

A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. By Mahathir Mohamad. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: MPH Publishing, 2011. 846 pp. \$15.99 (cloth).

Malaysia's former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's (1981–2003) book is an impressive study of modern political history. It contains crucial insights for people interested in the formation of Malaysia's current policy line, but the book is also a good read for people interested in Malaysia's role in issues of domestic and international peace and conflict. With its more than 800 pages, the book deserves a review from the various perspectives for which it offers invaluable information. I review here the contributions this book makes to our knowledge of conflicts that Malaysia and Prime Minister Mahathir have been involved in.

The book has an interesting analysis on the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), a conflict where anticolonial and anti-Japanese radicalism was mixed with Communist insurgency and ethnic (Chinese) loyalty. The author reveals the way common resistance to the Japanese kept various forces together, and how the surrender of Japan on August 16, 1945, created a new situation in which ethnicity, domestic ideology, and attitude toward British rule suddenly created dividing lines that were soon framed within the logic of global cold war between Communists and anti-Communists.

The description of the laws and institutions of the Malayan Emergency, such as the Internal Security Act, is especially illuminating. It shows, perhaps unintentionally, many of the mechanisms by which elitist colonial rules of politics are passed on to postcolonial politics. Furthermore, Mahathir's analysis of how the colonial masters sought an ethnic-based alliance with Malay movements against the Communist movement that were dominated by people of Chinese and Indian ethnic origin clearly shows how colonial practices of governance laid down some of the foundation for ethnic politics in the future Malaya and Malaysia. Mahathir's analysis also shows how difficult it was to then undo this mixing of ethnic and ideological alliances.

Mahathir's book also illustrates the conflicts related to the formation of Malaysia as a federation on September 16, 1963. The first of the disputes was between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, while the other, the Malaysian Confrontation, was between Malaysia and Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines.

The proposal for a Malaysian federation was supported by Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew because of cold war-related rationales. He felt that an independent Singapore would almost certainly become Communist (p. 167). Many Malays of Malaya did not want Singapore to be included because of concerns about ethnic balance (p. 169). However, due to the resistance of Indonesia and the Philippines against the establishment of the Malaysian federation, it was difficult for those opposing the merger to avoid being labeled supporters of "external powers"—Indonesia and the Philippines—which were waging a battle against Malaysia. "We in Malaya could not object without appearing to support Indonesia and the Philippines. To prevent being accused of being disloyal the Malays of the peninsula were forced to accept the risk of the Singapore Chinese tilting the balance of the races in the proposed Malaysia" (p. 171).

Thus the merger went ahead, but partly due to the marginalized position of the ethnic Chinese Malaysians the ethnic Malays managed to negotiate an electoral system that favored Malay constituencies in Malaya, while offering far-reaching autonomy for Singapore. Rural areas were given greater electoral weight in the Malaysian constitution while the "mainly Chinese . . . urban areas would have a proportionally smaller number of representatives to Parliament compared to the rural constituencies. So long as this fact was accepted, it would balance out the higher number of Chinese voters" (p. 172).

The other conflict, the Malaysian Confrontation, related to the establishment of Malaysia and was international in nature. The Philippines was not enthusiastic about Malaysia due to Malaysia's claim of Sabah in Northern Borneo, which was to be included in the new federation. Indonesia again, according to Mahathir, might have viewed the entire territory of the island of Borneo as a supplement to its province of Kalimantan. This is obviously an interpretation that Indonesia's President Sukarno rejected at the time. In this part of the book the author appears clearly as an actor in, rather than a neutral observer of, the conflict; however, in this role he is very informative about the perceptions and preferences of the Malaysian political elite at the time.

Dr. Mahathir also analyzes the domestic ethnic opposition of the Malaysian merger and presents an interesting analysis of how Indonesia's aggression again helped Malaysian unity. Even those originally opposed to the merger were in agreement that joining Malaysia was a better option than joining Indonesia.

After the fall of communism in Indonesia, the eagerness of the United States and the United Kingdom to dominate the region was reduced. Furthermore, the regional states adopted a posture that emphasized regional self-sufficiency in political and security affairs. With the establishment of ASEAN they created an order based on a doctrine that emphasized common development and positive economic interdependence. The struggle against internal Communists remained the only conflict in the country, and the persistent tackling of economic grievances managed to take out most of the revolutionary spirit from this rebellion.

For a peace researcher, Mahathir's book offers interesting analysis of domestic and international peace and conflict, which are a central theme of the book. Mahathir's account consists of analysis and personal reflection. It is not always "objective" or impartial, but instead, it offers a Malaysian perspective. In this way the book is interesting both as research material on perceptions of an influential politician and as a study. However, the book is also interesting for those who want to know how knowledge and politics interact in Malaysia. Mahathir's analysis is not merely a scholarly account or a personal reflection, but a careful reading of it also reveals something about the political elite's need to create truths and realities for Malaysian politics.

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Is China Buying the World? By Peter Nolan. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012. 147 pp. \$19.95 (cloth).

Nolan offers a provocative assessment of the state of the business system in developed economies, and a measured assessment of China's capacity to project economic power beyond its borders. Is China buying the world? No! Firms from high-income countries have already bought it, and it is almost impossible for China to catch up, argues Nolan. He does so by providing the reader with a compact and sophisticated analysis of how China's economic (re)emergence fits within current global business trends, all in under 150 pages.

Nolan splits his book into two key parts: "Who are we?" and "Who are they?" He then illustrates his argument with two short empirical case studies (banks and commercial aircraft).