

1988

A content analysis of the Asian Wall Street Journal's 1986 coverage of Malaysia

Norsidah bt. Saabin
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd>

 Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#), and the [Mass Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Saabin, Norsidah bt., "A content analysis of the Asian Wall Street Journal's 1986 coverage of Malaysia" (1988). *Retrospective Theses and Dissertations*. 17322.
<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/17322>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

**A content analysis of the Asian Wall Street
Journal's 1986 coverage of Malaysia**

by

Norsidah bt. Saabin

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background and Statement of Problem	1
	Perspectives on Malaysian Mass Media	5
	The Asian Wall Street Journal	14
	Mass Media in the Third World and the West	17
CHAPTER II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	26
	News from Third World Countries	26
	Foreign Correspondents in Third World Countries	30
	Objectivity Studies	37
CHAPTER III.	METHODOLOGY	43
	Content Analysis as the Method of Investigation	43
	Categories for Analysis	46
	Population	53
	Reliability Testing	53
	Units of Analysis	54
CHAPTER IV.	ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	58
	Subject-matter Distribution	58
	Affective Nature of Coverage	61
	Objectivity of Coverage	69
	Themes	75
CHAPTER V.	CONCLUSION	77
	Summary of Findings	77
	Suggestions for Further Study	81

BIBLIOGRAPHY	84
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	90
APPENDIX 1. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS	91
APPENDIX 2. PRIME MINISTER'S IMPROMPTU SPEECH DELIVERED AS AN ANSWER TO VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE WALL STREET JOURNAL PRIOR TO HIS ADDRESS AT THE WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL, NEW YORK	95
APPENDIX 3. TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE PROTESTING MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL	100
APPENDIX 4. CODING INSTRUMENT	102

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.	Domestic Economy and Government and Politics Items by Month	60
Figure 2.	Good-news and Bad-news Items by Month	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Average Reliability Scores	55
Table 2.	Subject-matter Distribution	59
Table 3.	Affective Nature of Coverage	62
Table 4.	Affective Nature of Coverage by Subject Matter	63
Table 5.	Affective Nature of News Items by Source	65
Table 6.	Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs by Affective Nature of Coverage	66
Table 7.	Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs by Subject Matter	67
Table 8.	Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs for News Items by Source	68
Table 9.	Average Objectivity and Direction Scores by Affective Nature of Coverage	69
Table 10.	Report and Opinion Paragraphs for News Items by Subject Matter	70
Table 11.	Average Objectivity and Direction Scores for News Items by Subject Matter	72
Table 12.	Report and Opinion Paragraphs for News Items by Source	73
Table 13.	Direction of Report and Opinion Paragraphs	74
Table 14.	Items by Thematic Focus	76

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

On 26 September 1986, the Malaysian government announced its decision to ban distribution of the *Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ)* for a period of three months and to expel two of the newspaper's Kuala Lumpur-based correspondents on the grounds that their presence would be prejudicial to the national security and thus contravene the IMMIGRATION ACT AND REGULATIONS of 1963.

Although the government offered no specific reason for the banning and expulsions at the time, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad later explained in a speech before American businessmen that these actions were taken in response to the *AWSJ*'s "tendentious, scurrilous and non-factual writing." He also maintained that the newspaper had deliberately timed publication of a number of articles - including stories alleging conflict of interest against Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin because of his involvement in several banking transactions, as well as articles on the Malaysian government's 1981 intervention in the world tin market - in an effort to "vilify" members of his government.¹

¹Mahathir Mohamad, impromptu speech during Malaysian Investment Seminar, New York, 30 September 1986, 3-5 (see Appendix 2); hereafter cited as Malaysian Investment Seminar speech.

With reference to the banning, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba was quoted by the *New Straits Times (NST)* - the largest English-language daily in the country - as saying,

The government has the power to act against anyone who creates dissatisfaction among the people. We want accurate reports and those that can help to maintain peace which will convince foreign investors to invest in this country.²

Deputy Home Affairs Minister Megat Junid asserted that the *Asian Journal* had created "feelings of uncertainty among the people" and likened the newspaper's coverage of Malaysia to "sabotage [of] the economic development of this country."³

Asian Wall Street Journal editor and publisher, Fred Zimmerman, described the suspension and expulsion orders as "unfair, unjustified and unwise" and stood by the accuracy and integrity of the *AWSJ*'s articles on Malaysia.⁴

Barry Wain, the *Asian Journal*'s managing editor, denied that the newspaper had ever pursued any policy or plan to damage or undermine the Malaysian economy. Seeking to counter the charges against the *AWSJ*, Wain maintained that the Mahathir government had "invoked the ground of bad faith . . . as an excuse to punish the *Journal* for publishing facts which the government finds politically unpalatable."⁵

²"Government Will Do What It Feels is Right: Ghafar," *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), 28 September 1986.

³Nick Seaward, "Silenced Voices," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 October 1986, 16.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Nigel Holloway, "Restriction and Appeal: Singapore Acts Against Time While the Journal Gets Hearing," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 October 1986, 14.

This particular banning incident was but one of many government-ordered disruptions of the *AWSJ*'s distribution that have resulted from periodic official criticisms, usually led by the prime minister himself. Dr. Mahathir has often charged the *AWSJ* and other foreign press with focusing solely on negative events. In impromptu remarks at the Malaysian Investment Seminar held in New York on 30 September 1986, he said,

If you read reports in The Wall Street Journals, Asian Wall Street Journals or otherwise you will find that the country is beset with numerous problems, problems of race relations, problems of New Economic Policy that are not acceptable to foreigners. Not acceptable to local people, problems of corruption in Government, any number of problems. In fact, if you read the papers and did not go to Malaysia, you would think that it is a very dangerous place to go to. Certainly, you would think that it is not the sort of place you would put your money in.⁶

The *Asian Journal*, in particular, was seen as deliberately emphasizing unfavorable events while ignoring the socio-economic development that Malaysia had already achieved. This, according to the prime minister, had deterred foreigners from investing in Malaysia.

In repeated criticism of the foreign press, Dr. Mahathir often contends that "many famous international publications are controlled by Jews who are now citizens of many western countries."⁷ An anonymous article in the *New Straits Times* alleged that the *AWSJ* is under the control of

⁶Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysian Investment Seminar speech, 3.

⁷Suhaini Aznam, "What is Fit to Print?: Mahathir Attacks Foreign Press Which He Says is Against Him," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 September 1986, 13.

"Zionists" attempting to destabilize Malaysia because of the government's strong support for the PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION.⁸

The *AWSJ* is far from the only foreign publication to be criticized by Dr. Mahathir's government. In 1985, a correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* was charged under the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT of 1972. Over the years, the CONTROL OF IMPORTED PUBLICATIONS ACT of 1958 has managed to exclude from the country issues of such magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*.⁹

Bannings and other such forms of censorship tend, however, to create more problems than they solve - serving only to reinforce misperceptions on all sides and contributing to the creation of an uninformed public. The *AWSJ*, for example, is one of the primary sources of business and economic information, especially for the Malaysian business community. Censorship jeopardizes the free flow of information among nations that is necessary for making sound business decisions, and it can ultimately do great harm to the economic climate of a country like Malaysia.

The ban on distribution of the *AWSJ* was lifted after only one and a half months, when the Malaysian Supreme Court ruled that the expulsions of the two *Asian Journal* correspondents had been improperly executed and were therefore illegal. Although the government admitted that it had erred in not following the proper procedures, the allegations made against

⁸"Daim - The Target?," *New Straits Times*, 21 May 1986.

⁹Andrew Szende, *From Torrent To Trickle: Managing the Flow of News in Southeast Asia*, Research Notes and Discussion Paper No. 58 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 26

the *AWSJ* were never publicly withdrawn. In view of the seriousness of those accusations and in view of the negative impact for the country's image of the actions that followed upon them, it seems worthy to probe further into the content of the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* coverage of Malaysia for that year. If those charges are true, not only would this influence future policy of the Malaysian government toward the *Asian Journal*, but it would call into question the very concept of "objectivity" espoused by the *AWSJ* and similar elite newspapers.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of the *AWSJ's* coverage of Malaysia during 1986. Findings from this study examine both the subject matter and the manner of that coverage in an attempt to discover what prompted the Malaysian government to take the actions that it did. Did the *AWSJ* emphasize only negative events, to the exclusion of positive or "good" news? And did the *Asian Journal* engage in non-factual or subjective writing in its coverage of Malaysia?

PERSPECTIVES ON MALAYSIAN MASS MEDIA

The social, economic, political, and cultural diversity of Malaysia is vividly reflected in the division of its mass media along lines of race or ethnicity and by language. The population of 16 million comprises three main groups - Malays (48%), Chinese (34%) and Indians (9%) - each with very different cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions.

With regards to political and economic strength, the Chinese, who generally are concentrated in the nation's urban centers, have been active primarily in the business sector but are not, however, widely represented

in government administration or political service. Malays, on the other hand, living mostly in rural areas, control a mere 20 percent of the nation's economy, in spite of their large numbers.¹⁰ Politics and the civil service have long been their province.

Reconfiguration of this demographic architecture has been a major focus of government policy since the racial riots of 13 May 1969, when hundreds were killed. In the aftermath, the NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) - a series of five-year plans scheduled to end in 1990 - was implemented in an effort to eradicate poverty, to maintain intercommunal harmony, and to alleviate disparities of income by restructuring society to "reduce or actually eliminate the identification of race with economic function."¹¹

The philosophy underlying the NEW ECONOMIC POLICY is spelled out in the *Rukunegara* ("National Ideology"). This ideology sets out five goals for the country - national unity, a democratic way of life, a just society, a liberal approach to cultural tradition and a technologically progressive society. These economic plans and development goals have tremendous effect on the role played by Malaysian mass media.¹²

The government of Malaysia accepts the classical view of the role appropriate to mass communication in a developing country, loosely referred to as "development journalism."¹³ The media are used to aid the

¹⁰Abdulwahab El-Affendi, "The Malay Dilemma," *Arabia*, November 1986, 10.

¹¹Government of Malaysia, *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1971), 1.

¹²George Thomas Kurian, ed. *World Press Encyclopedia* (New York: Facts on File, 1982), s.v. "Malaysia," by Elliot S. Parker.

¹³*Ibid.*

country's growth by serving as conduits of information in support of nation-building and development. Aggarwala defines development journalism as

the reporting of development processes rather than events. The emphasis in "development news" is not on what happened at a particular moment or on a given day but what is happening over a period of time. . . . In this, "development news" is significantly different from the so-called "spot" or "action news."¹⁴

The media are expected to cooperate with and to actively promote government policy. The emphasis is not so much on what news *is*, but rather on what news *does*. John Lent cites Malaysia as an example of

a nation that has successfully implemented mass media to promote national ideological campaigns. . . . There, mass media are employed to promote goals written into the New Economic Policy plans and Rukunegara. In carrying out this role, mass media practice self-restraint, steer away from investigative reporting, fill pages with government speeches and campaigns, ignore the opposition and use a high ratio of government press releases.¹⁵

Emphasis on development has changed the relationship between mass media and government. Submitting to government-issued guidelines, the mass media have become partners in national efforts to attain development goals.¹⁶ "Guidance" and "cooperation" have become the key words in government-media relations throughout the Third World.

¹⁴Narinder Aggarwala, "News: A Matter of People," in *Third World Mass Media: Issues, Theory and Research*, eds. Mario D. Zamora, Vinson H. Sutlive, and Nathan Altshuler (Williamsburg, VA: College of William and Mary, 1979), 51.

¹⁵John A. Lent, "A Third World News Deal?" *Index on Censorship* 6 (September–October 1977): 20.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 18.

According to Third World governments, development journalism is necessary because during periods of growth, stability and unity must be sought, criticism must be minimized, and public faith in governmental institutions must be fostered.¹⁷ Media must cooperate, according to the guided press concept, by stressing positive, development-inspired news, by ignoring negative social or oppositionist characteristics, and by supporting government ideologies and plans.¹⁸

In Malaysia, the fifty daily and Sunday newspapers (with a total circulation of over two million), four radio networks, three television channels, and an educational television system all operate under the "guidance" of the government in order to contribute toward achievement of the goals stated in the NEW ECONOMIC POLICY and National Ideology. According to Parker, newspapers carry a high proportion of articles about development and government activities through statements made by officials and through press releases issued by the Ministry of Information and by press agents of the various ministries. Some 60 percent of the news in Malaysian newspapers originates from government sources.¹⁹

Data from content-analytical studies point out that both government-controlled and privately-owned print media operating under the guided press concept stress development news. Information is customarily supplied by and supportive of the government.²⁰ Most

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ John A. Lent, "Mass Media in Malaysia," *Asian Profile* 6 (April 1978): 156.

¹⁹ *World Press Encyclopedia*.

²⁰ Lent, "Mass Media in Malaysia," 157.

newspaper reports tend to be bland and uncritical. Opinion articles and editorials generally address international subjects or "non-sensitive", non-controversial local issues.²¹

Complementing the concept of development journalism are legislation and the structural control of ownership. In 1985, in a speech addressed to journalists from ASEAN countries, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad set forth his rationale for government-guided, "free" journalism. He declared that the elected representative of the people - the government - is the appropriate agency to guarantee that the press uses its freedom with responsibility.²² Much of Malaysia's legislation relating to the press was modified and strengthened after the 1969 racial riots and again within the past few years. The PRINTING PRESSES ACT of 1948 was amended in 1969 to prevent the publicizing of incidents likely to inflame communal feeling or to prejudice national security. As amended in 1984, the ACT gave the Minister of Home Affairs the power to refuse, suspend, or revoke the annual licence of any publication. The ACT was further amended in 1987 to require application for a new publishing licence each year, as opposed to application for simple renewal of an existing license.²³

The OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT, which was amended in 1983 and again in 1986, mandates jail sentences for anyone convicted of unauthorized possession of a wide array of government documents - including Cabinet

²¹ *World Press Encyclopedia*.

²² Leonard R. Sussman, "The 'Free' Press of Malaysia," *Freedom at Issue*, July-August 1986, 20.

²³ Philip Bowring, "No Dilemma about Mahathir's Directions: Power to the Center," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 April 1988, 23.

memos, State Executive Committee papers, and any document declared to relate to national security, defense, or international relations by any federal minister, state chief minister, or other authorized official.²⁴ There is no longer any provision for judicial review of a conviction under this ACT.

The SEDITION ACT of 1948 was amended in 1971 to prohibit the discussion of the four sensitive issues considered to be the major points of contention among Malaysia's three main ethnic groups: adoption of Malay as the national language; special rights granted to the Malays as *bumiputras* ("sons of the soil"); the special position of the Malay sultans and other royal rulers; and constitutional provision of citizenship for non-Malays.²⁵ Yet racial polarization persists to this day, and even the very fact of its continued existence is considered one more of the sensitive issues that should be avoided in public.

Another piece of legislation profoundly affecting media performance in Malaysia is the INTERNAL SECURITY ACT of 1960. Under this ACT, the Minister of Home Affairs can prohibit the printing or possession of any material that - in his opinion - may lead to violence, cause public disorder, or promote hostility between races.

Given the sensitivity of local editors to government desires, few domestic papers have been closed or had their licenses suspended over

²⁴Suhaini Aznam, "An Act of Approval: A Tougher OSA Gets Go Ahead from Parliament," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 December 1986, 46.

²⁵Umithevi Nathan, "Propaganda and Persuasion - A Trend in Malaysian Mass Media," *Media Asia* 13 (1986): 102.

the course of Malaysia's history.²⁶ Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Koon, in his column in the *Star* newspaper observed that Malaysian editors have been conditioned to "behave" by the nation's press laws.²⁷ Due to these regulations, self-censorship is pervasive among reporters and editors alike.²⁸ Nevertheless, in December 1987, the publishing licences of three newspapers - one Malay, one Chinese, and one English-language publication - were suspended on charges that they had printed articles that could provoke communal violence.

More effective, however, than any set of formal regulations are the lack of a tradition of investigative or in-depth reporting among Malaysian newspapers and the characteristically strong reluctance on the part of civil servants to speak with journalists.²⁹

The Malaysian government's attitude toward the press has been significantly influenced by the historical circumstances of this heterogeneous, highly volatile society - with its ethnically organized politics, its experience of a communist insurgency, and the lingering memory of its 1969 racial riots.

