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## 'Mein Kampf' in Malaysia? Anti-Semitism Updated

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The world's most infamous anti-Semite, Hitler blamed the Jewish people for every conceivable problem faced by humanity. He presented a conspiracy theory with the Jewish people as the source of all the world's ills. He presented the Jewish people as clever, but wickedly sinister. His words still hold full venom.

Evidently, the Prime Minister of Malaysia has decided to take a page from Mein Kampf. In an October 16 address to the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad told his fellow Islamic leaders that "Jews rule the world by proxy," and that the world's Muslims should unite using non-violent means for a "final victory" over the Jews.

Mahathir, 77, has been in power for over two decades, and he has turned his country into the world's 17th-ranked economy. He has often taken any opportunity to embarrass the West, but in his address to fellow Islamic leaders, Mohammad gave way to the worst forms of anti-Semitism.

"The Europeans killed six million Jews out of twelve million, but today the Jews rule the world by proxy," Mahathir said. He went on to claim that the Jews, "get others to fight and die for them."

Most observers agree that the Prime Minister's speech included many positive proposals. As the conference host, he called upon the world's Muslims to end attempts to resolve problems by violence, condemned the practice of suicide bombing, and claimed that the Islamic nations had gained "nothing" in more than a half century of fighting Israel.

Speaking of the Jews, Mahathir said, "they survived 2,000 years of pogroms not by hitting back but by thinking. They invented socialism, communism, human rights in democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong, so that they can enjoy equal rights with others."

Pointing to the power of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims, Mahathir claimed that the Muslims "cannot be defeated by a few million Jews."

The speech sent shockwaves through the diplomatic community. The U.S. State Department released a statement calling Mahathir's remarks offensive and inflammatory. The foreign ministry of Israel called the speech "a desecration of the memory of six million victims of anti-Semitism." In the most significant response, Britain summoned Malaysia's top diplomat in London in order to express concern about the Prime Minister's speech. The British Foreign Office released this statement: "It is unfortunate that Mahathir chose to make these remarks which we regard as unacceptable. It is particularly regrettable that some of his positive and welcome messages, such as negotiation being the right path to peace and the futility of terrorism, have been obscured and overshadowed by racist remarks."

The Malaysian Prime Minister's speech should serve as a signal reminder that anti-Semitism is alive and well around the globe. In particular, this speech, presented before an applauding crowd of Islamic leaders, demonstrates the fact that hatred of Jews is one of the chief unifying themes of the Islamic world.

In pondering this speech, we should remember that the audience included Afghan President Hamid Karzai, King Abdullah of Jordan, Assyrian President Bashar Assad, Morocco's King Mohammed VI, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri. Special observers included Philippine President Gloria Arroyo and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Where is their outrage?

The net result of Mahathir's speech appeared to be the strange juxtaposition of simultaneous calls for terrorism to end and for Islam to raise up in a comprehensive effort to defeat world Judaism. Anyone confused?

The Islamic world simply cannot abide the existence of the state of Israel, but this speech demonstrates anew the vital importance of the Jewish state. In the aftermath of World War II, with the memory of the Holocaust vividly fresh, the United Nations approved the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state precisely because hatred of the Jews had led to such unspeakable horrors.

This fact was underlined the day following Mahathir's speech when Malaysian Foreign Minister Sayed Hamid Albar apologized for any "misunderstanding" that resulted from the Prime Minister's speech. He also claimed that no offense was intended. "I am sorry that they have misunderstood the whole thing," Amid told the Associated Press. "The intention is not to create controversy. His intention is to show that if you ponder and sit down to think, you can be very powerful." Really? That is a very strange explanation of the Prime Minister's statements concerning Judaism.

Furthermore, even in apologizing for the speech, Amid pointed to Israel as the source of the problem. "The only problem with the Jews is when the State of Israel was created." That's a bold rewriting of history, to say the least.

The existence of the State of Israel is the greatest offense to the world's Muslims. Their real concern is not the welfare of the Palestinians, for that beleaguered people has been as abused by the Islamic nations as by anyone else.

Prime Minister Mahathir's remarks should serve as a powerful reminder that the State of Israel has enemies all around the world and that many Muslims see the very existence of the state—regardless of its character and behavior—as an unacceptable fact of world history.

The Prime Minister's speech may unify the Muslim world, but it will certainly not make for peace. Our main concern should not be those who misunderstood the speech, but rather those who understood it all too well.

