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US in no position to preach to others

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THE status of independence and sovereignty for a nation state connotes the freedom and flexibility to formulate and implement national policies based on the dictates of national interest.

Any interference in these functions by an external entity, whether a supranational organisation or a nation state, is a gross violation of a nation's right and should be resisted with resolve.

Failure to counter this will result in the complete disregard of a nation's interest by others. It can lead to international bullying.

Bullies are usually people with low self-esteem who need to reinforce their self-worth. They do this by intimidating others. Usually the target is someone who is weak and therefore unwilling or unable to defend himself.

International bullies, likewise, are nation states with a chequered history. They will choose a weak nation which is trying to develop itself as their target and start lecturing it on everything from human rights practices to national governance notwithstanding that their own closets are full of skeletons.

It is with this in mind that the purported refusal of US President George W. Bush to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad unless three pre-conditions are met should be seen. The pre-conditions concern former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's health, detention of anarchists under the Internal Security Act and the alleged delays in the release of foreign news publications.

The purported response of Stephen J. Hadley, the US Deputy National Security Adviser to our Foreign Minister that, "You first have to do what has to be done", as reported in the Intelligence column of the Far Eastern Economic Review under the title "US admonishes Malaysia", is arrogant, condescending and racist in nature.

The United States should realise that it is no longer held in awe as the beacon of freedom.

It is now perceived as a big bully throwing its weight around even in matters that is none of its concern.

A nation where a President can lie about having improper liaisons with an intern in the Oval Office and still be a popular figure is not fit to become a 'doctor' or 'preacher' to others.

It is sadly a nation that is sorely in need of a doctor and preacher itself.

Dr Mahathir should not meet with Bush because there is no need to be nice to arrogant people.

If Malaysia's intention to create a more conducive environment for relations based on mutual interest with the Bush Administration is not reciprocated, so be it.

But we need not give the impression that we are bowing down to them in any way.