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Our Prime Minister has proved the critics wrong

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LIKE many others, I have read the articles in the Asiaweek on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, our Prime Minister.

Malaysians or foreigners alike, whether they like Dr Mahathir or not, must give credit where it is due.

He has managed to steer Malaysia out of monetary troubles and turned the tables on speculators, proved critics wrong, and got the International Monetary Fund to admit its mistakes.

For these achievements, his detractors have to make sure he will not be seen to be doing anything right.

Having served in the intelligence service, I have studied the many intricacies, dirty-trick tactics and propaganda employed by certain countries to topple a legitimate Government.

The Israeli Mossad excelled at it and of course there are others who do it.

Just look at Africa, South America and some Middle East Countries. They are weakened by these elements pursuing political agendas disguised as a democratic crusade of the people. Therefore, the dilemma of Dr Mahathir is not of his own doing.

These people just hate Dr Mahathir and his guts and used certain sections of the print media as its most effective propaganda tool to achieve their ends. I can say this because I have had the chance to travel abroad and meet so-called would-be investors, speculators and detractors alike, and make an assessment of their actual targets.

After having identified the media to use, like Asiaweek, their propaganda machine will grind into high gear and use whatever tactics, interviews, excerpts and imagination to create a story.

In August 1998 while in India, our host, a grandson of a Maharaja, revealed that the speculators, who were in the midst putting pressure on the Thai bhat, were going to attack the Malaysian currency. I thought my host was just telling me a rumour he had heard from his American counterparts.

His family's business empire, which had spread to the Silicon Valley, had huge business interests in IT, the cement industry, shipping and transportation, universities and private hospitals.

With the benefit of hindsight, I wish I had the guts then to make an attempt to see the Prime Minister and alert him to the impending attack. I did not because everyone I spoke to did not believe me and said that our currency was too strong and our economy well entrenched against speculators.

In December the same year while lunching in Paris, I talked to a few stockbrokers. The same story emerged and by that time the attack was starting to take place. By the first quarter of 1998, the attack was in full gear.

Then there was this German living in Australia who wanted to invest in Langkawi. He blamed Dr Mahathir for the country's predicament and charged that every Southeast Asian leader was corrupt. I asked him whether there was corruption in America or the West.

He said it happened in higher places and amongst the powerful lobbyists at Capitol Hill too. I believed him then and I believe him now just by looking at how former US President Bill Clinton extricated himself out of his scandals and wrongdoings.

Asiaweek or its analysts can write and say what they want. We are, for one, proud of our Prime Minister. The recent events in neighbouring countries purportedly praised by the West as democratic, is proving that western ideals of democracy may not be practical in some countries.