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Irresponsible reporting such as Asiaweek's should not be left unanswered

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I READ with disgust the article which appeared in the Jan 26 issue of Asiaweek, purportedly based on an exclusive interview with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

I appreciate the reply to the article by the Prime Minister's Special Assistant Datuk Hashim Makaruddin, "Courtesy repaid with vicious report" (NST, Feb 14) in which he answered the accusations and exposed the inaccurate facts.

I do not view the response as being defensive because such irresponsible reporting should never be left unchecked. I speak on behalf of the Malaysian people who appreciate the country's continued prosperity and growth under its past and present leadership.

I do not think this can happen without capable and charismatic leadership - the same leadership that the article chooses to ridicule.

The reason I am writing this letter is I think Malaysians should voice our objections, albeit in a civilised manner. I have great pride in telling my foreign friends and acquaintances about the country's achievements, her beauty and the warm and hospitable nature of her people.

Naturally, it would be unrealistic to expect the situation to be rosy all the time.

Trials and tribulations are a part of existence, whether for an individual or the country. I live in gratitude for the peace and tranquillity, although, like most Malaysians, sometimes I take this for granted.

But when I look at the news reports on the periods of unrest in a few neighbouring countries, I am reminded of the importance of stability, whether political, social or economical.

Maybe certain media reports exacerbated the situation or were actually a part of a scheme to cripple these economies for the benefit of certain factions with ill-intent.

It is a relief that Malaysians are not easily manipulated by our "enemies", although there were periods when some of us did play into their hands and participated in riots and demonstrations.

The high respect I have for the journalistic profession continues to erode with inaccurate and biased reporting demonstrated by the article in Asiaweek.

It is amazing how the western media skews the facts in order to downplay our achievements and blatantly express their opposition to the Government - I guess in support of the Opposition.

I hope fellow Malaysians can see through such articles which take on the guise of fair reporting when they are in fact clear attempts to undermine our efforts.

There are factions which are bent on sowing the seeds of chaos, hatred and racial disharmony to create instability in the country. One is left with the conclusion that such publications are working for these factions.

Two things come to my mind when reading the article - its ill-intent and desperate attempt to leverage on controversy to sell the publication.

Both are far from noble and I am sure, breaches every possible code of ethics that the journalistic profession upholds.

If sensationalising news while compromising on accuracy remains the credo of the publication, it should be categorised as entertainment, based on fiction, conjured in the minds of the writers.