In 1976, the managing editor of the *New Straits Times*, Abdul Samad Ismail, and the assistant editor of *Berita Harian*, Samani Mohamad Amin, were charged with working against the "best interest" of Malaysia.

²⁶ *World Press Encyclopedia*.

²⁷ Cited by Mohd. Hamdan Adnan, "Media Development and Trends in Malaysia," Adapted paper presented at a meeting of *AMIC* country representatives, Singapore, 1985, 25.

²⁸ Nathan, "Propaganda and Persuasion - A Trend in Malaysian Mass Media," 102.

²⁹ *World Press Encyclopedia*.

Abdul Samad subsequently confessed that he was tied to communist and other Marxist groups in Singapore and Malaysia.³⁰

In 1980, Muslims in Penang (mostly Malays) demonstrated in protest against the *Tamil Malar* when that Indian daily inadvertently published an article considered insulting to the Muslim community. Riots squads were deployed.³¹

A 1974 amendment to the PRINTING PRESSES ACT established that Malaysians must maintain majority shares in all of the country's newspapers, further restructuring the nation's mass media system to the needs of government. The result was that several newspapers changed from foreign ownership to control by the ruling political elite. The MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA), the second largest component of the ruling NATIONAL FRONT coalition, owns 75 percent of the *Star* - a successful English-language tabloid - and of *Malayan Thung Pau*. The New Straits Times Press, with its three dailies and three magazines, and the Utusan Group, operating two dailies and a number magazines, are both tied to the UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO) - the country's dominant political party - through a network of nominee companies and affiliated individuals.³²

Due to this structure of ownership, it has been said that these newspapers have become "unofficial" extensions of their owners. Election coverage, for example, is often said to be biased toward candidates from

³⁰John A. Lent, "Restructuring of Mass Media in Malaysia and Singapore - Pounding in the Coffin Nails?," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 16 (October-December 1984): 32.

³¹*Ibid.*, 32, 28.

³²*Ibid.*, 28.

the ruling coalition. Human rights activist and advocate of press freedom, Chandra Muzaffar, has relentlessly charged that "the press is totally lacking integrity. There [is] no distinction between government and party."³³

In terms of its economy, 1985 and 1986 were not good years for Malaysia. Global inflation and decreased commodity prices brought negative growth in Gross National Product (GNP) in 1985 and a meager 1 percent growth in 1986 - compared with a gain of 13.5 percent in 1984.³⁴ In a single year, 1986, the prices of three of Malaysia's major export commodities - petroleum, tin, and palm oil - fell by 50 percent or more, causing the country to lose M\$9.1 billion (U.S.\$3.6 million) in that year alone. External debt shot up from M\$11 billion (U.S.\$4.4 million) in 1980 to M\$51 billion (U.S.\$20.4 million) in 1986.³⁵

Economic slowdown led to strong criticism of Dr. Mahathir's administration on issues ranging from government spending to corruption and mismanagement of public funds. Critics could be found not only in opposition political parties, but in such public interest groups as Aliran and the Consumer's Association of Penang, as well.³⁶

Though the NATIONAL FRONT managed to retain the two-thirds majority needed in the national parliament to amend to constitution, the coalition had faced increased political opposition in both the federal and

³³John W. English, "Malaysia: Chilling Press Freedom," *IPI Report* 28-32 (August 1982): 15.

³⁴Nick Seaward, "Lesser National Product: Malaysia Suffers Its First Economic Contraction in a Decade," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 October 1986, 80.

³⁵Khor Kok Peng, "The End of an Era," *Inquiry*, September 1987, 19.

³⁶Suhaini Aznam, "Economic Slump Undermines Ruling Coalition's Image," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 May 1986, 25.

state elections of August 1986. The DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (DAP), a leading Chinese opposition party, gained increased support in the country's major cities, where the majority of the population are Chinese, winning a significant number of seats in the national parliament and several state legislatures. The MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA) - the primary Chinese partner in the NATIONAL FRONT - suffered major defeats as the party faced growing pressure from its constituents to stand up for non-Malay rights. The MCA attributed its calamity largely to government policies in place, in particular to the NEW ECONOMIC POLICY - which the Chinese claim unfairly favors Malays.³⁷ The NEP has contributed more than any other issue to the racial polarization of Malaysian politics.

Throughout 1986, the NATIONAL FRONT faced a number of internal crises. In February, a leadership rift within UMNO led to the resignation of Musa Hitam as deputy prime minister and to a severe split in the party membership. The integrity of the NATIONAL FRONT was further shaken when Tan Koon Swan, president of the MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION, was arrested in Singapore and later sentenced to a two-year jail term on charges of criminal breach of trust in connection with his business dealings in Pan-Electric Industries.

THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL

In the 1970s, Asia's incredible economic boom attracted the attention of Dow Jones & Co., publisher of the United States' *Wall Street Journal*. A daily source of business news and information was thought to

³⁷ El-Affendi, "The Malay Dilemma", 11.

be of use to Asian business communities. In December 1975, the company began publishing its Asian edition with four Asian partners - the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), *Nihon Keiza Shimbun* (Japan), the *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), and the *Straits Times* (Singapore).³⁸

Initially, according to Barry Wain, Dow Jones planned a paper that would essentially be a presentation of U.S. economic and business news with a "whiff of Asia." However, within a few months, it was concluded that, while readers in Asia did indeed want news from the United States, they also wanted more regional coverage. Dow Jones responded by investing in additional staff and a network of bureaus. Today, this Hong Kong-based publication has a staff of twenty based in twelve cities across Asia.³⁹

The newspaper, with a paid circulation of about 32,500 and an Asian readership of 64 percent, is primarily read by an elite group with an average annual household income of U.S.\$140,000.⁴⁰ Unlike most newspapers, in which stories about foreign countries are written for readers back home, the *AWSJ*'s stories are written by foreign correspondents but are intended chiefly for readers in the host countries or countries within the region. Prob. state.

In the words of Barry Wain, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* is "at its best . . . a combination of investigative reporting, off beat articles and a

³⁸Jerry M. Rosenberg, *Inside the Wall Street Journal: The History and Power of Dow Jones & Co.* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982), 235.

³⁹Barry Wain, "After a Rocky Start, Asian Journal Adjusts to Region," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 1 September 1986.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

continuing effort to humanize the gray world of business."⁴¹ The newspaper aims both to provide the most thorough, accurate, timely, and unbiased information possible and to tailor its contents to the specific business and economic interests of the readership.⁴²

In a survey of Southeast Asian news professionals' views on outside sources, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (with a Malaysia-wide circulation of about 2,300)⁴³ was one of two sources named as most useful by news professionals in that country.⁴⁴ The Malaysian government, however, views the *Asian Journal* as meddling in domestic affairs. Referring to the 1986 banning, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba said, "Malaysians never interfere in the affairs of other countries and therefore we expect foreigners not to interfere in our affairs."⁴⁵

Despite its ever-increasing popularity throughout Asia, from a total circulation of 12,000 to its present 32,000, the paper has been periodically banned - not only in Malaysia, but in Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea as well.⁴⁶ Moreover, Thailand has expelled

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Rosenberg, *Inside the Wall Street Journal: The History and Power of Dow Jones & Co.*, 235.

⁴³Audit Bureau of Circulation (London), Appendix to speech by Lee Kuan Yew to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, DC, 14 April 1988 (text provided by Public Affairs Office, Embassy of Singapore, Washington, DC).

⁴⁴Szende, *From Torrent To Trickle: Managing the Flow of News in Southeast Asia*, 71.

⁴⁵"Government Will Do What It Feels is Right: Ghafar."

⁴⁶Wain, "After a Rocky Start, Asian Journal Adjusts to Region," 20.

an *Asian Journal* reporter, and in 1987 Singapore restricted the newspaper's circulation in that country from 5,1000 copies to a mere 400.⁴⁷

MASS MEDIA IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE WEST

Malaysia's problems with the foreign press are ones it shares not only with the Southeast Asian countries, but also with other Third World nations. In 1976, the International Press Institute (IPI) reported that twenty-one governments had denied visas to foreign correspondents in recent years. Of these governments, fifteen were in the Third World.⁴⁸

In March 1987, Tunisian authorities imposed a one-year ban on the monthly edition of *Jeune Afrique* for the magazine's "exaggerated interest" in the affairs of that country. The following month *Jeune Afrique* weekly and *Jeune Afrique Economie* were accused of systematic efforts to tarnish the government's overseas image and were banned indefinitely.⁴⁹

In December of that same year, during a period of civil unrest, the government of Bangladesh closed the offices of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) there, citing the BBC's continued propagation of "highly mischievous, tendentious, and motivated stories with ulterior motives tantamount to being subversive."⁵⁰

⁴⁷Lee Kuan Yew, Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, DC, 14 April 1988 (text provided by Public Affairs Office, Embassy of Singapore, Washington, DC), 16; hereafter cited as American Newspaper Editors speech.

⁴⁸Stanley Meisler, "Covering the Third World (or Trying To)," *Columbia Journalism Review* 17 (November-December 1978): 35.

⁴⁹"Caselist," *CPJ Update* 29 (May-June 1987): 10.

⁵⁰Quoted in "Caselist," *CPJ Update* 32 (January-February 1988): 6.

Not only Malaysia, but its neighbors, Singapore and Indonesia, are moving toward exerting greater press controls. In 1984, Indonesia refused to renew the visas of five foreign journalists working in the country. A correspondent for the *New York Times* and three others were also expelled.⁵¹ In 1986, Singapore restricted the circulation of *Time* magazine, and in 1987 it restricted the circulation of three other publications - the *AWSJ*, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and *AsiaWeek*. The government claimed that all these publications had interfered in Singapore's domestic affairs.⁵²

Tensions such as these result in part from conflicting Western and Third World views on the role of press and the concept of news. These conflicting views helped create the feelings of suspicion between the *AWSJ* and the government of Malaysia. While the prime minister accuses the *Asian Journal* of conspiring with "Zionists" to topple his government, the *AWSJ* continues to portray itself as a champion of the free flow of information, freedom of the press, and truth.

There are significant differences between press in the Third World and press in the West. In the Western world, the practices and standards of the United States are generally considered the norm. But according to Singapore's prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew,

The United States press is not a universal standard. Media in other countries play different roles. These roles have grown out of their

⁵¹Meisler, "Covering the Third World (or Trying To)," 35.

⁵²Lee Kuan Yew, American Newspaper Editors speech, 3.

different historical experiences, political system and national temperament.⁵³

According to Western tradition, the role of the press is not only to inform people but also to scrutinize the social order, in particular government policies and the government itself.⁵⁴ The media are often viewed as "watchdogs" against potential government excess. This is particularly true in the United States, where freedom of the press enjoys strong constitutional safeguards premised on the belief that a well-informed public is essential for a free and democratic society to function.

Central to this view of the role of the public in a democracy is the conception of the "free marketplace of ideas," in which the diversity of reports and opinions guarantees that no one view, no single purveyor of news, and no one medium will monopolize the channels of communication.⁵⁵ The man in the street can judge for himself the truth of the numerous opinions available.

Contrast this with the situation of news media in the developing world, most of which are government-owned and, as mentioned earlier, are employed primarily to present government policies in as favorable a light as possible. Privately-owned media are expected to do their part in helping to promote government-identified national interests as well. When a Western news organization tries to assume in its dealings with a Third World government the role to which it is accustomed at home,

⁵³Ibid., 2.

⁵⁴John L. Martin and Chaudary A. Grover, *Comparative Mass Media Systems* (New York: Longman Inc., 1983), 151.

⁵⁵Leonard R. Sussman, "Developmental Journalism: The Ideological Factor," in *The Third World and Press Freedom*, ed. Philip C. Horton (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), 75.

conflicts arise. Thus, for example, as Singapore's prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, explained to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, "Singapore's domestic debate is a matter for Singaporeans. We cannot allow the press to assume the role in Singapore that the American media plays in America."⁵⁶

Unlike the majority of industrialized nations, most developing countries simply have no tradition of an independent press. ^{prob's cont} Newspapers in the Third World have always served as mouthpieces for the advocates of some social or political cause. The newspapers of colonial days were used to help perpetuate the rule of the colonial occupiers and rarely bothered with the concerns or views of those under occupation.⁵⁷ Malaysian newspapers, for example, have been used to bolster colonialism, propagate Christianity or Islam, and further the struggle for independence.⁵⁸ Even now, press criticism of the political party that won independence for the country just does not seem appropriate.

According to Lent, Third World leaders have attempted to redefine the concept of press freedom. Malaysian authorities, for example, have claimed that the country cannot afford the same degree of press freedom prevailing in more developed societies and that some restrictions must be imposed to avoid coverage that can cause lawlessness and anarchy. Due

⁵⁶Quoted in Georgie Anne Geyer, "Brilliant, Spunky Leader American Editors Thought They Fervently Disliked," *Straits Times Weekly Overseas Edition*, 28 May 1988.

⁵⁷Joanmarie Kalter, "Can Third World Journalism Find a Third Way?," *Quill* 71 (May 1983): 16.

⁵⁸*World Press Encyclopedia*.

to the potentially explosive multiethnic structure of the nation and the threat of communist insurgency, certain news has to be suppressed.⁵⁹

Incompatibility of Western-style journalism with the cultural temperament of their country is another reason typically given by Third World leaders as justification for restricting press activity. The Malaysian government often argues, for example, that since the nature of its people is "polite and the society is not used to open criticism, assertive journalism is not practicable."⁶⁰ Moreover, "respect for elders and [for] those [the people have] put in-charge of their destiny" - namely, government officials - inhibit investigative, critical journalism.⁶¹

Western-style news presentation, striving as it does for the unusual or exciting, generally emphasizes conflict. It is this conflict-oriented conception of news that has resulted so often in complaints of an overplay of "bad news" about Third World countries. Dr. Mahathir's lament that, "The moment something bad occurs [in a developing country], Western reporters will be on the scene with cameras, television, tape-recorders, and notebooks,"⁶² is a common one. In the Western press, negative events are generally viewed as more noteworthy than are positive ones.

⁵⁹Lent, "Mass Media in Malaysia," 160.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Geyer, "Brilliant, Spunky Leader American Editors Thought They Fervently Disliked."

⁶²Mahathir Mohamad, *The Challenge* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1986), 51.

Since progress is a general expectation, government failures are regarded with greater interest than are its successes.⁶³

On the other hand, negative news is avoided in the Third World due to the "fragile nature of the political structure of most Third World governments," and because stability is vital to economic, political, and social development. In the words of an Indian journalist,

If we follow the Western norm, we will be playing up only those dark spots and thus erode the faith and confidence without which growth and development are impossible.⁶⁴

Third World media organizations, and the governments they serve, generally feel that development news is needed to counter Western-dominated, spot news - which focuses on isolated events instead of on the issues or process behind those events.

According to Dorman, "press objectivity" has come to be seen in the United States as synonymous with "maturity" and "social responsibility." Essentially an Anglo-American invention, the practice of objectivity is said to delineate the press system of the First World from those of the Second and Third.⁶⁵ According to this conception, news presentation should be a factual reporting of events, untainted by the personal biases of the reporter.

Objectivity of news reporting is accorded such importance in the First World because of its intimate relationship with one of the most basic

⁶³Martin and Grover, *Comparative Mass Media Systems*, 5.

⁶⁴Ibid., 6.

⁶⁵William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 202.

principles of Western democracy, freedom of opinion. "According to democratic ideology, neither political parties, nor leaders, nor any other potentates shall decide the direction of society's activity. This right belongs ultimately to the individual citizen."⁶⁶ Factual, impartial news reporting is supposed to furnish the citizenry of a free society with the necessary basis for reaching independent, rational judgments about the nation's course.

"Objectivity," Dorman says,

is best achieved when the correspondent uses only direct or indirect quotations from all authoritative sides of an issue, letting assertions of fact stand on their own without reportorial interpretation or comment. The reporter is not supposed to interject his or her own opinion; substantiated or not, statements of opinion can only come from others. Background material can be used, of course, but it must come from authoritative sources.⁶⁷

④

He adds that this concept of objectivity is suitable in a free marketplace of ideas, where journalists act as "watchdogs" over the government, but that in the Third World, ideological, political, cultural, and socio-economic realities determine the sort of news that a nation needs to hear or view.⁶⁸

Western news values and concepts are rejected by Third World governments on the ground that developing countries have totally different needs to be filled by their news media. Meanwhile, Western

⁶⁶Jorgen Westerstahl, "Objective News Reporting," *Communication Research* 10 (July 1983): 407.

