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Malaysia is today one of the most stable democracies in the world

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I WOULD like to share my views on democracy with like-minded people.

David Hume, in his *Of the Origin of Government*, says: "In all governments, there is a perpetual intestine struggle, open or secret, between authority and liberty; and neither of them can absolutely prevail in the contest ... In this sense, it must be owned, that liberty is the perfection of civil society; but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence ..."

Hume drew this opinion from the history of England to show that neither authority nor liberty must be allowed in the extreme.

Verily, authority and liberty must necessarily work within the confines of the law and with the support of the people to ascertain good and proper governance in a democracy.

Hume's analysis of the turbulent years in England's history culminating in Cromwell's ascension to power firmly established a principle "that the people are the origin of all just power". Hence there was established in England, in 1689, a government with Parliament, chosen by the people and representing them, as the supreme authority of the land, but tempered, mercifully, by liberty.

Our system of government, a constitutional monarchy, takes after the British system of governance. Since independence, our country has been well-managed by far-sighted leaders like Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, Tun Hussein Onn and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

As Hume again says: "All men are sensible of the necessity of justice to maintain peace and order; and all men are sensible of the necessity of peace and order for the maintenance of society."

He further says that "order in society ... is much better maintained by means of government".

Especially under the stewardship of Dr Mahathir, our country has ably weathered the storm brought about by currency speculators and the turmoil caused by supporters of former deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir, in particular, proved the maxim *Salus populi suprema Lex* - the safety of the people is the supreme law. Imagine the chaos it would have caused if the police had not taken action.

It is to our Prime Minister's credit that Malaysia is today one of the most stable democracies in the world! In essence, a strong and stable government must not only be politically correct, but morally right as well.