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Let's stand proud and ignore arrogant West

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WITH the recent political brouhaha plaguing the nation, and now allegations of police brutality, the foreign media appears to have a vast arsenal of dirt to use against our country and Government.

And they have spared no effort in doing just that and are having a field day portraying our country as an epitome of the Dark Ages.

Foreign news channels on satellite TV continuously air footage of "riots" that to any unknowing viewer, would look like part and parcel of our daily lives.

Of course, it has been conveniently omitted (save for a small date at the corner of the TV screen) that this was the same particular footage, merely repeated over and over again, daily.

I must commend the foreign media on their artistic filming skills, for they indeed have a selective methodology that succeeds in portraying the worst possible-looking scenarios.

They have this uncanny ability to film events from a certain angle, that makes you wonder, as someone who has actually been where the action is, "now how come I missed that? Surely I could not have missed such an exciting and dangerous looking scene."

Indeed the art of filming is in creating illusion and making fantasy look like reality. Friends and relatives abroad call regularly to find out if looting has begun, and if supermarket shelves are now empty.

Just prior to entering the Bukit Jalil stadium for the closing ceremony of the 16th Commonwealth Games, I received a call from London asking me if the stadium was deserted, and if everyone had started packing their bags to flee the country.

Maybe I misheard, after all, it was so noisy at the "deserted" Games venue. Who is feeding them with such ideas?

What really riles me, and many other Malaysians, I am sure, is the high-handedness with which the West (including Australia) see fit to pass judgment, and accuse our leaders of autocracy and dictatorship.

We are a country in crisis, and surely a firm and decisive leadership is preferable over that of spineless leaders who do not even have the moral fibre to nip a blossoming racial bigot in the bud.

Why are we such a darling with the foreign media? What have we done to deserve this preferential treatment when it comes to gross misreporting?

An excerpt from the London Times recently was filled with so many inaccuracies, that it was laughable.

First, Umno was called the "United Malas National Organisation", then Daim was referred to as the "Governor of the Central Bank", and they referred to a public holiday which in reality, was not due till one week later.

Another foreign editorial referred to us as a country that has lived woefully beyond its means. Who are these people to judge us? What audacity!

As Malaysians, we can truly hold our heads up high, and be proud of our achievements, considering we are a small and developing country.

At least we will not become a developed nation built on the blood and sweat of slaves, nor by blatantly disregarding the original occupants of the land that is so ruthlessly colonised.

It is interesting to see that it is this very issue, the atrocities of slave trading, the inhumane treatment of mankind by the ruling forces,

that has become fodder for so many Hollywood productions.

How can the developed West even hint at issues like human rights, when even as recent as the 1960s, you have great leaders like Martin Luther King articulating his dream for an equal and just world?

Can not the poking of noses into other countries affairs and dictating how they should run their country be construed as autocracy as well?

Of course we do not condone injustice, police brutality, but we do not need a "holier than thou" finger wagging at us, especially when that very finger is itself tainted with the very same wrongs with which we are accused.

Martin Luther King had this to say: "Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering."

For a country that is only 42 years old, I reckon we have done very well for ourselves. Standing in the midst of the Kuala Lumpur City Central park and looking at the impressive skyline, driving along the intricate network of superb highways and infrastructure, receiving visitors from a spanking beautiful new airport, I think that we have every reason to be proud.

Not arrogant, but proud. There is a big difference between arrogance and pride. Arrogance is defined by the dictionary as "an unreasonably strong belief in one's own importance, and a lack of respect for other people".

I like this definition. Proud because we have worked hard to get where we are, and we have, against great odds, plodded on together, regardless of colour and creed, to make this nation what it is today.

If the tangible achievements are scoffed at by cynics as just mere material gain, derived by living woefully beyond our means, even then, we can say that we have done great. The electrifying atmosphere at the Games opening, when the Malaysian contingent received its standing ovation, from a crowd of Malaysians from all walks of life, and of different ethnic background, and of different religions, so riotously applauding, is reason for us to swell with pride. Negaraku sung in unison, resounding across the majestic stadium, never sounded so good.

So, fellow Malaysians, whatever the foreign media, or foreign powers may say to us, let us continue to hold our heads high, under the illustrious leadership of our visionary Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and truly believe with our hearts, that "Malaysia Boleh".