*, 11 September 1998.
295 An offshoot of Jewish-owned Salomon Brothers and member of one of the world's largest banks – the Traveler's Group. It is the third largest merchant bank in the US.
296 *Straits Times*, 9 September 1998.
297 Cited in Morias, J. Victor, *Mahathir, A Profile in Courage*, Kuala Lumpur: Eastern University Press, 1982, pp. 77–78.
298 *Straits Times*, 20 June 1998.
299 *Straits Times*, 16 October 1997.
300 *Straits Times*, 20 May 1998.
301 Mahathir's speech, 'Re-engineering the Economic and Political links between Europe and East Asia', at the World Economic Forum Europe/East Asia Summit in Singapore on 13 October 1994.
302 *Straits Times*, 17 October 1997.
303 Case, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Britain ended the preferential trade benefits and simultaneously instituted dramatic increases in foreign student fees for 15,500 Malaysians. Mahathir only put his 'buy British last' policy six months later.
304 *Berita Harian*, 8 July 1998.
305 *Straits Times*, 19 April 1998.

306 *Straits Times*, 15 March 1998.
307 *Straits Times*, 17 September 1998.
308 *Straits Times*, 16 September 1998.

Chapter 8

309 *Straits Times*, 13 October 1999.
310 A mattress was brought into court by the prosecution to elaborate on DNA findings of the stains found on it.
311 *Straits Times*, 11 November 1999.
312 Mahathir said UMNO lost seats due to personality and intra-party rivalries caused by those still loyal to Anwar. But in the same report, Najib Tun Razak said problems were with party policies, see *Straits Times*, 12 December 1999.
313 *Straits Times*, 15 September 2000. The NDP which expired at the end of 2000 is replaced by the *Vision Development Policy* which will take Malaysia to developed status by 2020.
314 *Straits Times*, 10 August 2000.
315 *Straits Times*, 3 September 2000 and 16 September 2000.
316 *Straits Times*, 8 December 2000.
317 'Fingering Mahathir', *Asiaweek*, 15 December 2000 and *StraitsTimes*, 13 December 2000.
318 *Straits Times*, 28 January 2001.
319 *Straits Times*, 20 June 2000.
320 *Straits Times*, 6 February 2001.
321 *Straits Times*, 1 February 2001.
322 *Straits Times*, 22 September 2000.
323 *Straits Times*, 14 September 2000.
324 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 December 2000.
325 *Asiaweek*, 15 December 2000.
326 *Asiaweek*, 26 January 2001, see Mahathir interview.
327 *Straits Times*, 3 February 2001.
328 *Straits Times*, 24 May 2000.
329 *Straits Times*, 22 January 2001.
330 *Straits Times*, 5 June 2000 and 23 June 2000.
331 In a speech at the UMNO general assembly, 11 May 2000.
332 Mahathir's speech at Kuala Lumpur, 'The Islamic World and Global Cooperation: Preparing for the 21st Century'. *The Oxford Islamic Forum*, 25 April 1997.
333 *Straits Times*, 25 March 2000.
334 The national ideology of *Rukunegara*, known as the Articles of Faith of the State, is literally a pledge of unity and obedience to the state containing five principles: belief in god, loyalty to king and country, upholding the constitution, rule of law and good behaviour and morality. These principles were to be achieved by five objectives: unity, democracy, justice, liberalism and progress. The new ideology beseeched 'a greater unity of *all her peoples* . . . ensuring a liberal approach to . . . *diverse cultural traditions* . . .'
335 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 May 2000.

Chapter 9

336 Fraser, Alexander Campbell, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding by John Locke*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894; Jonathan Dancy, *Perceptual Knowledge*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988 and Dominic Scott, *Recollections and Experience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

337 Van De Pitte, Frederick P., 'Descartes's Innate Ideas,' pp. 138–156 in Georges J.D. Moyal (ed) *René Descartes: Critical Assessments*, Vol. 1, London: Routledge, 1991. Read also Benson Mates, *The Philosophy of Leibniz: Metaphysics and Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 49–50, 175–178.

338 Congruent with Plato's Theory of Latent Knowledge and the Dispositional Innatism Theory subscribes by the Descartes and Seventeenth Century Cambridge Platonists, read Scott, *Recollections and Experience*.

339 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

340 *Ibid.*, p. 156. Locke rejects the conception of innate ideas and believes that family upbringing, values, etc. 'all indelibly stamp the white paper of the mind'. Where Locke's argument fails is that the human mind has firstly to 'predispose' itself to receive conditioning, learning and socialization – for example, the instinctive bonding of mother and her newly-born child, or the primordial realization of fear, sensation, loss, etc. These are all innate qualities. Locke though, without acknowledging innatism, concedes that the human being is born with 'passive awareness of the raw materials of knowledge' – this he prefers to call perception. Read Alexander Campbell Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–192. Also Neal Wood, *The Politics of Locke's Philosophy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, p. 56, 129, pp. 149–157.