⁶⁷William A. Dorman, "Peripheral Vision: U.S. Journalism and the Third World," *World Policy Journal* 3 (Summer 1986): 423.

⁶⁸Dorman and Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*, 202.

journalists, such as the *AWSJ*'s correspondents, naturally expect to continue the journalistic practices in which they have been trained and to apply the journalistic standards to which they have become accustomed.

With regard to this, Brig. Gen. Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's minister for trade and industry, said,

Their expectation cannot be met because the overriding responsibility of every government, especially an elected government, is not to preserve the prerogatives of the foreign press, but to fulfil the aspirations of its people and accomplish the goals they have set for themselves. It must do this within the ambit and the circumstances which a country finds itself in, including the traditions of law and government which it has inherited. . . . No single system of government can suit every nation, and no single model of the press can serve the purpose of every society."⁶⁹

A Third World government is likely to consider insistence on pursuing Western methods of reporting an example of the arrogant and prejudiced refusal of a correspondent to consider the local needs of his host country. Western journalists, on the other hand, deem the proposition that they should cooperate in putting forward the best possible representation of government motives and actions as nothing more than an attempt to turn them into yet another propaganda tool of the local ruling elite. Even assuming the best of intentions on all sides, when these differing perceptions come into conflict, problems are bound to arise.

If the *Asian Wall Street Journal* applies its Western standards of journalism in a Malaysian setting, is the newspaper being truly fair? Conversely, is it fair on the part of the Malaysian government to attempt to

⁶⁹Lee Hsien Loong, "When the Press Misinforms," Speech at the 40th World Congress of Newspaper Publishers, Helsinki, 26 May 1987, 92.

force an international publication like the *AWSJ* to conform to "Malaysian-style" news reporting? There are no easy answers to questions such as these, and they remain a subject for debate between Western and Third World countries.

Nevertheless, this thesis attempts to examine the content of a Western newspaper's coverage of Malaysia and to answer questions of both *what* is being reported and *how*. To what extent did the *Asian Wall Street Journal* emphasize "bad" news about Malaysia? Did the *AWSJ* engage in subjective or non-factual writing in its coverage of that country?

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NEWS FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

The term "stereotype," in its modern connotation of a social attitude that over-simplifies complicated realities by mistakenly submerging individual distinctions in a sweeping general description, was first introduced by Walter Lippmann, in his book *Public Opinion*.¹ Lippmann depicted news reporting - with its consistently recognizable types of characters, plots, and themes - as the filling in of a "repertory of stereotypes." Building on this characterization, Rodney Tiffen enumerates three principal factors that he sees as encouraging a tendency toward stereotyping in news content: a) the sporadic and selective attention most journalists give their topics, b) the brevity and compression needed in most news stories, and c) the general need to present news that will have the greatest appeal and familiarity to an audience. All of these factors come into play in the presentation of news about Southeast Asia in the Western press. As a consequence, foreign news coverage of the region tends to focus on the "hometown angle," on familiar and salient themes, and on "crisis journalism." Among the more conspicuous features of

¹Cited in Rodney Tiffen, *The News from Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1978), 110.

crisis journalism, is the recurrence of such themes as race conflict, natural disaster, corruption, dictatorial government, riots, and strikes.²

Many critics complain that news from the Third World focuses excessively on conflict or upheaval, to the exclusion of positive aspects of the countries in these developing regions. In the words of a Filipino information officer, "It is as if Western reporters feel their job in any developing society is to identify that society's weakest points and biggest problems and make them worse by exaggeration and unremitting publicity."³

The director of news and current affairs for the Nigerian Broadcasting System noted, "Another aspect of the problem is the attitude, the preferences, and the prejudices of foreign newsmen. . . . The development and indeed transformation that is going on all around is hardly ever noticed while events or issues that are insignificant or that in no way contribute to the progress of the nation but rather create a bad image, get interpreted from the Western point of view and blown up out of all proportion."⁴

"The international press only reports such news as is harmful to the image of our people," declared then-President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela, "while the powerful press and audio-visual media of the industrialized world completely ignore our struggles, our efforts."⁵

²Ibid., 110-11.

³Quoted in *ibid.*, 111.

⁴Roger Tatarian, "News Flow in the Third World: An Overview," in *The Third World and Press Freedom*, ed. Philip C. Horton (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), 25-27.

⁵Ibid.

Findings of several studies on Third World news coverage support such criticisms. In an evaluation of 1979 wire service copy, Weaver and Wilhoit report that the greatest percentage, by a significant margin, of stories from less developed countries concerned "elections, political violence, internal conflict or crises, and armed conflict," while the greatest percentage from developed countries dealt with "prices, labor relations, and culture."⁶ (6)

James Potter's analysis of eight prestige newspapers in the United States categorizes more than half of all Third World coverage (57.4 percent) as falling under one of the sensational sub-categories of subject matter, while only about one-third of coverage of the West is found to be sensational. While the pattern of Western news coverage shows an important focus on both government and sensational stories, along with due emphasis on business, sensational stories are more than twice as prevalent than government stories from Third World countries.⁷ (5)

Riffe and Shaw, examining foreign news content in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times* during the period 1970 to 1979, found coverage in the two newspapers strongly oriented toward conflict both within nations and between nations. Published news items about the Third World were more likely to deal with conflict or upheaval than were published accounts from the First and Second Worlds. Although in terms of quantity, news about the Third World was not underemphasized (4)

⁶Quoted in James W. Potter, "News from Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (Spring 1987): 75.

⁷Ibid., 73-79.

in either of the newspapers, both displayed a tendency to play up negative news from developing regions more than from other areas.⁸

In an effort to discover whether Western media single out the Third World for negative coverage, Stevenson and Gaddy compared coverage in Western media with that in media of other social systems. The authors correlated the foreign news "diet" in local media of selected countries - divided among the First, Second and Third Worlds - with the foreign news "menu" available from news agencies. With the exception of the African regional wire of the Agence-France Presse, a greater proportion of news reported from the Third World was bad news than that reported from the Northern Hemisphere countries of the West. A substantial portion - on average, 25 percent - of Third World news reported in all parts of the world contained some elements of domestic or international conflict.⁹

A study of domestic coverage of negative news shows interesting results. Gieber reviewed the content of thirty-four small and medium-sized American dailies to ascertain whether, given a universe of news events, editors selected a significantly higher percentage of sensational or negative news items than other types. In order to determine the extent to which selection was biased in the direction of "negative" wire news, stories are grouped into three categories: negative, positive, and other. Negative items were those reporting social conflict and disorganization, including occurrences of international tension, civic disruption, crime, disasters,

⁸Daniel Riffe and Eugene F. Shaw, "Conflict and Consonance: Coverage of the Third World in Two U.S. Papers," *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Winter 1982): 617-27.

⁹Robert L. Stevenson and Garry D. Gaddy, "Bad News and the Third World," in *Foreign News and the New World Information Order*, eds. Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1984), 88-105.

and the like. Positive items were those reporting social accord and organization, such as instances of international cooperation, non-controversial information on government affairs, and reports of society at work. Under the category "other" could be found news about curiosities of life, sports, and entertainment. Gieber found only one newspaper - a United Press client - that had overplayed negative news. The negative content of the remaining thirty-three newspapers was proportional to that of the wire services. On these grounds, he felt confident in stating that, so far as news drawn from wire services was concerned, the newspapers had not exhibited a bias for negative news. On the contrary, he concluded, most of the newspapers tended to draw a representative sample from the universe of news available.¹⁰

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Ndicu Gitau applied Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance - which holds that people seek information reinforcing their beliefs¹¹ - to the activity of news reporting. According to Gitau, when a reporter makes decisions about foreign events, cultural differences can be assumed to impinge upon his interpretation of those events, ultimately influencing what he writes.¹²

¹⁰Walter Gieber, "Do Newspapers Overplay Negative News?" *Journalism Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1955): 311-18.

¹¹Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, IL: Row & Peterson, 1957).

¹²Ndicu E. Gitau, "An Analysis of the Coverage of Idi Amin by Three Selected Daily English Language Newspapers," (M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1979).

In observations that seem to buttress Gitau's point of view, Stanley Miesler, a foreign correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, noted that Third World cultures and goals present problems to a foreign correspondent. According to Miesler, a correspondent "can fairly easily relate to Western or European countries, since the needs, systems and goals of these countries are somewhat similar to those of the United States. But a Third World correspondent soon finds that in Asia, Africa or Latin America 'social change is more important than political events.'" Adding that the Third World is one of "poverty, of frustrated striving, of cultural imitation and of incredible change," he explained how covering such subjects can be a formidable task, for they are difficult to grasp and to make interesting to American readers - and even more difficult to write about without somehow offending one's host.¹³

A similar view is presented by David Shaw, who asserts, in a four-article series in the *Los Angeles Times*, that language and cultural barriers generally render a foreign correspondent far less knowledgeable about his assignment abroad than he would be on a similar subject in the United States. The most frequently mentioned characteristic of a successful correspondent, according to Shaw, is "the ability to adapt to a foreign culture, to avoid the 'easy [temptation] to impose your own culture on a foreign culture' . . . to say, 'Boy, is this place screwed up' because they don't do like we do."¹⁴

¹³Stanley Meisler, "Covering the Third World (or Trying To)," *Columbia Journalism Review* 17 (November-December 1978): 37.

¹⁴David Shaw, "Correspondents Must Mix Curiosity with Isolation," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 July 1986.

Mort Rosenblum shares this point of view, remarking that unfamiliarity with "baffling local customs and thought process" can mislead correspondents and affect what they report about the Third World. In addition, foreign journalists are frequently unable to speak the language of the country they are covering, and translation, if available at all, is rarely adequate. Under such circumstances, even the best have problems.¹⁵

Rosenblum notes that, though most admit inadequacies in their coverage, Western journalists still defend the job they are able to do under the circumstances and deny intentional bias or any form of conspiracy against anyone. According to one of Reuters' managing editors, complaints against Western news coverage often result from mistaken notions about how news organizations work. "We are sometimes accused of not doing what we have not set out to do," he says. "How can you give a complete picture of India in say, 3,000 words a day? No we're not and we can't. . . . We must operate on the principle of news as exception."¹⁶

In a forum on Malaysian press freedoms, Raphael Pura of the *AWSJ* described most foreign coverage of Malaysia as "neutral or just plain factual, . . . clearly [considered,] and unmitigatedly negative." Pura emphasized that news is not manufactured out of thin air and that the accuracy of reporting depends upon the availability of information sources. He recommended that those in official positions who are unhappy with the way news is presented should remember that "if [a

¹⁵Mort Rosenblum, "Reporting from the Third World," in *Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects*, eds. Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) 234.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 237.

reporter] gets good cooperation from those people and they are frank with him, then most likely the story would come closer to [giving] that balance and rounded picture." By the same token, if one of the disputants in a controversy refuses "to explain its side of the story then the reporter cannot be expected to accurately represent the position of the party concerned."¹⁷ It should be stated here that, since journalists in Malaysia are barred, whether by law or by the simple reluctance of government officials to grant candid interviews, from access to a variety of views - especially on controversial issues - balance in reporting is often difficult to maintain.

Reacting to the many criticisms of Western coverage made by Third World governments, Harvey Stockwin, a veteran correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, suggested to Mort Rosenblum that these stem in large part from the fact that the Western press is the "only one telling these leaders what they don't want to hear." Rosenblum finds Stockwin's comments representative of the views of many, claiming that Western hostility toward the Third World position revolves around the same basic point: "many leaders use such devices as news pools and development journalism as a convenient means to muzzle criticisms and hide their own shortcomings."¹⁸

Many, if not most, Third World governments claim development journalism as indispensable to the struggle for economic development,

¹⁷"Press Freedom in Malaysia," Forum sponsored by the Selangor Graduates Society, in *Moving, Writing, and Behaving Gingerly*, ed. Gurmit Singh (Port Kelang, Malaysia: Percetakan Waizet, 1985), 106.

¹⁸Rosenblum, "Reporting from the Third World," 236.

but as Joanmarie Kalter points out, too often it is not the economic survival of a country that is at stake, but the political survival of the regime in power. "As the country's problems become harder to control," she contends,

the government controls the reporting instead. News of bad harvest is said to sap morale and news of the activities of the opposition to endanger security. The government can legally confiscate, suspend or ban newspapers in two-thirds of African countries, in all Asian countries and in more than half of Latin America.

The result is news that sounds like "a cheerleading chorus for the latest government 'success'."¹⁹

Lent attributes increased Third World restrictions on press freedom to a trend in developing countries toward more centralized government, with a single strong ruler and concentration of power in the hands of a few important families. "This phenomenon prevails in all parts of the developing world," he argues, "and nearly all Asian countries have gone or are going through this phase. When the ruling cliques cannot cope with communal strife or dissent, they simply shuffle aside constitutional guarantees, promulgate and alter press laws, suspend newspapers, arrest journalists and restructure the media to include more official management and ownership."²⁰

In interviews with seventy correspondents based throughout Southeast Asia (at this time *AWSJ* was not yet in operation), Tiffen

¹⁹Joanmarie Kalter, "Can Third World Journalism Find a Third Way?" *Quill* 71 (May 1983): 16.

²⁰John A. Lent, "A Third World News Deal?" *Index on Censorship* 6 (September–October 1977): 19.

explored several aspects of Western news coverage of this region, including the work situations faced by journalists, their news values, and other components of the social process of newsmaking. While he found outright fabrication to be rare, "beat-up" stories - stories that are overwritten to make events appear more dramatic and significant - are acknowledged as common occurrences, as are instances of writing "off the top of one's head" or of trying to interpret events with little first-hand information.²¹

Rosenblum contends that foreign correspondents, trying to persuade their editors of the importance of events in distant lands, may be "tempted to reach for dramatic conclusions or wide generalizations to make their stories more attractive." Thus the structure of a typical foreign story might best be described as "summarize, generalize, analyze, and theorize."²²

Attribution of an assertion to a source is a protective measure for the journalist who, while he may not be sure of the truth of that assertion, knows nevertheless that the spokesman said what he did. The attribution is an important piece of information, because it conveys the status of the facts presented. According to Tiffen, U.S. journalists concentrate very heavily on precise attribution - by name if possible - and on direct quotations, while British and Australian journalists are more content to use

²¹Tiffen, *The News from Southeast Asia*, 99-103.

²²Quoted in Shaw, "Correspondents Must Mix Curiosity with Isolation."

such general designations as "Western diplomats," "ASEAN officials," and the like.²³

American journalism is currently absorbed in a debate over responsible professional practice. This debate revolves around such issues as objectivity versus subjectivity, detachment versus advocacy, and observer versus "watchdog" conceptions of the press. Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman discern two clearly distinguishable sets of belief systems among American journalists about the proper function of the media. Depending upon age, region, and educational background, these journalists advocate either a "neutral" or a "participant" role for themselves.²⁴

Tiffen found Western journalists in Southeast Asia share a desire for objectivity, even though many agree that, in the words of Edward R. Murrow, it is not "humanly possible for any reporter to be completely objective, for we are all to some degree prisoners of our education, travel, reading - the sum total of our experience."²⁵ There is, nevertheless, a strong conviction, according to Tiffen, that a determination to overcome or minimize one's personal attitudes is the mark of professionalism. Herbert Gans asserts, however, that journalists tend to treat foreign news with less detachment and that explicit value judgements, usually

²³Tiffen, *The News from Southeast Asia*, 92.

²⁴John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman, "The Professional Values of American Newsmen," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36 (Winter 1972-73): 23.

²⁵Quoted in Tiffen, *The News from Southeast Asia*, 95.

unacceptable or unjustifiable in domestic news, appear quite frequently in processing foreign news.²⁶

Tiffen admits that there are both virtues and vices in Western news coverage of Southeast Asia. The primary virtue of this reporting is that it provides a regular source of information that is not the direct instrument of any particular interest in the region. In addition, Western journalists make an active effort to ferret out true information from false. However, due to several factors, including susceptibility to a constant need to produce, these journalists tend to depend on self-interested sources and feel an obligation to report the views of those sources.²⁷

OBJECTIVITY STUDIES

The greatest problem a researcher faces in any attempt to study press objectivity is that of measurement. Several studies measure objectivity by utilizing Hayakawa's "report/inference/judgement" trichotomy of basic sentence types that one person can use to communicate information to another. Report sentences are factual and verifiable. Inference sentences are subjective and not immediately verifiable. Judgement sentences contain expressions of a writer's favorable or unfavorable opinions about whatever is being described.²⁸

²⁶Cited in Leonard L. Chu, "An Organizational Perspective on International News Flow: Some Generalizations and Questions for Research," *Gazette* 35 (1985): 9.

