

politicians, civil servants, and well recognised local and international scholars. To cap it all, the book contains a short, crisp and to-the-point “Foreword” by His Royal Highness, Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta’in Billah, the Constitutional Head of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

Reading the book thoroughly, one comes away with the clear impression that Malaysia’s major achievement at 50 is the highly laudable maintenance of inter-ethnic peace. Malaysia thus has a lot to offer to other “deeply divided” societies. However, it is also clear that Malaysia must go beyond the maintenance of inter-ethnic peace to the achievement of inter-ethnic unity which alone will secure the future of this country. In other words, Malaysia should continue with its state building activities but must invest more heavily on nation-building activities. This is what Malaysia should aspire for and this message is well emphasised in some of the chapters and specially in Najib’s “Where we want to see Malaysia go.”

The book contains beautiful and attractive four colour photos to complement the topics discussed. The reader with a keen eye may spot several typographical errors which hopefully will be taken care of in the second edition of the book. This anthology will provide useful insights to policy makers, researchers, students, and the public at large.

Singapore-Malaysia Relations Under Abdullah Badawi. By Saw Swee Hock and K. Kesavapany. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, pp. 103+xvii. ISBN: 981-230-378-2.

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Saw Swee Hock is Professorial Fellow and Adviser to the Malaysia Study Group at Singapore’s top research organisation on Southeast Asia – the Institute of Southeast Asia (ISEAS) – which is headed by K. Kesavapany (a former diplomat and High Commissioner to Malaysia, 1997-2002). The authors are pre-eminently positioned to

write a book on Singapore's relations with Malaysia and have produced a volume that offers a unique and optimistic description of the roller coaster relationship between Singapore and Malaysia. Although a thin volume, it is divided into seven chapters and includes four appendices, which contain, among others, speeches by Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia and S.R. Nathan, President of Singapore.

Malaysia's relations with Singapore have not always been smooth. There have been occasions when the heat generated by the strong words used by both sides have had an impact on government - to - government and people - to - people relations. However, as Swee Hock and Kesavapany point out, the leadership on both sides has always been pragmatic and careful not to let such disputes rupture their political and economic ties. This volume is a testimony to the two countries' unique relationship of interdependence; there is too much at stake for either country to let the relationship slide down regardless of the differences that may arise. The hope expressed by the authors is that the assumption to office on 30 October, 2003, by Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi as the Prime Minister of Malaysia will bring a smoother, more amicable phase in the relationship.

In the "Background" chapter, the authors describe the period from 1997 to 2002 under the leadership of Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohamed as the "most stressful" (p. xv) because a number of issues between the two countries had reached a "confrontational level" (p. xv). These issues include: the withdrawal of Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions by West Malaysians when they were employed in Singapore, the Tanjong Pagar railway station and railway land in Singapore, the pricing of water supplied by Malaysia to Singapore, Singapore Air Force's access to Malaysian airspace, the new bridge ("the scenic bridge") to replace the existing Causeway, the *Pulau Batu Puteh* (Padra Branca) dispute and land reclamation by Singapore near the Malaysian border.

Singapore's side hope that with Mahathir gone from the scene, there would be dramatic improvement in the country's relations with Malaysia was not totally misplaced. Badawi took a number of important steps in the conduct of the country's foreign policy soon after assuming power. For example, in addition to visiting the ASEAN capitals, Badawi visited countries like Japan, Australia, the United

States and the United Kingdom. Subsequent developments have demonstrated, however, that these visits signalled a change in style rather than in the substance of the country's foreign policy. His visit to Australia helped break the ice between Canberra and Kuala Lumpur, which had formed as a result of spats between Mahathir and Australian Prime Minister John Howard. Similarly Badawi's visits to Tokyo, London and Washington signalled that Malaysia was open to foreign investment and determined to maintain strong economic ties with those countries.

Of course, as with any other state, Malaysia under Badawi's leadership cannot ignore the country's relationship with its closest neighbour, Singapore. The need to develop economically, the spread of violent extremism and the threat of epidemics like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian flu make it imperative for both countries to cooperate with each other. In addition, as the authors are correct in pointing out, the "move towards greater contacts and cooperation was also dictated by globalisation and the rise of China and India as well as slowdown in the flow of foreign investment in both countries" (pp. xv-xvi).

