

MAHATHIR
BY MUSA SCULLY

LONDON, AUG. 27 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, IN LEADING THE BARISAN NASIONAL TO AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY IN THE RECENT GENERAL ELECTION, HAS DONE MUCH MORE THAN JUST STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS OF GENUINELY FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN MALAYSIA.

+SOUTH+, THE THIRD WORLD MAGAZINE PUBLISHED HERE, SAID IN AN EDITORIAL IN ITS LATEST ISSUE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SHOWN THAT EVEN WHEN A GOVERNMENT IS SECURE IN OFFICE, IT CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE ITS CRITICS AND IF THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY IS IN QUESTION, THE ONLY COURSE AVAILABLE TO IT IS TO GO BACK TO THE PEOPLE AND SEEK A FRESH MANDATE.

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED HOW A GOVERNMENT CAN RESTORE SOCIAL CONSENSUS BY SUBMITTING TO THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE -- EVEN WHEN A GOVERNMENT IS UNDER PRESSURE AND THE COUNTRY IS IN A STATE OF RECESSION.

THE MAGAZINE, WHICH HAS A GLOBAL CIRCULATION OF 82,000, SAID NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES LIKE BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN SHOULD TAKE A LEAF FROM THE MALAYSIAN BOOK.

+THE REFUSAL OF MONARCHS, DYNASTIC RULERS AND MILITARY DICTATORS TO GO TO THE PEOPLE PERPETUATES ALIENATION, SOCIAL STRIFE AND INTELLECTUAL STAGNATION,+ IT ADDED.

+SOUTH+ SAID DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WENT BACK TO THE PEOPLE BECAUSE +IT WAS A QUESTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY.+

ON THE DEFEAT OF PAS, THE MAGAZINE SAID THE IDEA OF TURNING MALAYSIA INTO A STRIDENT THEOCRATIC STATE ON THE IRANIAN MODEL WAS THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF PAS.

+IN THE END, IT WAS THE MODERATE DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WITH HIS PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO HUMAN PROBLEMS WHO WON THE DAY FOR UMNO,+ IT ADDED.

+SOUTH+ SAID THERE ARE TWO LESSONS TO BE DRAWN. +ONE, RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM IN A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY CAN ONLY ACCENTUATE RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND SHARPEN ETHNIC CLEAVAGES, TWO, ISLAMICISTS THROUGHOUT THE MUSLIM WORLD SHOULD RETURN TO THE DRAWING BOARD.

+THEY CANNOT GO AGAINST THE TIDE OF HISTORY AND THEIR ELOQUENT RHETORIC NOTWITHSTANDING, THEY CANNOT CONSCRIPT THE PEOPLE TO FIGHT PROGRESS.+ -- BERNAMA.