²⁷Tiffen, *The News from Southeast Asia*, 201-02.

²⁸S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 38-44.

Shipman used Hayakawa's trichotomy in two ways: 1) to measure the objectivity of *New York Times* stories concerning the war in El Salvador, and 2) to determine the extent to which *Wall Street Journal* criticisms of the *Times*' reporting might have caused a decrease in the number of inference and judgement sentences in stories about the war. Shipman considers attributed report statements most objective, while judgement statements are least so. His samples were randomly drawn from staff-written news stories during periods before and after the *Journal*'s criticisms, and he excluded commentaries and news analyses, which he considered more subjective. Shipman found the number of report sentences in both time periods significant, while the number of attributed report sentences, surprisingly, declined considerably from one period to the next. There were virtually no judgement sentences in either period, nor was there any marked change in the number of inference statements. From these factors, Shipman concluded that the *Times* exercised care not to put opinion in the form of judgements into its news stories.²⁹

In a content analysis of eight U.S. dailies with circulations exceeding 300,000, Ryan adapted Hayakawa's conceptual framework to a comparison of the usage of report, inference, and judgement sentences in coverage of social issues. Stories were categorized by subject-matter and then classified as either issue-oriented or event-oriented. Ryan coded each sentence in each story as a report sentence or an opinion sentence. Each report sentence was classified as either attributed or unattributed; while

²⁹ John M. Shipman, "New York Times Coverage of the War in El Salvador," *Journalism Quarterly* 60 (Winter 1983): 719-22.

each opinion sentence was classified as an inference, judgement, or miscellaneous sentence. Inference and judgement sentences were then further subdivided into attributed and unattributed. Ryan found that 73.7 percent of all sentences analyzed were either attributed or unattributed reports and that a "disturbing" 26.3 percent of all sentences were opinions. A significant percentage (10.2) of the sentences are unattributed inferences or unattributed judgements. Ryan also discovered a higher percentage of opinion sentences in issue-oriented stories than in event-oriented ones, something he considers particularly hazardous to newspapers hoping to establish reputations for accuracy and fairness in reporting.³⁰

Lowry analyzed network television news coverage of the Nixon Administration before and after a speech in which Vice President Spiro Agnew criticized the networks and other news media in order to ascertain the extent to which the nature of network news might have changed in the face of pressure from the administration. He classified each sentence in each story as an attributed or unattributed report, a labeled or unlabeled inference, an attributed or unattributed favorable judgement, an attributed or unattributed unfavorable judgement, or a sentence that cannot be placed in any category. While he found no decline in the number of inference sentence after Agnew's attack and virtually no judgements either before or after, Lowry discovered 9 percent more attributed reports in stories after the speech than in those before. From these findings he concluded that "a network is least likely to be criticized if it simply 'reports

³⁰Michael Ryan, "Reports, Inferences, Judgement in News Coverage of Social Issues," *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (Autumn 1979): 497-503.

the facts' and, in addition, reports the source of those facts than if it uses any other options."³¹

Time magazine has always insisted that objectivity in news presentation is impossible and that Time writers should "make a judgement in their articles." Merill investigated some of the techniques used by the magazine to create or reinforce stereotypical images of three U.S. presidents - Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy - in a study of ten consecutive issues from each of the presidential terms of office. Six bias categories were employed: 1) attribution bias; 2) adjective bias; 3) contextual bias; 4) adverbial bias; 5) photographic bias; and 6) outright opinion, the most obvious type of bias or subjectivity in newswriting. Instances of bias are coded as either favorable or unfavorable. The study showed Time to be anti-Truman, pro-Eisenhower, and neutral toward Kennedy. Readers generally do not expect to find the judgements or opinions of a writer outside of signed columns or editorials, but Merill noted a pronounced inclination for editorialization in Time's regular "news" columns in an effort to lead readers' thinking.³²

3. Interpretative news is generally presented as reporting that "explains the meaning" of news. Yet the practice remains controversial, and there is no clear definition of the term. While Curtis MacDougall considers interpretative reporting a major change in American journalism, Michael Schudson believes it to be fully consistent with the aim of

³¹Dennis T. Lowry, "Agnew and the Network TV News: A Before/After Content Analysis," *Journalism Quarterly* 48 (Summer 1971): 205-10.

³²John C. Merill, "How Time Stereotyped Three U.S. Presidents," *Journalism Quarterly* 42 (1965): 563-70.

objectivity. MacDougall describes interpretative news as "the ability to comprehend the meaning of immediate news events in relation to broader social, economic and political trends," and considers the most successful journalists to be those "with wide educational background, a specialist knowledge in one or more fields, the ability to avoid emotionalism and to remain objective," and superior powers of observation and description.³³

To further clarify the meaning of interpretive reporting, DeMott analyzed 184 news reports - half described by newspapers editors as interpretative and the other half described as spot news - in an effort to determine the chief differences between these two types of news. Stories were examined in terms of: 1) length, 2) absence or presence of reporters' opinions, 3) type (interpretive or spot), 4) literary style, 5) affective nature (positive or negative), and 6) general subject matter. DeMott found that reports described as interpretative tend to be much longer, with more background and exposition, than spot news stories. With regard to subject-matter, interpretative news is more concerned with social developments or problems and with events commonly identified as "soft" news, rather than with such "hard" or "breaking" news as formal or official actions of governments, crime, disasters, and the like. The study's combination of high inter-coder reliability and high degree of significance - at confidence level of .01 - presents a strong and consistent pattern suggesting that the presence of reportorial opinion is the most noteworthy dissimilarity between spot news and interpretative news. The prevalence

³³Quoted in Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 147.

of reportorial opinion in interpretative news stories raises serious questions concerning the role and credibility of news media.³⁴

With the foregoing in mind, this thesis proposes to investigate a number of matters regarding the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* 1986 coverage of Malaysia in an effort to indicate the degree to which criticisms made by the Malaysian government can be considered valid. To what extent did the *AWSJ* highlight "bad" news about Malaysia? What subject-matter and themes were emphasized in the newspaper's coverage? Most importantly, did the *Asian Wall Street Journal* engage in subjective or opinionated writing in its coverage of Malaysia that might have justified the government's decision to ban the publication?

³⁴John DeMott, "'Interpretative' News Stories Compared With 'Spot' News," *Journalism Quarterly* 50 (Spring 1973): 102-08.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

CONTENT ANALYSIS AS THE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

As the criticisms of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* are directed against its contents, and since the purpose of this study is to investigate the character of the newspaper's coverage of Malaysia, content analysis seems the most appropriate method to employ. Such an analysis is defined by Berelson as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."¹ Similarly, Carney defines content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identified characteristics of messages."² Cartwright defines it as referring "to the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of any symbolic behavior."³

Though there are many different explanations of how content analysis should be conducted, all seem to agree in their insistence on objectivity, systematic approach, and generality. "Objectivity" stipulates that each step in a study be carried out on the basis of clearly formulated rules. "Systematic approach" involves consistent application of these rules to the

¹Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952), 18.

²Thomas F. Carney, *Content Analysis: A Technique for Systematic Inference from Communication* (Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press, 1972), 5.

³Quoted in Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3.

inclusion and exclusion of content or categories. "Generality" requires that findings "must have theoretical relevance."⁴ In addition to these three criteria, two others commonly mentioned are "quantitativeness" and "manifest content."

Among social science researchers, the debate over quantitativeness centers on whether it should be restricted to frequency measurement or should also involve "contingency analysis," in which coding of a text depends on the presence or absence of certain attributes.⁵ Frequency measurement serves to indicate importance, attention, or emphasis.⁶ As Fred Kerlinger notes, "most content analysis [does] not measure variables. It measures emphasis of frequency of various communication phenomena, such as propaganda trends and readability."⁷ This study will employ frequency measurement to determine significant characteristics of the *AWSJ*'s Malaysia coverage, but will disregard the technique of contingency analysis.

Another point of contention is the relative importance of "manifest" and "latent" elements of the content. Proponents of manifest content (the "surface meaning" of a text), stipulate that only those items appearing explicitly in the material should be coded.⁸ Others - such as Budd,

⁴Ibid., 3-5.

⁵Ibid., 5-6.

⁶Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980) 40.

⁷Quoted in Ndicu E. Gitau, "An Analysis of the Coverage of Idi Amin by Three Selected Daily English Language Newspapers" (M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1979) 43.

⁸Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 13.

Thorp, and Donohew - disagree, contending that this approach does not answer "the question of the implication of what was said compared to what was not said."⁹ Holsti counters this objection with an observation of the difficulty involved in drawing valid inferences about the causes or effects of communications from content data.¹⁰ Since the purpose of this study is merely to describe the characteristics of the *AWSJ*'s coverage without reference to either the intention of the news source or the effect of the message on the receiver, it is therefore appropriate to limit the analysis to manifest content.

Holsti presents three kinds of conditions in which content analysis is especially appropriate as a research tool: 1) cases in which data accessibility is a problem and in which an investigator's data are limited to documentary evidence; 2) cases in which, given certain theoretical components of the data themselves, the subject's own language is crucial to the investigation; and 3) cases in which the volume of material to be examined exceeds the investigator's ability to undertake the research by himself.¹¹ Since all of these conditions apply to the situation at hand, it is clearly appropriate to employ content analysis as the method of inquiry.

In analyzing characteristics of the *AWSJ*'s coverage of Malaysia, the basic questions are: "*What* is said?" and "*How* is it said?" More

⁹Richard W. Budd, R. Thorp, and L. Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), 54.

¹⁰Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 13.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 15-17.

specifically, operationalization of these questions involves consideration of the following:

- ◆ Subject matter and type of items. ✓
- ◆ Affective nature of coverage ("good" vs. "bad" news).
- ◆ 5. News sources or filing agencies.
- ◆ 5. Objectivity or subjectivity of content.
- ◆ 5. Direction of attitudes expressed in content.
- ◆ Major themes in the year's coverage. ✓

CATEGORIES FOR ANALYSIS

Subject matter

These categories were set up on an *a priori* basis to cover all news content. Besides reflecting the purpose of this study, the categories were formulated to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. The nine subject-matter categories were modeled on the *Wall Street Journal Index*, taking into consideration the content of coverage for the particular year of study. Each item was classified under a single category on the basis of its predominant subject matter.

- ◆ *Domestic Economy*: Activities of local businesses and international companies operating in Malaysia, foreign investments, stock market activity, corporate sales and takeovers, consumer and commodity prices, Gross Domestic Product, labor, commodity market and trading, government revenue, project developments, and inflation.
- ◆ *International Economy*: Activities and events involving Malaysia in the international economic scene - such as international economic agreements or policies, regional economic activities, and effects of the world economic situation on Malaysia.

- ◆ *Finance:* Banks and banking activities, including Malaysia's central bank and its financial cooperatives; foreign loans and grants; foreign debts; currency and tax matters.
- ◆ *Industry:* Manufacturing activities and events related to products "Made in Malaysia;" tourism.
- ◆ *Foreign Trade:* Imports and exports, trade and investment with foreign partners, trade surpluses and deficits.
- ◆ *Government and Politics:* Events and activities related to executive, legislative, and judicial powers of government, including activities of the royal rulers; governmental system and policies; activities political parties, politicians, government ministers and other government officials; government involvement in control of economic phenomena.
- ◆ *Social Conditions:* Events and activities reflecting Malaysian society and social life. Social problems like violence, riots, etc.; living conditions; education, health, social services, unemployment; general social phenomena.
- ◆ *Individual Profiles:* Activities or events related to Malaysian business leaders and investors (excluding government officials).
- ◆ *AWSJ and Malaysia:* All events (including legal proceedings) related to the banning of the newspaper or the expulsion of its journalists; general criticisms of foreign press coverage of Malaysia.

"Good" versus "bad" news

Formulation of these categories was adapted from Gieber's study,¹² which employed a very simple yet complete "negative/positive" (or "bad/good") scheme appropriate to the classification of news content. Gieber organized wire service items into three major categories - "Negative," "Positive," and "Other" . Under the "other" category, Gieber

¹²Walter Gieber, "Do Newspapers Overplay Negative News?" *Journalism Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1955): 311-18.

included what he termed "oddities of life," or "brighteners," as well as sports and entertainment stories. Since such items are not part of *AWSJ*'s coverage, this last category was eliminated. All items were therefore categorized as either "good" or "bad" news. Coding did not involve reference to the events themselves, so that a story about "political conflict," for example, which might normally be considered bad news, could be coded as good news if the report were predominantly about how well the government resolved the situation.

- ◆ *Good news:* Items reflecting social cohesion and cooperation, political and economic stability or strength; non-controversial information on government affairs, economic or social situations; depictions of persons or groups (including nations) cooperating in political, social, or economic affairs.
- ◆ *Bad news:* Items reflecting social conflict and disorganization, political and economic instability or weakness; reports of political, economic, or social disruptions (such as civil conflicts, accidents, riots, and disasters).

Content type

Each item was coded as being of one of three content types:

- ◆ News story.
- ◆ Editorial.
- ◆ Opinion item.

The designation "opinion item" was used for letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, and other such expressions of individual opinion. In fact, only a single opinion item - an essay on the Sabah elections - was found. Likewise, no feature stories were found in the year's coverage; therefore, no category was included for this type of item.

Editorials are obvious expressions of the newspaper's opinions. In addition to presenting the facts of an event or issue, news stories might also include expressions of opinion or attitude (although these will generally not be explicit). Such opinions may mirror those stated in the newspaper's editorials or may in fact be quite different. For these reasons, news stories and editorials were each subjected to separate sub-analyses, in addition to the general analysis of all items for the year.

News source or filing agency

Every news story was credited to one of five different sources:

- ◆ *AWSJ* correspondents.
- ◆ *AWSJ* staffwriters.
- ◆ Ap-Dow Jones wire service.
- ◆ AP wire service.
- ◆ Reuters wire service.

News items written by employees of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* were attributed to correspondents when a byline was given and to staffwriters when one was not. All other news stories were attributed to the wire service supplying the item, even when both a byline and the name of the wire service were provided.

Objectivity and subjectivity

To determine whether the *Asian Wall Street Journal* engaged in opinionated or subjective writing, this study analyzed two types of paragraph - report and opinion. Definitions of each type of paragraph are

adapted from those employed by Lowry.¹³ Ryan's study,¹⁴ in which sentences were coded as reports or opinions, served as a guideline for categorization of paragraphs.

- ◆ *Report paragraph:* This paragraph contains a predominant number of statements of verifiable fact - information that is observable in some manner, rather than matters of personal opinion or belief.

Take, for example, the following:

Banker-entrepreneur Azman Hashim plans to sell 40% of Arab-Malaysian Merchant Bank Bhd. - the country's largest merchant bank - to local and Japanese investors for M\$161 million (U.S.\$620 million).¹⁵

Although the reader may not be in a position to verify the facts of the statement himself, the sentence is of such form that it is capable in principle of being verified. Report sentences may be attributed or unattributed, and attribution may be to either to a specific or a general source.

- ◆ *Opinion paragraph:* This paragraph contains a predominant number of sentences that a) indicate the writer's approval or disapproval of the occurrences, persons, or objects being reported; or b) are incapable - even in principle - of being verified.

The latter may be termed inference statements. These are subjective, relying on personal opinions, beliefs, or feelings. Inference statements attempt to interpret or evaluate events, to draw out the implications

¹³Dennis T. Lowry, "Agnew and the Network TV News: A Before/After Content Analysis," *Journalism Quarterly* 48 (Summer 1971): 205-10.

¹⁴Michael Ryan, "Reports, Inferences, Judgement in News Coverage of Social Issues," *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (Autumn 1979): 497-503.

¹⁵Raphael Pura, "Investor to Sell 40% of Malaysian Bank," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 1986.

of an event, to make generalizations or predictions. Such statements may attempt to say what other people think or feel instead of reporting what those people *say* they think or feel. Inference statements may also purport to explain the motives for someone's actions, rather than simply reporting those actions.

