

D. Malaysia – Researcher: Dorothy Bartozsewski

i. Discussion

Dorothy Bartozsewski, the IMPACS' researcher stationed in Malaysia, chose the following media for analysis: Utusan, a Malay language daily newspaper; Radio 4, an English language radio station; the Star, an English language daily; and Sin Chew Jit Poh, a Chinese language newspaper.

Despite monitoring four major media in Malaysia, the coverage of APEC tended to be restricted to a uniformly narrow range of topics and sources. The majority of the discussion revolved around economic issues and was attributed to government representatives. This may be a consequence of government control, as all major Malaysian media outlets are owned by the ruling coalition.

Three daily newspapers were monitored. The Malay-language daily, Utusan focused on four main topics: Economic issues, the process of negotiation (politics of trade), events or outcomes from the official Summit and the violence in East Timor. Although the People's Summit was the main topic of one article, the concerns of civil society and indeed, other voices of opposition were marginalized almost to exclusion.

Government sources dominated the APEC discussion in Utusan. Not only were they the most frequently used source type, they were by far the most apt to appear first in these news items.

The English-language daily, The Star, provided a similarly narrow range of topics that in general relied on official government sources. It should be noted

however, that the results from one monitoring day are absent. This being said, the Star's APEC coverage at times tended to focus on trivial events such as a shopping trip by Bill and Chelsea Clinton, APEC leaders sporting new "APEC" windbreakers and faxes for US security plans mistakenly being sent to a chicken processing plant in New Zealand.

The Star provided extremely limited opportunities for voices critical of APEC to be heard. In fact, only one article mentioned the need to "broaden support from the grassroots" and "integrate women into APEC." However, representatives "from the grassroots" or women were not consulted in this piece as to whether they wanted to be included. The only other article that might be construed as an opportunity for criticism was one describing a "hex" that a group of witches put on APEC. Needless to say, such an item was surely meant to provide comic relief rather than a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the Cooperation.

Sin Chew Jit Poh, the Chinese paper, tended to be less conformist than its Malay and English language counterparts. While its coverage was less extensive than the other papers, Sin Chew Jit Poh focused on economic issues, and often put issues in context, something lacking in the other coverage. As well, the 'info-tainment' that marked much of the coverage in the Star, for example, was absent from Sin Chew Jit Poh. Not surprisingly, there was far greater coverage of China/Taiwan issues. Still, sources from government and APEC committee members