Chapter 1, "Resolving Bilateral Issues," perhaps the key chapter of this book, discusses the steps taken to find solutions to the issues in dispute between the two countries. However, the chapter is descriptive and retrospective in nature. Most of the materials used in this chapter have appeared in one form or another in other works on the subject. It is a pity that the authors have not used their access to inside information to provide new insights into the often acrimonious efforts to resolve the disputes, most of which, it should be noted, remain unresolved.

In fact, the only issue to be settled amicably was that of Singapore's reclamation work near the Malaysian coastline. Kuala Lumpur had protested that the reclamation work was an encroachment on its territory, and was also causing a lot of problems including disturbing the marine life on Malaysia's side. The matter was referred to the International Law of the Sea Tribunal in Hamburg which ruled that while Singapore was within its sovereign right to carry out land reclamation, it has to take into account the impact of such works on Malaysia's coastline. Both governments accepted the tribunal's judgement on the matter.

The dispute over the ownership of *Pulau Batu Puteh* (Pedra Branca) is under arbitration with the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The dispute over pricing of water supplied by Malaysia to Singapore was glossed over by the authors in a couple of paragraphs although this is perhaps the most divisive issue between the two countries. The construction of the “scenic bridge” to replace the existing causeway linking Johor with Singapore receives somewhat detailed analysis. This issue was taken off the list of disputes unilaterally by Malaysia when the government decided on April 12, 2006, to scrap the entire project. Despite an unprecedented public altercation between the Malaysian government and the former Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir Mohamed, Kuala Lumpur has vowed not to re-open negotiations with Singapore over the “scenic bridge.”

Chapter 2, “Intensifying Official Visits,” chronicles the official level visits between the two states since Badawi took over as Prime Minister. Once again, no “inside information” and no new insight is provided concerning these meetings. Chapter 3, “Developing People-to-People Contacts,” discusses measures designed to further improve contacts at level of the people. This chapter touches on the need to increase the number of tourists to visit each other’s country; the possibility of limited circulation of each other’s newspapers; joint production of television programmes; and student exchange programmes. The chapter fails to take note of the natural process of contact between the people of both countries. Irrespective of the state of relationship between the two countries, Singaporeans tend to invest in the Malaysian property market, especially in Johor, where they even set up homes, and of course, they visit Malaysia for holidays and shopping trips. Perhaps more should be done to encourage Malaysians to visit Singapore. The recent Malaysian government decision to allow budget airline, Air Asia, to operate flights into Singapore and to let Tiger Airways, a Singapore-based budget airline, to fly into Kuala Lumpur is a right step in the direction of increasing people-to-people contact.

Chapter 4, “Deepening Public Sector Economic Links,” and Chapter 5, “Expanding Public Sector Economic Links,” analyse the issue of economic linkages, public and private, between the two countries. Singapore has consistently been among the top three foreign investors in Malaysia. For Singapore, Malaysia remained

the top trading partner in 2004 with total trade valued at S\$88.3 billion or 15 per cent of the country's trade with the world (p. xvii). These two chapters should open the eyes of sceptics about the future of close economic relations between the two countries. The recent decision to set up the Iskandar Development Region in Johor, for instance, has reportedly excited Singaporean investors.

Chapter 6, "Renewing Educational and Sporting Events," looks at two important but hitherto neglected areas where both Malaysia and Singapore stand to gain a lot from close cooperation. This chapter refers to a number of educational and sporting events held annually between the two. But there is a need to do more. In addition to the existing links between University Malaya and National University of Singapore, linkages between other universities in both countries should be seriously explored.

The last chapter of this book is appropriately titled "Uplifting Future Relations." It duly notes the fact that with the settlement of the reclamation issue and the arbitration of *Pulau Batu Puteh* by the ICJ, there stands a good chance that Malaysia-Singapore relations can be set on a more even keel benefiting the people on both sides of the causeway. Indeed, difficult issues between the two countries still remain to be settled. But solutions to these are to be found through quiet diplomacy. There is no alternative to better relations between Malaysia and Singapore because there is no escaping the fact that geography and history place the two countries in a relationship of interdependence.

Al-Diyah as Compensation for Homicide and Wounding in Malaysia. By Syed Ahmad Alsagoff. Kuala Lumpur: Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2006, pp.436. ISBN: 983-3855-04-0 (PB).

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This publication concerns itself mainly with the law of *diyah* as compensation for homicide and wounding. It attempts to show that