The following serves as an example:

The evaluation also notes that OCBC might "have difficulties" taking possession of the UMBC shares mortgaged to the bank by the Daim companies in the event of a default - *presumably* because that would amount to transferring control of a Malaysian bank to a foreign company, a development the Malaysian government *wouldn't be likely* to approve.¹⁶

Paragraphs containing an equal number of report and opinion sentences were coded as opinion paragraphs.

Direction

At the same time that each paragraph was categorized as either report or opinion, it was also rated for direction, i.e., the "attitude expressed toward any symbol by its user."¹⁷ The central consideration in determining the direction of a paragraph was the orientation of the sentences in that paragraph to the subjects of those statements. A three-point scale was used:

- ◆ *Positive*: The subject of the sentence is depicted from a favorable viewpoint; an example would be any statement depicting Malaysia as progressive, successful, unified, or the like.

¹⁶Idem, "Malaysia's Daim Tied to Private Bank Deal," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 3 April 1986; emphasis added.

¹⁷Quoted in Frederick I. Anderson, "An Analysis of Objective-Subjective Content of News Programs of Three Television Networks" (M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1973), 40.

- ◆ *Negative:* The subject of the sentence is depicted from an unfavorable viewpoint; an example would be any statement depicting Malaysia as immoral, backward, chaotic, or the like.
- ◆ *Neutral/balanced:* Sentences make non-controversial statements, are neither favorable nor unfavorable, contain an equal number of both favorable and unfavorable points, or are ambiguous in direction.

A positive paragraph would be one containing a predominant number of positive statements. A paragraph containing an equal number of positive and negative statements would be considered neutral or balanced. The measurement of direction in this study is not an attempt to uncover the attitudes of the reporters, but rather any attitudes expressed in the content of the coverage.

Theme

Predominant themes for each item were recorded in order to detect news angles, conceptual frameworks, and the like that are present in the content but that might not be evident from simple classification by subject matter. Recording of themes also revealed aspects of news coverage that cut across several subject-matter classifications. For example, an individual item on Tan Koon Swan might focus on his financial dealings, while another might discuss his political activities. Yet both might convey the theme: "Tan is corrupt!"

Only themes clearly present throughout a particular item were noted for that item. Similar themes were then grouped into general classes to facilitate analysis. Since themes are by nature directional, there was no need to code value directions.

POPULATION

Because the *Asian Wall Street Journal* does not maintain an index, the researcher examined every issue published from 1 January to 31 December of that year - five issues per week for fifty-two weeks - in order to select all items pertaining to Malaysia. From these, all "substantive" items were analyzed. Some subjective judgement was exercised in determining items qualifying as "substantive." For example, a quotation of tin prices on the Kuala Lumpur exchange would not be included, while a news story on the Malaysian government's attempt to corner the world tin market would be. News summaries appearing in the "Asian Briefs" section and corporate data found in the "Earnings Roundups" were excluded from consideration.

RELIABILITY TESTING

The definitions and measurement devices used were subjected to a reliability test from a panel of six, working independently with the same three randomly-selected items, before coding began. The panel was evenly divided between men and women. Four were graduate students, and the remaining two were full-time employees in the private sector (the first with a bachelor's degree and the second with a master's degree). The panel was also evenly divided among Malaysians and Americans.

The degree of agreement between the researcher's own work and that of each of the panel members reflects a high level of coder reliability. Once this reliability was established, special effort was given to

maintaining consistency in coding. The following formula was employed:

$$\text{Coder reliability} = 2M/(N_1 + N_2)$$

M is the number of category assignments upon which two coders agree; $N_1 + N_2$ is the total of the category assignments made by the two coders.¹⁸ Robert North considers this formula the simplest to compute.¹⁹ Budd emphasizes that no statistical knowledge is needed to understand the formula and that it could be extended for any number of coders.²⁰ For this study, the formula was applied to each item for each of the six panel members. Average reliability scores for each coder appear in Table 1.

Guido Stempel notes that "in many instances [of content analysis] a sample is not being used," which provides a "legitimate reason for not using significance tests."²¹ Such was the case here. Since this study deals with an entire population, rather than a sample, there was no need to establish confidence level or sampling error.

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

Holsti describes five types of recording unit commonly used for measurements in content analysis: 1) single word or symbol, 2) theme,

¹⁸Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 140.

¹⁹Robert C. North, et al, *Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 49.

²⁰Richard W. Budd, R. Thorp, and L. Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), 68.

²¹Guido H. Stempel, "Statistical Designs for Content Analysis," in *Research Methods in Mass Communication*, ed. Guido H. Stempel and Bruce H. Westley (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 133.

3) character, 4) sentence, and 5) paragraph. An item as a whole may also serve as the recording unit when entire articles, films, books, and the like are to be examined.²²

Table 1. - Average Reliability Scores

Coder	Score
A	X
B	.73
C	.86
D	.76
E	.90
F	.85
G	.83

N.B.: Coder A represents researcher.

Single words or symbols are generally avoided as units of analysis, due to the immense volume of data involved²³. As Curtis MacDougall points out, most news stories use block paragraphing, with each paragraph normally representing a single sub-topic and standing independently of those before and after it. He added that since there is a relationship between number of paragraphs and meaning conveyed, using either the paragraph or the item as a unit of measurement would

²²Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 117.

²³Ibid., 116.

accomplish the same purpose.²⁴ Budd, Thorp, and Donohew note that the entire article may be used as the unit of analysis when project goals and the category system employed are of a general nature.²⁵

Budd, Thorp, and Donohew define a theme as "a single thought unit or idea unit that conveys a single item of information extracted from a segment of the content."²⁶ Although coding of themes is typically very time consuming, theme can often be a most useful unit of analysis - especially in research regarding propaganda, values, attitudes, or beliefs.²⁷ Berelson describes theme as "an assertion about a subject matter. Thus it is a sentence, under which a wide range of specific information can be subsumed. . . . While the theme is considered a unit of measurement in content analysis, it also may be among the objective methods of measuring direction."²⁸

This study employed three different units of analysis. Since the main purpose of the study is to investigate general characteristics of the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* coverage of Malaysia, the individual item was used as the primary unit of analysis. Paragraph and theme served as secondary units.

²⁴Cited in Gitau, "An Analysis of the Coverage of Idi Amin by Three Selected Daily English Language Newspapers," 39.

²⁵Budd, Thorp, and Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications*, 35.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 34.

²⁷Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 116.

²⁸Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952), 138.

Each primary unit was coded for 1) subject matter, 2) affective nature, 3) content type, and 4) source of news or filing agency. The paragraphs within each item were next coded as report or opinion and as positive, negative, or neutral. Objectivity and direction scores were then computed for each item as a whole. Finally, each item was evaluated for predominant themes relating to Malaysia.

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The *Asian Wall Street Journal's* 1986 coverage of Malaysia included 191 items, totalling 3770 paragraphs, that were considered "substantive" for the purposes of this study. An average of sixteen such items appeared per month, with an average length of twenty paragraphs per item. The vast majority (97.91 percent) of these items were news stories. Only three of the items were editorials; one, an essay on the Sabah elections, was categorized as an opinion item.

SUBJECT-MATTER DISTRIBUTION

All 191 items were analyzed by subject matter. As one would expect of a business newspaper, over half of the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* coverage of Malaysia was devoted to economic and financial matters. As Table 2 indicates, Domestic Economy was the single largest category of items for the year, with 34.55 percent of all items.

The *AWSJ* also gave ample coverage to Malaysian government and politics, with 34.03 percent of its substantive items focusing on these topics. In fact, although slightly fewer items fall under the Government and Politics category than under Domestic Economy, the greater average length (twenty-three paragraphs per item for the former vs. eighteen per

item for the latter) indicates that more in-depth coverage was devoted to happenings of a political nature. This is not surprising, given the great

Table 2. - Subject-matter Distribution

	Items (N=191)	Paragraphs (N=3770)
Domestic Economy	34.55%	30.77%
Government and Politics	34.03%	40.05%
Finance	12.04%	11.83%
<i>AWSJ</i> and Malaysia	6.81%	5.65%
International Economy	5.76%	6.82%
Social Conditions	3.14%	2.52%
Individual Profile	2.09%	1.27%
Industry	1.05%	0.93%
Foreign Trade	0.52%	0.16%

influence wielded by the Malaysian government over the nation's economy. It is even less surprising when one recalls that 1986 was both an election year and a year marked by several political controversies.

Among these were the leadership crisis sparked by the resignation of Musa Hitam as deputy prime minister and home affairs minister - arguably the worst political rift in Malaysia's history - financial scandal involving MCA president Tan Koon Swan, and an emotionally charged election in the state of Sabah. Rioting and other ethnic violence leading up to this last event dominated items falling in the Social Conditions category. Figure 1 shows that high points in the volume of coverage

given to governmental and political matters coincided with many of these occurrences.

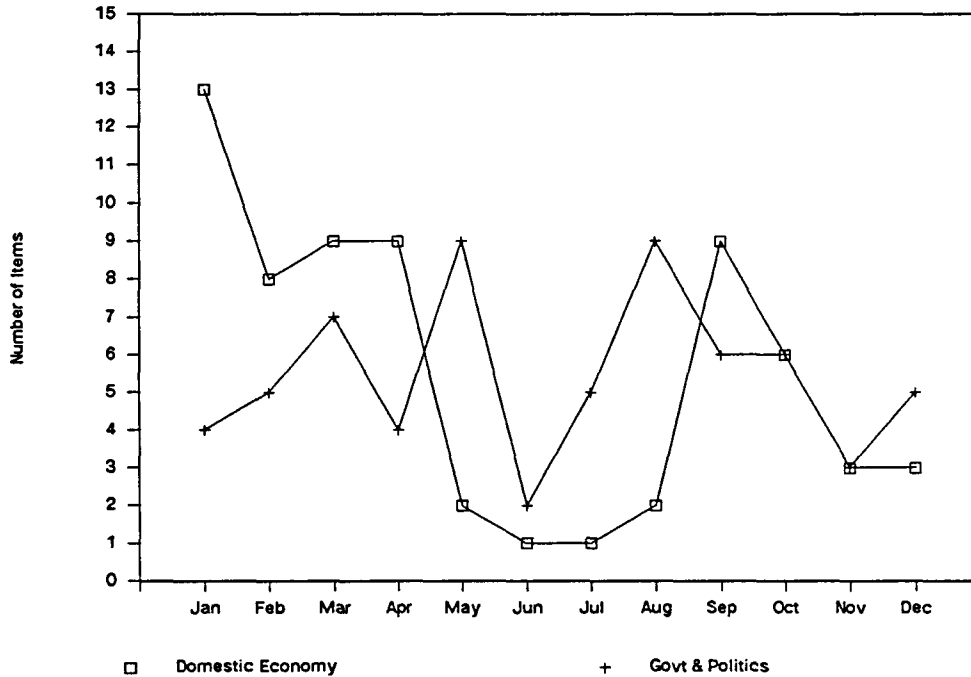


Figure 1. Domestic Economy and Government and Politics Items by Month

The high volume of news on the domestic economy in the month of January is attributable in large part to the collapse of tin prices, which had a devastating effect on Malaysia. Financial and leadership problems faced by the multimillion-dollar Promet corporation also received significant coverage through most of the year.

Events related to the banning of the *AWSJ* and the expulsion of its correspondents – obviously a subject of considerable interest to the newspaper – also generated a sizable number of items (6.81 percent).

Since the Malaysian economy performed poorly in 1986, it is understandable that very few items were carried on Industry (1.05 percent) and Foreign Trade (0.52 percent). Individual Profile had few items (2.09 percent) because most individuals to whom entire articles were devoted were government figures, so that these items were included in the Government and Politics category.

The great majority of items appearing in the International Economy category were devoted to the failure of Pan-Electric Industries Ltd., a Singapore-based company owned by Malaysia's Tan. The company's financial difficulties - which led to a two-day suspension of stock trading in both Singapore and Malaysia and the near collapse of both countries' brokerage systems - tended to attract more in-depth coverage than other economic matters, with an average article length of twenty-three paragraphs per item.

AFFECTIVE NATURE OF COVERAGE

Items were also analyzed for affective nature. Table 3 reveals that the amount of "bad news" during the year exceeded "good news" by more than two to one if measured by number of items and by more than three to one if measured by number of paragraphs.

Out of the 191 substantive items used for the study, 130 (68.06 percent) were coded as bad news and only 61 (31.94 percent) as good news. While 2924 paragraphs (77.56 percent) were devoted to bad news, only 846 (22.44 percent) were dedicated to good news.

Table 3. - Affective Nature of Coverage

	Items (N=191)	Paragraphs (N=3770)
Bad News	68.06%	77.56%
Good News	31.94%	22.44%

Table 4 distributes affective nature of coverage across subject-matter categories. Coverage of governmental and political matters - of which Prime Minister Mahathir and other Cabinet members were most critical - was predominantly bad news. Bad-news items exceeded good news in the category almost four to one.

It is interesting to note that in Domestic Economy, the largest subject area, there was a greater degree of balance. In spite of the severe economic decline suffered by Malaysia in 1986, just over half of all Domestic Economy items were coded as bad news.

Items in the Social Conditions category had the largest contingent of bad news, with 100 percent. International Economy had the next highest rate of bad news, with just over 90 percent. The high levels of bad news in these two categories can be attributed to the fact that coverage in each was dominated by a single occurrence - the Sabah riots and the Pan-El collapse, respectively.

As one might expect, items categorized under *AWSJ* and Malaysia were more than three-quarters bad news (76.92 percent). The only good-news items appearing in this category were those reporting that the

Supreme Court had quashed the expulsions of Berthelsen and Pura and that the government had decided to lift its ban on the newspaper earlier than scheduled.

Table 4. - Affective Nature of Coverage by Subject Matter

	Good News	Bad News
Domestic Economy (N=66)	45.45%	54.55%
Government and Politics (N=65)	21.54%	78.46%
Finance (N=23)	43.48%	56.52%
<i>AWSJ</i> and Malaysia (N=13)	23.08%	76.92%
International Economy (N=11)	9.09%	90.91%
Social Conditions (N=6)	0.00%	100.00%
Individual Profile (N=4)	25.00%	75.00%
Industry (N=2)	50.00%	50.00%
Foreign Trade (N=1)	100.00%	0.00%
Total Items (N=191)	31.94%	68.06%

All remaining categories, except Industry and Foreign Trade (which were too small for meaningful analysis) contained more than 50 percent bad news.

Figure 2 indicates that bad news was the norm throughout 1986, exceeded good news every month except May - when the upheaval in Sabah was resolved peacefully - and in November and December - after the lifting of the ban. As would be expected, the number of bad-news

items was high in the period immediately prior to and during the banning incident.

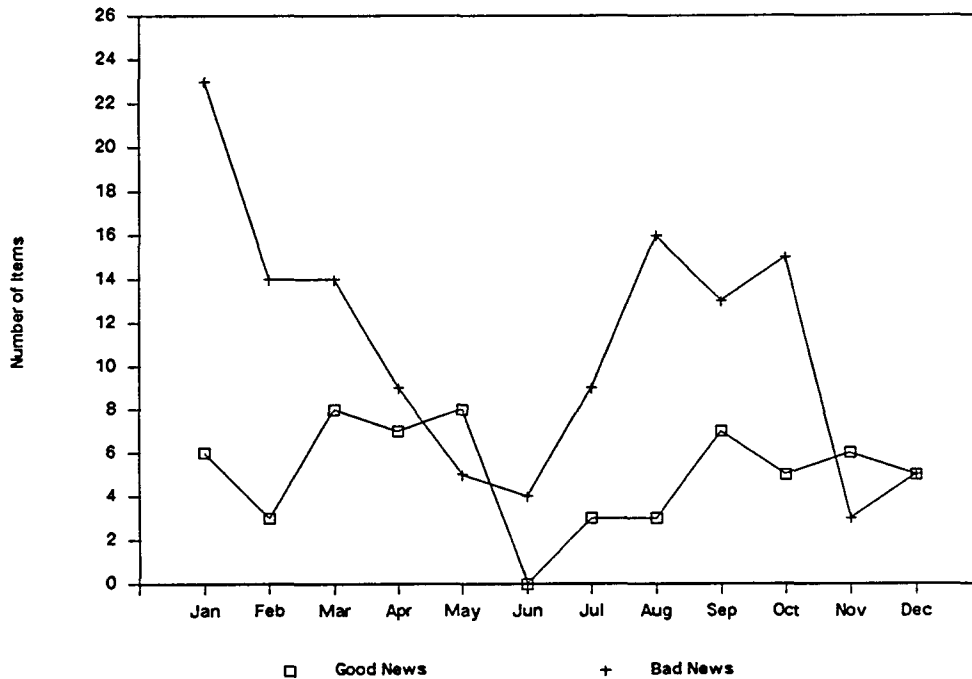


Figure 2. Good-news and Bad-news Items by Month

Source or filing agency was recorded for news stories only.