341 Fatalism is defined here to mean the 'belief in the inevitability' rather than the 'hard' determinism that looks at fatalism in causal chain.

342 Mahathir's stint as a private medical practitioner did not have the same urban corporate exposure, as did Hussein Onn's law practice.

343 Khoo Boo Teik, *The Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 272.

344 Gardner, Howard, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, New York: Basic Books, 1995, Appendix 11, pp. 327–341.

345 Kellerman, Barbara, *Leadership: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984, p. ix.

346 'Charisma' as a word did not originate with Weber. 'Charisma' is not really a useful word to describe leadership qualitatively. It is intrinsic and subjective and has long been associated with religious perception particularly with Christian theological discourse – the 'gift of grace' resembling the Greek idea of the divine man or the Roman innate concept of *facilitas*; for Christians this meant the intuitive recognition by lay people that the saint has intimate contact with god – such suppositions obviously have questionable merit but as they exist regardless they need to be understood as an element inherent in society's perception of leadership. Read Charles Lindholm, *Charisma*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: B. Blackwell, 1990, p. 192.

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Abbreviations of journals cited

JMBRAS *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSEAH *Journal of Southeast Asian History*

Newspapers

Asiaweek
Far Eastern Economic Review
New Straits Times
New Sunday Times
Star
Straits Times
Time Magazine

Glossary

abang	brother; a polite term of address for husband or friend
abiseka	a Brahmannic rite to re-anoint a *kshatriya*
adat	custom and traditions
adat raja	royal custom
anak	child
anak buah	royal subject
anak dagang	recent immigrant
anak negeri	autochthonous or *bumiputra* person
anakanda-anakanda	children
anak-bapak	child-father bond; also bond between ruler and subject
anugeraha	divine beneficence to a subject
bahasa	language or use with *budi* to mean etiquette
Bahasa Indonesia	Malay language officially referred to as the National Language of Indonesia
Bahasa Kebangsaan	Malay language officially referred to as the National Language of Singapore
Bahasa Malaysia	Malay language officially referred to as the National Language of Malaysia
Bahasa Melayu	Malay language
bakti	devotion
balai rakyat	community hall
bangsa	race
bangsawan	opera
bapa (bapak or pak)	leader or father; polite term for an elder person in Indonesia

batik	Malay wax-designed cloth
bendahara	archaic form of prime minister; modern form for prime minister is *perdana menteri*
bicara	discussion
bisa-kawi	spirit-keeper in Minangkabau
bomoh	medicine-man
bumiputra (bumiputera)	indigenous people or literally, son of the soil though it now, more appropriately, refers to peoples of the soil or of indigenous origins
bung	variation of *abang* or brother; a polite term of address for husband or older male; more commonly Indonesian
cahaya	radiance or guiding light in person
cakravartin	Sanskrit meaning cosmic ruler
cerdek	cunning
ciri	acclamation of supernatural genealogy in royal enthronement by the royal shaman
curek	ceremonial sword
dakwah	literally means sermon but generally applies to mean missionary activities of Islamic fundamentalism
darshan	Sanskrit *darśana*, to view the holy personage
daulat	sacred forces surrounding kingship
dharmas	religious domains
DKK	*Darah Keturunan Keling*, literally refers to one who has Malay/Tamil blood, and also called a *Chitty* for those who come from Melaka
doa selamat	prayer
dunia akhirat	next world
durhaka	lese majeste, or sin against the ruler and invoked as a curse on the perpetrator
fatwa	legal ruling on a question of Islamic law
fikh	religious decree
gamelan	Javanese orchestra
haidh	Arabic for menstruation

haram	forbidden by Islamic law
Hari Raya Puasa or Aidilfitri	celebrating the end of the fasting month of Ramadan as known in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei
harta pusaka	inherited customary and familial property
hikayat	history, story or narrative
hululiyah	Arabic for incarnation
ibadah	religious duty
ikat	Malay hand-woven cloth
ilmu	knowledge; use with *kesihatan*, or *hisab* becomes health science or mathematics respectively; use alone it means esoteric knowledge or knowledge of the occult
imam	leader of congregation at prayer in a mosque
istana	royal palace
jihad	holy war
kafirs	infidels, usually referring to non-Muslims
kalifah	supreme leader
kampung	hamlet or village
kangani	Tamil for organized labour collective
kapitan Cina	Chinese comprador
kayu kamat	a kind of seal made from wood
kebesaran	glorification of the ruler
kehalusan	polite behaviour, forbearance, subtlety, and aspects of refined manners, and used also to denote shrewdness
kemuliaan	exalted status of a ruler
kenduri	feast
kerajaan	government or kingdom; in a state of raja-subject
keramat	tomb of an ancestor or shrine of a revered departed
kesaktian	from Sanskrit *sakti*, divinity bestowed on rulers
keselamatan	well-being
khalwat	improper physical proximity between a

