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`PM should be congratulated for his decisive victory'

Farnell Hobman

I read recently an article by John Gittings entitled "Malaysian PM keeps office with reduced majority" which appeared in the December 2 to 8, 1999 edition of The Guardian weekly.

The double standard, the bias, and the use of incorrect/misleading statements to support the bias was most disappointing.

Mahathir has won a fifth consecutive term with 77 per cent of the seats. This is a decisive victory under any circumstances, especially for a fifth consecutive term which voters are interested in change for change sake.

What did Gittings report? "Mahathir shrugged off the humiliation of a sharply reduced personal majority..." humiliation! how farcical.

"The National Front lost two states to Pas". The National Front lost Terengganu, Kelantan was already held by Pas. The statement is misleading.

After the thrust at Mahathir, Gittings changes tack completely and congratulates Wan Azizah for converting a majority of 23,000 into a majority of 9,000!

This is a sharp reduction in the margin, why isn't it a humiliation? Abdullah Badawi was returned with a reduced majority, Wan Azizah converts a majority but both results are the same.

Trumped-up charges are mentioned, as well as alienation of many ordinary Malays, the results do not prove an alienation.

"Mahathir's strength in his claim to have overseen economic progress which is maintaining unity..." The strength is more than a claim, it is a reality, witness the remarkable recovery from the international crisis of only one year ago. Where would Malaysia be if it had followed the advice of the IMF.

The answer is not hard to find, it would not have recovered and it would be paying for advice designed to subjugate the country. Why? Surely it is obvious.

Mahathir should be congratulated, not castigated, on his decisive victory.