Table 5 exhibits a pronounced tendency for bad-news items to originate with *AWSJ* correspondents or staffwriters. While roughly half of all news stories from the three wire services were good news and half bad news, *AWSJ* reporters were responsible for bad-news items more than three times as often as they were responsible for good-news ones. No clear pattern emerged among the three wire services, however. AP-Dow Jones and Reuters were responsible for more good news than bad (57.58

percent and 62.50 percent good news, respectively), while the opposite was the case for the AP wire service (only 36.84 percent good news).

Table 5. - Affective Nature of News Items by Source

	Good News	Bad News
<i>AWSJ</i> Correspondents and Staff (N=127)	22.83%	77.17%
Wire Services (N=60)	51.67%	48.33%
AP-Dow Jones (N=33)	57.58%	42.42%
AP (N=19)	36.84%	63.16%
Reuters (N=8)	62.50%	37.50%

It might be expected that good-news items would be composed primarily of positive paragraphs and that bad-news items would be composed primarily of negative paragraphs. Indeed, when good news and bad news were analyzed for paragraph direction along the positive/negative/neutral scale, as shown in Table 6, the number of negative paragraphs in bad-news items was considerable (38.95 percent). Yet, surprisingly, the largest portion of paragraphs in both categories was found to be neutral. The newspaper apparently attempted to neutralize or balance its coverage regardless of affective nature. Even more startling, however, was the fact that - not only in bad news but in good news as well - negative paragraphs (17.49 percent) exceed positive paragraphs (15.01 percent), although only slightly.

**Table 6. – Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs
by Affective Nature of Coverage**

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Good News (N=846)	15.01%	17.49%	67.49%
Bad News (N=2924)	4.45%	38.95%	56.60%

Analyzing each subject-matter category along this same directional scale, as shown by Table 7, revealed that items under International Economy had the greatest contingent of negative paragraphs (45.14 percent), followed by Social Conditions (37.89 percent). This is consistent with the earlier finding that both of these categories were overwhelmingly bad news (90.91 percent and 100 percent, respectively).

Government and Politics, which was nearly 80 percent bad news, also had a considerable proportion of negative paragraphs (36.82 percent). Four items in this category were specifically criticized by Prime Minister Mahathir. Taking these four together, almost half the paragraphs (44.81 percent) were negative in direction. Like other items in the Government and Politics category, however, the majority of paragraphs (52.83 percent) for these four items were neutral.

Except for International Economy and Social Conditions, all categories were composed of neutral paragraphs by more than 50 percent. Individual Profile employed the greatest contingent of neutral paragraphs (75 percent). Even items on the banning of the *AWSJ* displayed an inclination toward the use of neutral paragraphs (65.73 percent). This

data reinforces the earlier contention that the newspaper generally attempted to neutralize or balance its coverage.

**Table 7. - Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs
by Subject Matter**

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Domestic Economy (N=1160)	9.40%	32.59%	58.02%
Government and Politics (N=1510)	6.03%	36.82%	57.15%
Finance (N=446)	3.59%	26.68%	69.73%
<i>AWSJ</i> and Malaysia (N=213)	2.35%	31.92%	65.73%
International Economy (N=257)	7.78%	45.14%	47.08%
Social Conditions (N=95)	13.68%	37.89%	48.42%
Individual Profile (N=48)	4.17%	20.83%	75.00%
Industry (N=35)	2.86%	11.43%	85.71%
Foreign Trade (N=6)	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Total Paragraphs (N=3770)	6.82%	34.14%	59.05%

When the direction of paragraphs in news items was examined by source or filing agency, as illustrated in Table 8, wire service items were found to have a smaller proportion of negative paragraphs and a larger proportion of positive paragraphs than items written by *AWSJ* reporters. Of the three wire services, Reuters was most prone to the use of negative paragraphs, with 21.21 percent. Yet even this percentage was smaller than that of negative paragraphs used by *AWSJ* correspondents and staff.

**Table 8. - Positive, Negative and Neutral Paragraphs
for News Items by Source**

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>AWSJ</i> Correspondents and Staff (N=3145)	6.20%	36.85%	56.95%
Wire Services (N=580)	8.97%	17.58%	73.45%
AP-Dow Jones (N=323)	7.12%	16.10%	76.78%
AP (N=191)	8.90%	18.85%	72.25%
Reuters (N=66)	18.18%	21.21%	60.61%

Of the four news sources, Reuters utilized positive paragraphs most often (18.18 percent), while *AWSJ* reporters employed them least often (6.20 percent). All the wire services together contributed roughly a fifth of all positive paragraphs (21.05 percent) and of all neutral paragraphs (19.21 percent) found in the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* news items on Malaysia but less than 1 percent of all negative paragraphs used. Without the presence of wire service reports, the newspaper's 1986 coverage of Malaysia would have been even more negative than it was.

To relate the direction of paragraphs to the items in which those paragraphs appeared, a directional score was computed. Each negative paragraph in an item received a value of -1, each positive paragraph received a value of +1, and each neutral paragraph received a value of 0. Values were totaled and divided by the number of paragraphs in the item to determine an overall direction for that item. A directional score of 0

would represent a perfectly neutral or balanced item. A score of -1 would represent a completely negative item, while a score of +1 would represent an item that is completely positive. As Table 9 shows, neither good-news nor bad-news items approached the extremes of the directional scale, indicating that items of both types tended toward neutral reporting. While the average directional score for good-news items is only slightly positive (0.02), the average score for bad-news items is markedly negative (-0.33).

Table 9. - Average Objectivity and Direction Scores by Affective Nature of Coverage

	Objectivity	Direction
Good News (N=61)	0.08	0.02
Bad News (N=130)	0.09	-0.33

OBJECTIVITY OF COVERAGE

As mentioned in Chapter 2, report paragraphs are considered more objective, while opinion paragraphs are more subjective. Since one would expect that the *Asian Wall Street Journal* - with its reputation as one of Asia's more prominent newspapers - would attempt to conform to the journalistic ideal of objectivity, one would also expect to find report paragraphs in much greater abundance than opinion paragraphs.

Table 10 confirms that expectation.

**Table 10. - Report and Opinion Paragraphs for News Items
by Subject Matter**

	Report	Opinion
Domestic Economy (N=1160)	92.93%	7.07%
Government and Politics (N=1490)	87.05%	12.95%
Finance (N=446)	93.05%	6.95%
<i>AWSJ</i> and Malaysia (N=213)	96.71%	3.29%
International Economy (N=257)	88.72%	11.28%
Social Conditions (N=70)	91.43%	8.57%
Individual Profile (N=48)	93.75%	6.25%
Industry (N=35)	100.00%	0.00%
Foreign Trade (N=6)	100.00%	0.00%
Total Paragraphs (N=3374)	90.58%	9.42%

For this analysis, editorials and opinion items were excluded, since these items represent explicitly subjective writing. Over all, report paragraphs in news items outnumbered opinion paragraphs more than nine to one. Only 9.42 percent of all paragraphs were expressions of opinion, a very small proportion when one considers that the definition of opinion used in this study includes not only judgements, as in some other studies, but inferences as well. Most of the opinions expressed were attributed to someone other than the writer, indicating that - at least on its face - the *AWSJ*'s news coverage was free from editorialization. Of all the paragraphs analyzed, 90.58 percent consisted of report paragraphs.

The percentage of opinion paragraphs in the Government and Politics and International Economy categories was greater than average. Government and Politics contained the largest component of opinion paragraphs (12.95 percent), while International Economy contained 11.28 percent. As we recall, items in both of these categories tended toward more in-depth coverage, suggesting that opinions tend to be utilized more in longer or more in-depth news coverage.

When the four items specifically criticized by the Malaysian government were examined, 83.43 percent of the total paragraphs were categorized as report paragraphs and 15.56 percent as opinion paragraphs. Although the small number of items may distort these percentages somewhat, they seem to suggest that the *AWSJ* was more inclined to use opinion paragraphs in these items than in other items in general. When report and opinion paragraphs in these four items were broken down by direction, straight reporting was found to incline toward neutral paragraphs (58.69 percent), while opinions tended to be negative (75.75 percent).

For measurement of overall objectivity of coverage, a score was computed for each item reflecting the proportion of report and opinion paragraphs in that item. Each report paragraph in the item was given a value of 0, while each opinion paragraph received a value of +1. Values were totaled and divided by the number of paragraphs in the item to determine general orientation of that item. The higher the score, the more opinionated the item. As with the directional score computed earlier, a score of 0 represents the ideal. Table 11 provides average objectivity and direction scores for each subject-matter category.

**Table 11. - Average Objectivity and Direction Scores
for News Items by Subject Matter**

	Objectivity	Direction
Domestic Economy (N=66)	0.05	-0.14
Government and Politics (N=63)	0.10	-0.28
Finance (N=23)	0.07	-0.20
<i>AWSJ</i> and Malaysia (N=13)	0.03	-0.24
International Economy (N=11)	0.08	-0.30
Social Conditions (N=5)	0.06	-0.22
Individual Profile (N=4)	0.05	-0.28
Industry (N=2)	0.00	-0.05
Foreign Trade (N=1)	0.00	0.00
Total Items (N=187)	0.07	-0.22

Objectivity scores for two categories exceeded the cumulative average of 0.07. A high of 0.10 was computed for the Government and Politics category. International Economy had a score of 0.08. These scores indicate that the tendency to use opinion paragraphs noted earlier for these two categories was not confined to a few stories, but was characteristic of most if not all Government and Politics and International Economy items. Although the general pattern indicates that all coverage was essentially objective in nature, in these two categories there was some inclination to depart from straight reporting.

Although two categories, Industry and Foreign Trade, scored perfect 0s, neither of these contained a sufficient number of items to yield

a meaningful analysis. Ironically, the most objective coverage was of matters relating to the *AWSJ* banning - the category in which the newspaper might have experienced the greatest temptation to resort to editorialization. On the contrary, the newspaper appears to have made a special effort to maintain objectivity in this matter.

Table 12 reinforces the impression that the *AWSJ*'s coverage of Malaysia was, for all practical purposes, objective. Across the board,

Table 12. - Report and Opinion Paragraphs for News Items by Source

	Report	Opinion
<i>AWSJ</i> Correspondents and Staff (N=3145)	89.79%	10.21%
Wire Services (N=580)	94.83%	5.17%
AP-Dow Jones (N=323)	92.57%	7.43%
AP (N=191)	98.43%	1.57%
Reuters (N=66)	95.45%	4.55%

every news source was overwhelmingly disposed toward straight reporting. Although *AWSJ* correspondents and staffwriters employed a greater proportion of opinion paragraphs (10.21 percent) than did the wire services (5.17 percent), the reporters nevertheless used report paragraphs almost nine times more often than opinion paragraphs.

Table 13 gives separate analyses of paragraph direction by type for news stories and editorials. For news items, straight news reporting is

again seen to be composed primarily of neutral paragraphs (62.56 percent). However, when opinions are expressed they tend to be negative (58.12 percent).

Table 13. - Direction of Report and Opinion Paragraphs

News Items			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Report Paragraphs (N=3374)	6.11%	31.33%	62.56%
Opinion Paragraphs (N=351)	11.68%	58.12%	30.20%
Total Paragraphs (N=3725)	6.63%	33.85%	59.52%
Editorials			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Report Paragraphs (N=7)	0.00%	42.86%	57.14%
Opinion Paragraphs (N=20)	30.00%	65.00%	5.00%
Total Paragraphs (N=27)	22.22%	59.26%	18.52%

Out of 191 items related to Malaysia, only 3 were editorials. Two of these were elicited by the banning incident, and the third dealt with Malaysia's prescription of the death penalty for drug trafficking. The editors of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* criticized Malaysia's use of capital punishment for drug-related offenses and the Malaysian government's decision to ban the newspaper. They lauded the country's Supreme

Court for its independence and integrity in overturning the expulsions of Berthelsen and Pura.

It is no surprise that opinion paragraphs predominate in editorials. What is more interesting to note is that the direction of opinions expressed in the editorials was consistent with those found in the news items. Of the 20 opinion paragraphs used in editorials, 65 percent were negative. Though the number of editorial items may be insufficient for a truly significant analysis, examination of these items nevertheless provide an indication of the newspaper's general attitude toward Malaysia.

THEMES

From analysis of the 191 substantive items pertaining to Malaysia in 1986 a total of 247 themes emerged, which were then categorized by focus, as indicated in Table 14. Out of these thematic groups, four represented more than 15 percent each of the total items: economic decline (37.17 percent), political instability (24.61 percent), economic opportunity (16.75 percent), and corruption (16.23 percent). A fifth thematic group, incompetence and mismanagement, represented almost one-tenth (9.42 percent) of all items for the year. Of these five most frequently used types of themes, only one was favorable toward Malaysia.

The predominance of unfavorable themes in the *AWSJ*'s 1986 coverage of Malaysia suggests that the newspaper did in fact emphasize bad news about the country. Although the prominence of themes focusing on economic opportunity conveys some attempt by the

newspaper to report favorable developments in Malaysia along with the unfavorable, the newspaper's preoccupation with bad news is evident.

Table 14. - Items by Thematic Focus

	Items (N=191)
Economic Decline	37.17%
Political Instability	24.61%
Economic Opportunity	16.75%
Corruption	16.23%
Incompetence and Mismanagement	9.42%
Repression	4.71%
Competence	4.19%
Integrity	4.19%
International Cooperation	4.19%
Social Upheaval	4.19%
Political Stability	3.66%

N.B.: Percentages total to greater than 100% due to multiple themes for some items.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

Two main facts about the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* 1986 coverage of Malaysia emerged from this study - the newspaper's coverage of the country was essentially neutral, though with a markedly negative cast, and undeniably objective. At the same time, the *AWSJ* clearly emphasized bad news about Malaysia. But whether this emphasis mirrored actual conditions is unknown. Even though we are aware that 1986 was a year of many controversies, this study has no way of accounting for good occurrences that may have taken place that year and simply gone unnoticed by the *Asian Wall Street Journal*.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In keeping with the nature of the *AWSJ* as a business newspaper, the largest single category of items for the year focused on the domestic economy - including news of local and foreign business enterprises, corporate and stock market activity, and general economic conditions.

Politics and government-related matters were reported with about equal frequency, but received greater in-depth coverage than the domestic economy. Since the government exercises a sizable presence in the

nation's economy, a great deal of attention was paid to economic policy and to government interaction with economic phenomena. Ample coverage was also given to more overtly political situations, as well - especially to allegations of corruption among senior government officials and to incidents of mismanagement of public funds. Items in this last area were those most annoying to the prime minister.

Although foreign trade and industry are important sectors in the national economy, few items related to these areas were carried in 1986. This may be attributed in part to Malaysia's poor economic performance that year. It is also likely that developments in these two areas were overshadowed to some degree by other, more "newsworthy" occurrences.

Over all, the ratio of bad news to good news was two items to one. (9)

Items dealing with social conditions, international economy, and government and politics had the highest percentages of bad news. The latter category of items contained nearly 80 percent bad news and a considerable proportion of its paragraphs were negative in direction. The fact that stories on social conditions in Malaysia were devoted almost exclusively to ethnic and religious violence in Sabah lends credence to some of the government's criticisms of the *AWSJ*.

More difficult to accept is Prime Minister Mahathir's claim that the *Asian Wall Street Journal's* coverage of Malaysia was "not factual at all." Results of this study showed report paragraphs outnumbering opinion paragraphs more than nine to one. Only 9.42 percent of all paragraphs were expressions of opinions, and few of these were directly attributable to the *AWSJ's* reporters.

On a scale of 0 to +1, with 0 representing absolute objectivity, items examined scored an average of 0.07. This indicates that report paragraphs were in the overwhelmingly majority throughout the year's coverage, regardless of subject matter. News reports on governmental and political matters were somewhat less objective than coverage in general, with an average score of 0.10. Among filing agencies, *AWSJ* reporters were more likely to use opinion paragraphs than were the wire services, most probably because items from the wire services were shorter and more precise with less justification for judgements or inferences. Nevertheless it seems that, on the whole, the *AWSJ* practiced straightforward factual presentation of news on Malaysia.