	male and a female not married to each other
kismet	Will of God
kongsi (guanxi)	Chinese clan guild; community brotherhood
kshatriya	Sanskrit for warrior or royal class of the Hindu caste (class) system, in the following order: Brahmin, *kshatriya*, *vesyas*, *and sudras*, and the 'untouchables'or *pariah* (or *dalit*)
kurnia	ruler's bounty
laksamana	admiral
lembuara	spear
lingga	Pali form of Sanskrit *linga*, symbolic representations of human generative organs, part of fertility-worship of ruler as *rajalingga* or *rajalingam*
mahdi	the coming prophet
mahkota	crown; use as *raja-mahkota*, it means the crown prince or heir to the throne
mahligai or mahaligai	Sanskrit meaning palace
majlis bicara	council meeting; *bicara* also means discussion
majlis	council; refers also to important gatherings
makan suap	literally, being fed but more correctly taking bribes
malu	shame, loss of face, disgrace or embarrassment
mamak	Tamil meaning uncle; usually refers to a Tamil Muslim
mandala	Sanskrit meaning centre
masuk Melayu	becoming Malay by conversion to Islam
mati	to die
Melayu jati	true Malay
menteri besar	chief minister
menteris or menteri-menteri	ministers
muafakat	agreement through consensus
mufti	a religious court chief judge
mukim	a district where one considers home

muntah lembu	cow's vomit; in Malay history it refers to the royal shaman or keeper of the sacred *ciri*
murtad	person who has left Islam – backslider
musyawarah	deliberation
najis	taboo; ritually unclean to participate in religious activity, usually refers to a woman in menstruation
namaste	Hindi for hand-clasped salutation or greeting
neraka	hell
negeri	country
nobat	royal band
orang besar	district chief
orang laut	people of the sea; Malay royal combat force
pahlawan	warrior
pawang	shaman or medicine-man (*bomoh*)
penghulu	village chief
peranakan	more commonly referring to Straits-born Chinese whose mother tongue is Malay. In the more traditional way, the women-folk dress in the Malay sarong and *kebaya* (blouse). The *peranakan* is believed to be a descendant of a Malay foreparent. A Chinese *peranakan* is called *baba* (for male) and *nonya* (for female)
perasaan kebangsaan	sensation of nationalism
pondok	a small village hut
pusaka raja	royal regalia
pusat	centre or headquarters
pusat-mandala	centre of power
raja	sultan, ruler or king
raja muda	young king and brother of the heir apparent; in Perak the heir is called the *raja-muda* in deference to its first ruler Sultan Muzaffar Syah who was relegated to *raja-muda* by his father in favour of Muzaffar's younger brother in the Melaka sultanate

raja-mahkota	heir apparent to the throne
rakyat	people
rasuah or wang suap	bribe
rezeki	good fortune
sabil Allah	God's war
sakti	Sanskrit meaning divinity bestowed on rulers
sampan	a paddle riverboat
saudagar-raja	ruler's personal merchant
sawah	wet-rice cultivation
tudung selendang	head scarf
semangat	invisible vital (life or spiritual) force
semangat-keramat	spiritual force from a shrine/tomb
sijida	Indian custom of kneeling or bowing in obeisance
sinkeh	China-born Chinese
sultan	raja, ruler or king
sumpah	solemn promise, oath, or curse. More often this word is used as a curse (*menyumpahi* = to curse or *kena sumpah* = to be under a curse)
syahbandar	harbour master, mercantile comprador or mayor
syariah (*shar'ia*)	religious administration or Islamic law
tahlil	prayer; but usually refers to prayer for the departed
takdir	fate
tanda	symbol
tanjak	royal headdress or crown
tarikat	mystical brotherhood
tasawwuf	Islamic mysticism usually associated with Sufism
temenggong	defence minister
tulah	royal curse
tun-bendahara	prime minister
ubat guna	magic potion; *kena ubat guna* means being charmed; sometimes it is simply said *kena buat* or to be done in by malevolent spirits
ulama	Muslim scholar

ulu or hulu	interior of a country and remote from a city
ummah	Muslim community
varna	Sanskrit for the Hindu caste (class) system. Malay word for colour (*warna*) derived from this word
vratyastoma	a Hindu rite to qualify non-Indians to enter the Hindu *varna* system as was done for Hindu priests in Indonesia
wahyu	from Arabic *wahy*, meaning divine radiance
wak kebun	gardener
wanita	woman or female
wayang	play or public show, also refers to movie
wayang-lakon	puppet show or drama
yaksa	Sanskrit for soil-god worshipped as such in animism
Yang di-Pertuan Agong	the Malaysian king, literally 'one who is foremost' or chief ruler
Yang Mahamulia Sri Paduka	His Highness with the Sacred Feet, from the Sanskritic title of 'ruler with the noble footprints'
zina	infidelity

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