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Stand fast in facing PM's critics

John Teo

S. GIMAN'S letter about Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (NST, July 20) leaves a deep impression. For starters, it was written by an ordinary Malaysian, someone who had apparently given much thought before putting pen to paper. It is obviously not the work of a sycophant, although he/she gives a self-description as a "crony".

Precisely because the writer is an ordinary Malaysian, the letter is an exercise in considerable courage. He/she alluded to "a few unwelcomed remarks" when writing or talking about the PM from other, presumably ordinary, Malaysians.

I can say with some personal authority that this is quite an extraordinary understatement. It is one thing to try to discuss and understand the serious antipathies of so many Malaysians towards their PM. It is quite another to accept the reactions of others when they know your views are for the PM.

The hardest, perhaps, is when they start questioning your intelligence in holding to such views. I admit it calls for great self-assurance.

In paying tribute to Dr Mahathir's 20 years leading the country, I think it is proper, as S. Giman did, to acknowledge those who will naturally stick with him no matter what - his immediate family.

After all those years, and faced with a vocal group of disaffected and unappreciative Malaysians, the temptation must have been great at times to try and persuade the PM to give up and give in. That would only have added to his distractions in implementing his goals.

In moments of personal despondency, I console myself by saying Malaysians will eventually come around to what I am convinced will be history's judgement of Dr Mahathir - that he is a true and great Malaysian statesman. But this is small consolation.

The selfish Malaysian in me keeps lamenting why so many Malaysians are not supporting the PM when he is still around and in a position to transform that support into a much better and greater Malaysia. I have a feeling this must be the wish the Prime Minister prizes above anything else.