Even though the total number of negative paragraphs was quite considerable (34.14 percent), paragraphs generally tended to be neutral in direction (59.05 percent), giving the impression that the writers did make an effort to balance or "neutralize" their reports. In every subject-matter category, except for items dealing with social conditions and international economy, neutral paragraphs exceeded both negative and positive paragraphs combined. Among the different filing agencies or news sources, while no clear pattern emerged regarding the selection of good and bad news, wire services used a distinctly smaller proportion of negative paragraphs and a larger proportion of positive paragraphs than did *AWSJ* reporters.

When the paragraphs of news items were analyzed for type and direction together, a tendency was found for opinion paragraphs to be neg-

ative (58.12 percent), while report paragraphs were more inclined to be neutral (62.56 percent). A significant portion of opinions paragraphs were characterized as neutral (30.20 percent), indicating either that the opinions expressed were ambiguous or that the paragraphs were equally balanced between positive and negative opinion statements.

The direction of opinion paragraphs used in the three editorials were found to be consistent with those in the news reports, with 65 percent negative. Since the number of editorials was small, this figure may be somewhat distorted. It does, however, suggest a general trend in the newspaper's attitude toward Malaysia.

One of the more striking findings of this study was that - even though both bad-news items and good-news items were predominantly neutral in direction - the number of negative paragraphs exceeded the number of positive paragraphs not only in bad news, but in good news as well (although only slightly). Thus, despite whatever attempts there may have been to neutralize stories, news reports still emphasized negative dimensions over positive.

Moving to thematic analysis, findings showed that of the five most frequently used types of themes, only one was favorable to Malaysia. Items were found to focus most frequently on economic decline (37.17 percent) and political instability (24.61 percent). This is not a complete surprise, since items dealing with the subjects of domestic economy and government and politics were the two most prevalent. It appears that the *AWSJ* did attempt to portray some favorable aspects of the country, with a

number of items focusing on economic opportunity. Nevertheless, the majority of themes communicated an unfavorable image of Malaysia. No doubt, readers would be left with a distinct impression of Malaysia as a country plagued with economic and political problems, not least of which were mismanagement, incompetence, and corruption.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be stated with confidence that the *Asian Wall Street Journal* did consider bad news to be highly newsworthy in its coverage of Malaysia. Most major conflicts and controversies that occurred in 1986 were reported extensively. It cannot be concluded, however, that the newspaper preferred bad news to good news, since there is no outside data with which to correlate these findings.

A comparison of *AWSJ*'s coverage of Malaysia with that of several other newspapers might be helpful in this regard. It would also be worthwhile to examine the *AWSJ*'s coverage of other countries to discover whether events in those countries were dealt with in a similar manner. In addition, the scope of study should be expanded to encompass several years. In this way general trends can be better documented.

As we recall, one of Prime Minister Mahathir's complaints against the *Asian Wall Street Journal* was that the newspaper emphasized only negative aspects, thus portraying a bad image of Malaysia to the foreign investors so vital to the country's troubled economy. Findings of this study suggest that his criticism is not without some grounds. However,

the study also indicates that the *AWSJ* did maintain objectivity in spite of its negative reports about the country. If this was the case, it is difficult to understand why Dr. Mahathir chose to ban the newspaper and to expel its correspondents - especially in light of his professed concern for Malaysia's image as a prosperous, democratic country where foreign business enterprises are welcomed.

The reader may at this point be inclined to ask, "If the *Asian Wall Street Journal* was presenting essentially straightforward factual reports on Malaysia, why did the Malaysian government become so disturbed?" It should be remembered that this study only measured the objectivity of what was written in the *AWSJ*'s coverage. It did not measure bias or "slanting" of news reports, since there was no way of determining what materials might have been intentionally excluded from the items that were carried.

For example, there were few firsthand accounts of the government's views on many of the matters being reported. Of all the items carried about Malaysia by the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in 1986, those about government and politics were most negative and used the highest proportion of opinion paragraphs. But this may have been more a result of the previously noted inaccessibility of government officials to the press, especially foreign press, than of any deliberate attempt to portray the government unfavorably. A methodology needs to be formulated that will take such matters into account.

Like many other studies of this nature, this work focused on quantification of various news categories in the media. Such an approach can only indicate general patterns of coverage, but cannot contribute much on

the question of reconciling the competing news values and practices of the West and the developing world. Differences and similarities between First World and Third World news values need to be further elucidated, perhaps by making comparisons of the coverage of specific events involving the interests of several countries from both of these areas. The framework of this study should be expanded to go beyond the contents of a particular newspaper in order to understand why conflicts are given so much attention in Western journalism and why certain viewpoints are invariably missing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Affendi, Abdulwahab, El-. "The Malay Dilemma." *Arabia*, November 1986, 7-13.

Aggarwala, Narinder. "News: A Matter of People." In *Third World Mass Media: Issues, Theory and Research*, eds. Mario D. Zamora, Vinson H. Sutlive, and Nathan Altshuler, 41-56. Williamsburg, VA: College of William and Mary, 1979.

Anderson, Frederick I. "An Analysis of Objective-Subjective Content of News Programs of Three Television Networks." M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1973.

Asian Wall Street Journal, January-December 1986.

Atwood, L. Erwin, Stuart J. Bullion, Sharon M. Murphy, eds. *International Perspectives on News*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982.

✓ Berelson, B. *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952.

Bowring, Philip. "No Dilemma about Mahathir's Directions: Power to the Center." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 April 1988, 22-26.

✓ Budd, Richard W., R. Thorp, and L. Donohew. *Content Analysis of Communications*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967.

✓ Carney, Thomas F. *Content Analysis: A Technique for Systematic Inference from Communication*. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press, 1972.

"Caselist," *CPJ Update* 29 (May-June 1987): 4-10.

- "Caselist," *CPJ Update* 32 (January-February 1988): 4-12.
- Chu, Leonard L. "An Organizational Perspective on International News Flow: Some Generalizations and Questions for Research." *Gazette* 35 (1985): 3-18.
- "Daim - The Target?" *New Straits Times*, 21 May 1986.
- DeMott, John. "'Interpretative' News Stories Compared With 'Spot' News." *Journalism Quarterly* 50 (Spring 1973): 102-08.
- Dorman, William A. "Peripheral Vision: U.S. Journalism and the Third World." *World Policy Journal* 3 (Summer 1986): 419-43.
- _____ and Mansour Farhang. *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.
- English, John W. "Malaysia: Chilling Press Freedom." *IPI Report* 28-32 (August 1982): 15.
- Festinger, Leon. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row & Peterson, 1957.
- Geyer, Georgie Anne. "Brilliant, Spunky Leader American Editors Thought They Fervently Disliked." *Straits Times Weekly Overseas Edition*, 28 May 1988.
- Gieber, Walter. "Do Newspapers Overplay Negative News?" *Journalism Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1955): 311-18.
- Gitau, Ndicu E. "An Analysis of the Coverage of Idi Amin by Three Selected Daily English Language Newspapers." M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1979.
- Government of Malaysia. *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1971.
- "Government Will Do What It Feels is Right: Ghafar," *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), 28 September 1986.

Hayakawa, S. I. *Language in Thought and Action*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964.

Holloway, Nigel. "Restriction and Appeal: Singapore Acts Against Time While the Journal Gets Hearing." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 October 1986, 14.

Holsti, Ole R. *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1969.

Johnstone, John W. C., Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman. "The Professional Values of American Newsmen." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36 (Winter 1972-73): 522-40.

Kalter, Joanmarie. "Can Third World Journalism Find a Third Way?" *Quill* 71 (May 1983): 14-18.

Khor Kok Peng. "The End of an Era." *Inquiry*, September 1987, 19-21.

Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980.

Kurian, George Thomas, ed. *World Press Encyclopedia*. New York: Facts on File, 1982. S.v. "Malaysia," by Elliot S. Parker.

Lee Hsien Loong. "When the Press Misinforms." Speech at the 40th World Congress of Newspaper Publishers, Helsinki, 26 May 1987.

Lee Kuan Yew. Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, DC, 14 April 1988. Text provided by Public Affairs Office, Embassy of Singapore, Washington, DC.

Lent, John A. "A Third World News Deal?" *Index on Censorship* 6 (September-October 1977): 17-46.

_____. "Mass Media in Malaysia." *Asian Profile* 6 (April 1978): 152-61.

_____. "Social Change and the Human Right of Freedom of Expression in Malaysia." *Universal Human Rights* 1 (July-September 1979): 51-60.

- _____. "Press and Government in East Asia: An Overview." *Asia Quarterly* No. 2 (1980): 127-37.
- _____. "Restructuring of Mass Media in Malaysia and Singapore - Pounding in the Coffin Nails?" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 16 (October-December 1984): 26-35.
- Lin, Carolyn. *Content Analysis of the Coverage of Sino-US Normalization by Three Newspapers: The New York Times, the Central Daily News and the Peoples' Daily*. M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1983.
- Lowry, Dennis T. "Agnew and the Network TV News: A Before/After Content Analysis." *Journalism Quarterly* 48 (Summer 1971): 205-10.
- Mahathir Mohamad. *The Challenge*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1986.
- Martin, John L., and Chaudary A. Grover. *Comparative Mass Media Systems*. New York: Longman Inc., 1983.
- Meisler, Stanley. "Covering the Third World (or Trying To)." *Columbia Journalism Review*, 17 (November-December 1978): 34-38.
- Merill, John C. "How *Time* Stereotyped Three U.S. Presidents." *Journalism Quarterly* 42 (1965): 563-70.
- Mohd. Hamdan Adnan. "Media Development and Trends in Malaysia." Adapted paper presented at a meeting of AMIC country representatives, Singapore, 1985.
- Nathan, Umithevi. "Propaganda and Persuasion - A Trend in Malaysian Mass Media." *Media Asia* 13 (1986): 99-102.
- North, Robert C., et al. *Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
- Potter, James W. "News from Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers." *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (Spring 1987): 73-79.

"Press Freedom in Malaysia." Forum sponsored by the Selangor Graduates Society. In *Moving, Writing, and Behaving Gingerly*, ed. Gurmit Singh, 100-118. Port Kelang, Malaysia: Percetakan Waizet, 1985.

Riffe, Daniel, and Eugene F. Shaw. "Conflict and Consonance: Coverage of the Third World in Two U.S. Papers." *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Winter 1982): 617-27.

Rosenberg, Jerry M. *Inside the Wall Street Journal: The History and Power of Dow Jones & Co.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982.

Rosenblum, Mort. "Reporting from the Third World." In *Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects*, eds. Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson, 221-41. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

Ryan, Michael. "Reports, Inferences, Judgement in News Coverage of Social Issues." *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (Autumn 1979): 497-503.

Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers.* New York: Basic Books, 1978.

Seaward, Nick. "Lesser National Product: Malaysia Suffers Its First Economic Contraction in a Decade." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 October 1986, 80-81.

_____. "Silenced Voices." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 October 1986, 16.

Shaw, David. "Correspondents Must Mix Curiosity with Isolation." *Los Angeles Times*, 7 July 1986.

Shipman, John M. "New York Times Coverage of the War in El Salvador." *Journalism Quarterly* 60 (Winter 1983): 719-22.

Stempel, Guido H. "Statistical Designs for Content Analysis." In *Research Methods in Mass Communication*, ed. Guido H. Stempel and Bruce H. Westley, 132-43. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

- Stevenson, Robert L., and Garry D. Gaddy. "Bad News and the Third World." In *Foreign News and the New World Information Order*, eds. Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw, 88-105. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1984.
- Suhaini Aznam. "An Act of Approval: A Tougher OSA Gets Go Ahead from Parliament." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 December 1986, 46-47.
- _____. "Economic Slump Undermines Ruling Coalition's Image." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 May 1986, 25.
- _____. "What is Fit to Print?: Mahathir Attacks Foreign Press Which He Says is Against Him." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 September 1986, 13.
- Sussman, Leonard R. "Developmental Journalism: The Ideological Factor." In *The Third World and Press Freedom*, ed. Philip C. Horton, 74-92. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.
- _____. "The 'Free' Press of Malaysia." *Freedom at Issue*, July-August 1986, 20-22.
- Szende, Andrew. *From Torrent To Trickle: Managing the Flow of News in Southeast Asia*. Research Notes and Discussion Paper No. 58. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986.
- Tatarian, Roger. "News Flow in the Third World: An Overview." In *The Third World and Press Freedom*, ed. Philip C. Horton, 25-27. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.
- Tiffen, Rodney. *The News from Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1978.
- Weaver, David H., Judith M. Buddenbaum, and Jo Ellen Fair. "Press Freedom, Media, and Development, 1950-1979: A Study of 134 Nations." *Journal of Communication* 35 (Spring 1985): 104-16.
- Westerstahl, Jorgen. "Objective News Reporting." *Communication Research* 10 (July 1983): 403-24.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all who contributed in any way to the preparation of this thesis. In particular, I wish to thank my major professor, Dr. J. K. Hvistendahl, and the other members of my committee, Dr. Bill Gillette and Dr. John Wong.

Special recognition goes to the staff of the Malaysian Embassy, for assistance in locating valuable background information on Malaysia and on the banning incident, and to ACCESS: A Security Information Service, in Washington, DC, for provision of computer facilities for completion of the final manuscript.

For the opportunity to pursue this research, I am especially grateful to the Institut Teknologi MARA, in Shah Alam, Malaysia. Thanks also to the Public Service Department of the Malaysian government for financing my studies in the United States.

Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to my husband, Faruq abd ul-Rafi', for his constant love and tireless support.

APPENDIX 1. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- ◆ Singaporean authorities arrest millionaire businessman Tan Koon Swan, newly-elected president of the MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA), on charges of abetting criminal breach of trust, fraud, and cheating stemming from the collapse of Pan-Electric Industries. Supporters of the popular Tan stage demonstrations at the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and at the Malaysia-Singapore causeway.
- ◆ A Malaysian newspaper reporter is fined M\$7,000 (U.S.\$2,850) for receiving secret military information.

FEBRUARY

- ◆ Malaysian government releases a plan to increase economic efficiency and competitiveness by shifting from the current reliance on commodity exports toward industry.
- ◆ In perhaps the worst crisis the party has faced since Malaysia gained its independence in 1957, a leadership rift in the UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO) leads to resignation of the popular deputy prime minister, Musa Hitam. Musa simultaneously relinquishes his home minister's portfolio.

MARCH

- ◆ Government makes public a report charging former officials of federally-owned Bank Bumiputra with financial mismanagement and corruption involving \$M2.5 billion (U.S.\$960 million).
- ◆ Eastern state of Sabah is rocked by two dozen bombings and fatal fires along with other incidents of ethnic violence stemming from the previous April's electoral upset of the incumbent Malay, Muslim BERJAYA party by the Kadazan, Christian-dominated UNITED SABAH PARTY (PBS). Curfews are imposed on the state capital of Kota

Kinabalu after two deaths result from rioting; some 700 militant Muslim opponents of the government are arrested.

- ◆ Annual economic report reveals that national GNP has declined for the first time in a decade – by 2.7 percent in 1985, compared to a gain of 13.5 percent in 1984. Due to the economic slowdown, thousands of Malaysians have been retrenched, firms closed, and various government development projects postponed.
- ◆ Musa Hitam announces he has withdrawn his resignation as deputy president of UMNO to prevent further split in the party ranks.

APRIL

- ◆ UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USNO) leader Mustapha Harun loses High Court challenge of Joseph Pairin Kitingan's right to serve as Sabah chief minister. Mustapha drops out of upcoming state elections and resigns from politics.

MAY

- ◆ Nancy Reagan, touring Asia prior to the economic summit in Tokyo, visits Malaysia as part of her campaign to stop drug abuse.
- ◆ Abdul Ghafar Baba sworn in as deputy prime minister.
- ◆ Special federal task force established to scrutinize the affairs of some 900 ailing government-sponsored companies.
- ◆ Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announces during a visit to Australia that some aspects of the NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) will be temporarily suspended due to the sluggishness of the Malaysian economy.
- ◆ PBS reaffirms its hold on the Sabah government, soundly defeating the USNO and BERJAYA parties in elections for the state legislature. PBS is later admitted into the country's ruling NATIONAL FRONT coalition, ending the year-long political crisis..

