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Aussie hypocrisy

HYPOCRITES ought not to judge others. The Aussie move to detain suspects without charge clearly shows double standards. Australia, a loud critic of Malaysia's Internal Security Act, has succumbed to reality's dictates - as has the United States and Britain before it - and adopted a similar measure, no less draconian. The Howard Government's willingness to wheel and deal with the Opposition just so the Bill is passed is indicative of its commitment to the measure, invective against Malaysia's ISA notwithstanding.

Of course, some will argue that Australia has limited it to just seven days as opposed to Malaysia's 60 days. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the principle of detention without trial into the statute books is an admission of the legitimacy of such a law in the face of threats against the country's security and sovereignty. The difference in perception is, therefore, one of mere degree.

Why then are the European nations, as defined by the Prime Minister, insistent that they hold the moral high ground when, in the final analysis, they are as much a captive of their circumstances as we are? Would such an admission place us too close to them for their liking? Because, with that admission will come a point where statesmen such as Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad must be given their due as equals. When that point is reached the loss of unquestioned European supremacy becomes inevitable. Hence the double standards that pervade the policies of the Anglo-American axis, as pointed out by Australia's former UN envoy Richard Butler. As in this instance, the move held as correct by the Howard administration is obviously not equated with the ISA, when in essence the two are identical, despite all protestations to the contrary. The pot calling the kettle black also provides the pretext to invade another country said to be incapable of dealing with its own terrorists.