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English Language a natural unifier of peoples and countries

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THE world has seen tremendous changes since 1914, some good, some not so good, and consequently it has become necessary to be adept at accommodating these changes. As Dr Mahathir would say, change or perish.

We have seen the rise and fall of communism; we have phenomenal progress in the field of communication; and we are now faced with environmental problems that threaten our very existence on earth. Our survival as a species depends on international understanding and co-operation, a genuine togetherness without political spin.

Change in the past was seen as something strange and perhaps threatening, but today it has become synonymous with progress. People's attitudes and values have changed, sometimes for the better, and in other cases for the worse. Lying in Parliament carries no stigma these days. Princess Diana saw fit to present her case on television. The Serbs have raped Bosnia with total impunity, and President Milosevic is questioning the legitimacy of the court now trying him.

Neither Britain, nor the USA, or any other nation, is now in a position to police the world, so we must all co-operate to avoid conflict. We have been members of a mutual suicide club since the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945.

We need to love each other as brothers and sisters, irrespective of race, religion, political and social background.

The world can only become a better place if we all, together and individually, act to achieve peace and justice at national and global level. We should not be over-ready to destroy or denigrate others.

Justice and peace have been the cornerstone of all civilisations. We are asked to listen to the voice of reason.

Man is strong only by union and cannot achieve happiness in a world full of conflict, suspicion and hatred. Even the Jeffrey Archers of this world, including of course those in Malaysia, deserve sympathy and justice.

"Man will see the truth," said President Woodrow Wilson when presenting his case at the end of World War I to the Senate for his League of Nations address for a world peace. All wars must stop, he argued. Gandhi reinforced this quest for peace when he said 'Non-violence is the first article of my faith'.

Sages have made it their business to persuade the young and the old alike to improve their hearts and minds, to have a spring of virtues to act justly, and to avoid wrong-doing. Prophet Muhammad said, "do good, for God loveth those who do good". Jesus preached love for all. The Buddha showed the path of righteousness.

National and international organisations need to uphold tolerance and peace at government level, through schools and other institutions and the mass media. Religion and politics can play a very significant part if they operate beyond parochial concern to the wider world of humanity, something they both subscribe to.

Malaysia is a good example of living in harmony in a multi-cultural society.

It has united its people and gone from strength to strength since Independence in 1957. It has played an active role as a model for others to emulate.

To achieve such global aims, several organisations have been brought into existence such as Voluntary Service Overseas, the American Peace

Corps, Medicine Sans Frontieres and United Nations Associations.

The Tower of Babel led to confusion and division among people. Esperanto attempted to give the world a global language to unite them.

The English Language, however, has become a natural unifier of peoples and countries.

Those who learn to speak it, get on with each other far more happily, without a demarcation of US and THEM.

The recent increase in lawlessness in Britain is a reflection on societies that care more for the creation of wealth than educating their people to have moral codes and standards of behaviour on the basis of peace and happiness for all.

Those who live by the sword, die by the sword. One begins to wonder whether economic success leads to peace and harmony.

Till about a decade ago, the British-Asian population was hard-working and peaceable. Recent events in Oldham and Bradford have been attributed to social and economic inequalities.

It would be too simplistic to say that lawlessness flows from lack of employment and general economic depression.

Some of the incidents may be brought about by sinister influences calculated to cause damage to all parties. Criminality cannot be excused on the grounds of economic deprivation.

Society cannot hope to have peace and prosperity where there are racial tensions. Race riots must be stopped immediately for mutual benefit. No side can benefit from violence. All religions, including Islam and Christianity, preach tolerance and mutual respect. Farakhan has won his appeal to preach in Britain for peace and co-prosperity.

But hooliganism is hooliganism is hooliganism!

If a child's education lacks human values, mutual respect and tolerance what follows is social disorder and violence, an area of much concern to Dr Mahathir recently.

Imagine for a moment an institution where people of different colour, creed, race, age and education attend the same institution in search of a common goal of acquiring knowledge. The students come from diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

They speak Malay, Cantonese, Tamil, Punjabi, and of course English. They are keen to learn, pass examinations and obtain their "Senior Cambridge" for their future. They were dedicated and industrious students who wanted to achieve as much as they could. They had peace and prosperity in their hearts.

This is what Dr Mahathir prescribes as the right course of action for his 20-20 vision, with plenty for all in social harmony.

Think well, work hard and speak the right language.