JULY

- ◆ Australian nationals John Kevin Barlow and Brian Chambers are hanged for heroin trafficking, the first such executions of non-Asians under Malaysia's strict anti-drug laws. International media attention and Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke's

remarks in Sydney about "barbaric" hangings are perceived as challenging Malaysia's right to implement its own laws.

- ◆ Prime Minister Mahathir announces dissolution of the lower house of the national legislature, paving the way for general elections.

AUGUST

- ◆ In national and state elections, the ruling NATIONAL FRONT coalition retains its commanding majority in the country's parliament, while the opposition DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (DAP) makes significant inroads at both the federal and state levels.
- ◆ In post-election reshuffling of the national cabinet, Prime Minister Mahathir consolidates his position by placing allies in key ministries. Several perceived supporters of Musa Hitam are transferred to less influential positions.
- ◆ Tan Koon Swan resigns as MCA president as he begins serving a two-year jail sentence in Singapore for criminal breach of trust.
- ◆ Political aspirant Abdullah Ahmad sparks demands for government action from several Chinese groups with remarks before a university audience in Singapore suggesting that Malaysia's Malays would prefer merger with Indonesia over allowing Chinese to dominate the country.

SEPTEMBER

- ◆ Although not an OPEC member, Malaysia makes voluntary 10 percent cut in oil production in support of OPEC efforts to stabilize prices.
- ◆ Malaysian government acknowledges that it lost some \$M80 million (U.S.\$32 million) in 1981-82 attempt to corner the world tin market.
- ◆ Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin announces sale of his controlling interest in United Malayan Banking Corp., Malaysia's third largest bank, to government-owned Perbadanan Nasional Bhd. (Pernas). The multimillion-dollar profit Daim will earn from the transaction fuels allegations that his family business empire is causing conflicts of interest with his role as finance minister.
- ◆ John Berthelsen and Rafael Pura, correspondents for the *AWSJ*, are ordered to leave Malaysia on grounds that their presence in the

country is prejudicial to the national security. Distribution of the newspaper is prohibited for three months.

- ◆ At Malaysian Investment Seminar in New York, Prime Minister Mahathir announces changes in rules governing foreign investment in Malaysia. In impromptu remarks, Dr. Mahathir attempts to justify banning of the *AWSJ* and expulsion of Berthelsen and Pura as legitimate responses to the newspaper's "tendentious, scurrilous and non-factual writing."

NOVEMBER

- ◆ Ban on distribution of the *AWSJ* is lifted 1 1/2 months early, after the Malaysian Supreme Court rules that the government had acted illegally in refusing to allow Berthelsen and Pura to appeal their expulsions from the country.
- ◆ Visit of Israeli President Chaim Herzog to Singapore further strains Malaysia-Singapore relations.

DECEMBER

- ◆ Controversial amendment to the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT mandating a minimum one-year jail sentence for anyone found in possession of documents falling under a catch-all definition of confidentiality is passed into law - despite nationwide objections from lawyers, journalists, and others, including Malaysia's first prime minister.
- ◆ Bricklin Industries of New York announces plans to import Malaysia's Proton Saga automobile to the U.S. beginning in February 1988.
- ◆ Malaysia's central bank asks the country's high court to place in receivership twenty-three financially ailing deposit taking cooperatives, which face total losses estimated at more than M\$230 million (U.S.\$92 million).

APPENDIX 2.
PRIME MINISTER'S IMPROMPTU
SPEECH DELIVERED AS AN ANSWER
TO VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS MADE BY
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL PRIOR
TO HIS ADDRESS AT THE WALDORF
ASTORIA HOTEL, NEW YORK*

Thank you very much for the introduction, Mr. Greenburg, Mr. Sargese, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have a prepared speech but since reference was made to the press article, I think I might take that up first so as to hopefully clear the air.

The last one week or so Malaysia has received a lot of attention from the press. We have been trying to do this for a long time. Unfortunately, we did not succeed before but now we have succeeded. Unfortunately again I have to do some explanation. Now if you will permit me I will begin from the beginning, having read Sherlock Holmes quite often. The beginning is that Malaysia is a developing country. It is a unique multiracial country in which half the population is made up of the indigenous people. 38 per cent are Chinese, 10 per cent are Indians. It is a little bit difficult for Americans to figure that out because although you are also a multi-racial country, you do not have such figures. You have a lot of minorities but they are very small compared to Malaysia. May be, perhaps, if you allow 38 per cent of Chinese to migrate to America and make up 38 per cent of your population and 10 per cent of the population to be made up of Indians of the various kinds, you may be able to understand the problems that we have been trying to run a multi-racial country like Malaysia.

[2] Fortunately, since independence in 1957 we have managed to run Malaysia quite well even if that is our opinion. From figures, of course, we have consistently achieved growth rates that exceed most other countries. In fact, until 1982 our growth rate was 8 per cent per year and

* Malaysian Investment Seminar, New York, 30 September 1986; bracketed numbers indicate original pagination of text provided by Public Affairs Office, Embassy of Malaysia, Washington, DC.

almost everything that you see today have been built or constructed or implemented after independence. Among which is, of course, the number of factories, number of manufacturing centers that we have in Malaysia most of them started after independence which goes to show the kind of policies we have particularly towards foreign investors. This growth cannot just happen like that. Growth can only take place if there is stability in the country. You see, a lot of countries with even more natural resources both in terms of human capacity as well as other forms of resources but they have not been able to achieve that kind of growth that we have achieved and the reason is usually a lack of political stability. A lack of ability for the Government to govern effectively.

In Malaysia, despite the fact that it is multi-racial and not single community is big enough to run the country by itself. Malaysia has managed to have stability except for 1969 when we have these racial riots but after that we managed to calm things down and within a short while we returned to parliamentary democracy and the different communities decided that they should work together to rebuild Malaysia and have did it so well that if you had been in Malaysia in 1970 and returned to the U.S. and go back to Malaysia this year, you are going to see such a [3] difference that you could not imagine. That is not to say that a riot is necessary in order to build up a country but the fact remains that we have been able to cement the relationship within the different communities we have been able to follow policies that have contributed to a very high growth rate indeed. We managed to build up the economy so that we became one of the countries that sometimes referred to as the little dragon of South East Asia or sometimes people classify us as NIC or Newly Industrialised Country or just to becoming the NIC.

Unfortunately, if you read reports in the newspapers you will wonder how is it possible for a country with so many problems to achieve this kind of growth rates. If you read reports in the foreign journals and if you read reports in The Wall Street Journals, Asian Wall Street Journals or otherwise you will find that the country is beset with numerous problems, problems of race relations, problems of New Economic Policy that are not acceptable to foreigners. Not acceptable to local people, problems of corruption in Government, any number of problems. In fact, if you read the papers and did not go to Malaysia, you would think that it is a very dangerous place to go to. Certainly, you would think that it is not the sort of place you would put your money in. But the fact remains, the country has grown. It has remained stable. It has become economically very strong. The people live very well, indeed, and I think on the whole all of South East Asia or may be in the whole of the world, you do not find as many Mercedes Benz taxis as you find in Malaysia. We have done very well. The per capita income has grown to about US\$ 2,000 per year until recently, of course, when our own Ringgit has been devalued not because we chose to do so. We [4] put up with a lot of these bad reports by the foreign press.

We have been very liberal with our own press as well as with the foreign press. Now this may be very hard for this to think but everything is comparative and if you care to make comparisons with many countries you will find that we have been very liberal indeed. We have put up with all kinds of articles that have no relationship with truth

at all, not factual at all. Tenacious writings, slanted writings, angles with writings when we cannot understand why this is so. Some people say this is because of my bluntness, that I like to say what I think. I do not mince words. I tell people exactly what I think of them. It is an unfortunate characteristic for a Prime Minister, but, I cannot help myself. I have told people when they are wrong that they are wrong.

Now, as I said we have tolerated these things until lately when we notice a special trend, a trend to publish scurrilous articles on Malaysia whenever there is some special occasion taking place. Principally, whenever there is something to do with meetings that may affect the economy of Malaysia. When the Asian Development Bank met in Manila, an article came up which was very unfair to the Minister of Finance, accusing him of all kinds of crimes, of all kinds of manipulation when substantiating nothing. Then there was the International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington, yet another article appeared in The Wall Street Journal again attacking the Minister of Finance. An article regarding [5] his property, regarding his shares, regarding his friendship with the Prime Minister, how he was chosen, all kinds of things came out and it was a very long article. Of course, we feel that there would be some articles published when the Minister of Finance again attends the International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington which is being held now but this time I think The Wall Street Journal has excelled itself. It has published four articles vilifying not only the Minister of Finance but also the Prime Minister. Nothing factual was reported. All kinds of stories were made and nothing that he said which needs also to be mentioned if it does not favour the view of The Wall Street Journal was left out. For example, in my explanation regarding the Tin operation, I explained that the Government went in because there was a lot of speculation in the London Metal Exchange. Efforts were being made to push the price down and we stood to lose a lot of money and therefore the Government went in and intervened to defend the price. This is not something new. A lot of Governments intervened whenever their own economy is involved.

Recently, for example, some Banks decided to unload a lot of Ringgits in order to depress the Ringgit value and the Government had to defend the Ringgit. We have to buy up the Ringgit in order to sustain its value. So intervention of this nature is something that is quite natural. But because the Government went in it was made up that there was some hanky-panky and some corruption involved. All we did was to defend the Tin because people were playing around with commodities that affect our economy and we thought that by going in we would be able to defend and even make a little bit of profit but as you know the London Metal Exchange changed the rules when it came to delivery date to save [6] their members. Now, how do you deal with a body that makes and breaks its own rules to suit its own members. The Government would not have done this thing except that people would be unfair but that part of the story was not published. Instead, the depression or the economic depression in Malaysia was attributed. It seems to The New Economic Policy, to the Tin operation, to our mistake in going into heavy industries, etc. How foolish. It is not only Malaysia that is suffering from depression. Everything in this world trading in commodities supplies now and they suffer because all commodities have come down in price.

You may know how Australia feels about America because of the sale of wheat. The price of wheat went down not because Australia wanted but because the U.S. decided to sell wheat at a subsidized price. The price of Tin went down for many reasons. It is not the Government of Malaysia which fixed the price of Tin. It is the market that fixed the price of Tin and because the price of Tin went down to 1/3 its original price because the price of palm oil which used to sell at 1,400 Malaysian Ringgit per metric ton now sells at 500 Malaysian Ringgit or less our income naturally goes down. The price of timber has gone down. The price of petroleum which we used to sell at dollars 30 per barrel is now being sold at dollars 10 per barrel.

Under such circumstances how do you expect the economy of Malaysia to prosper. What has that got to do with the New Economic Policy or the fact that the Government has gone into the tin market. Would it has [7] saved Malaysia if we had not gone into the tin market or the New Economic Policy when the price of all the commodities that we sell now goes down to that level. Would the abolishment of all these New Economic Policies suddenly bring prosperity to us. We do not think so. Anybody with any sense at all will surely conclude that this is not so. If Malaysia is suffering now, it is not because of our policies, it is because that all commodities have now undergone a radical structural change. You do not need commodities the way you need commodities before. You do not need copper anymore. It used to be you used copper to make cables for telephone. Now you have glass fibre. Who needs copper. The price of copper goes down. It will never go up again to the old level. The same can be said for tin. You have substituted paper, glass, aluminum, plastics for packaging instead of tin. How do you expect the price of tin to go up. At the same time new technology in prospecting has enabled people to discover tin deposits where before they would have to spend millions of dollars searching for tin and so Brazil producers more tin than the world needs at 1/3 the cost of Malaysia at dollars 3,000 per metric ton. The Brazilians can sell tin at any price. Our cost of production is dollars 8,000 per metric ton.

These are the reasons why Malaysia today faces an economic slump. It has nothing to do with our New Economic Policy. It has nothing to do with corruption among Ministers if there is corruption, let us see the truth, let us investigate. It is so easy for a newspaper with circulations around the world and knows its power and has linkages with other newspapers to print speculation articles like that and let the whole world read in order to undermine our economy. But what can we do, we are a small country, a developing country. We have no means of reaching people. [8] It is very fortunate that I can speak to you hear today, very fortunate indeed. But how many of you are going to spread the news around. You will talk may be to a few people but The Wall Street Journal is read worldwide and people are going to assume that Malaysia has got all the wrong policies and therefore nobody should go to Malaysia to invest. But those who have gone to Malaysia to invest must know that when they invest in Malaysia they have rich benefits. That is the truth. There are many people in this room who have been to Malaysia. You know very well that Malaysia has a growing economy. That Malaysia is stable that Malaysia is a country where you can reach everyone including

the Prime Minister if you have a problem. We have been very liberal with foreigners. We have invited them. We have gone out all our way to be accomodating that is why I cam here because I thought I have a message for you. A message that may help you decide to invest in Malaysia.

So that is the story of the press and I am sure that I am not going to be let off so easily. I know that in this room there are members of the same press. I know that efforts will be made by the press editors to pressure the Malaysian Government to do this and that. We are a small country but we bow to no one. We will not be bludgeoned into submitting to this kind of pressure even if it means that the development of our country is going to suffer. Malaysia is not like that at all. We will stand up and we will fight. We will fight the whole way through.

Well, if I may go on with my prepared speech which is much less interesting, ladies and gentlemen.

APPENDIX 3.
TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE
PROTESTING MALAYSIAN
GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON THE ASIAN
WALL STREET JOURNAL*

The Wall Street Journal protested strongly the Malaysian government's action Thursday banning distribution of its Asian edition, The Asian Wall Street Journal, for three months and expelling its two correspondents in Malaysia

The Malaysian government action was announced by Bernama, Malaysia's national (official) news agency. It said the Home Ministry acted "after the ministry had studied the articles carried by the newspaper." It did not cite the specific articles to which it objected. A text of the Bernama announcement is attached.

Warren H. Phillips, chairman and chief executive of Dow Jones & Co., Inc., publishers of The Wall Street Journal and The Asian Wall Street Journal, issued the following statement:

"We protest the Malaysian government's actions. We believe they are unfair, unjustified and unwise. We are requesting the government of Malaysia to reverse the suspension of our publishing permit and the expulsion of our two reporters, Rafael Pura and John Berthelsen, both fine journalists whose work is a source of pride to us. The real losers in all of this are the members of the Malaysian business community. Their government has deprived them of essential business and economic news from Asia and the rest of the world. We are proud of the accuracy and integrity of our reporting from Malaysia.

[2] "It is ironic that at a time of expanding international trade and financial transactions, with Malaysia actively seeking increased investments from the U.S. and other nations, the Malaysian government should try to suppress the free flow of information on which international commerce depends. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad plans to be in the U.S. next week for previously scheduled meetings on U.S.-Malaysian relations. The banning of an American newspaper and an American business enterprise, and expulsion of its representatives, does

*Dow Jones & Co., New York, 26 September 1986; bracketed numbers indicate original pagination.

little to inspire confidence in the Malaysian government's approach to an improved business climate and factual reporting."

The Asian Wall Street Journal is published in Hong Kong and Singapore. Its attained circulation on June 27, 1986 was 33,269, up 14.4% from a year ago. Circulation in Malaysia is about 1,800. Dow Jones & Co. publishes another overseas edition of The Wall Street Journal in Europe, with circulation there of about 35,400.

The Bernama text, dated Sept. 26, reads:

"The publishing permit of The Asian Wall Street Journal has been suspended for three months with immediate effect, the government announced today.

"A Home Ministry statement issued here said the decision was made after the ministry had studied the articles carried by the newspaper. It said the ministry had always adopted a liberal attitude towards newspapers in the country. However, this attitude must be reciprocated by the papers with a sense of responsibility and accountability, it said.

"The statements warned that the ministry would not hesitate in acting against any publication that exceeded the bounds of such liberalism by featuring articles, reports, statements, or other writings which could undermine public order, morals, national security, ties with foreign governments or went against the country's laws or threatened the republic or national interest.

Although the Malaysians didn't specify the articles they objected to, The Wall Street Journal in the U.S. and The Asian Wall Street Journal published the attached articles this week.

**APPENDIX 4.
CODING INSTRUMENT**

CODING INSTRUMENT

Date: _____
 Total paragraphs: _____
 Filing agency: _____
(If correspondent, etc, include name.)

Title: _____
 Content type: _____
 Subject matter: _____
 Circle one: "Good news" / "Bad news"

Para. #	Report	Opinion	Direction			Theme(s)
			+	-	0	