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Dedicated to values and ideas

THE proposed think-tank on the thoughts and ideas of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a fitting embodiment of the Prime Minister's legacy. The "Dr Mahathir Mohamad Institute of Strategic Thinking" can become the mechanism through which future generations of Malaysians and others can better understand and develop the Prime Minister's analyses of contemporary issues and their solutions.

The think-tank should serve a cutting-edge purpose by focusing on Islamic thought, Occidental thinking and anything that concerns Malaysia, in politics, economics and culture. The first should be pursued with alacrity, given the confusion of the Malays in the wake of Pas' inimical interpretation of Islam. The think-tank can proffer expert advice to the Government on how to thwart religious leaders bent on using religion to change the pluralistic landscape of Malaysian society.

Efforts hitherto by the Institute of Islamic Understanding (Ikim) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, commendable as they are, need to be buttressed by an organisation such as that which is to be dedicated to Dr Mahathir. The think-tank should also help Malaysian decision-makers comprehend the European way of thought, especially on imperialism, which has muddied their worldview. Dr Mahathir has spent the better part of his 22 years in office protecting Malaysia from the wiles of European nations, and countries elsewhere dominated and influenced by them, bent on subjugating the rest of the world. That Malaysia still stands independent of such coercion is a tribute to Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Following the Prime Minister's credo of doing everything well, the think-tank should have a carefully defined mission, be well-planned, well-financed, well-officered, independent and equipped for the long haul. It should not meet the fate of the short-lived Nkrumah Ideological Institute in Ghana, which Dr Mahathir visited when he was a backbencher. It should be seen in time as the Malaysian version of the Heritage Foundation or the Brookings Institution, both incubators of ideas and strategies that have considerable sway on current American policy. At a time when globalisation and changing international geopolitics are presenting vexing conundrums, Malaysia is still a safe haven where citizens can exercise freedom of thought, word and deed. For this, and the myriad benefits the nation enjoys, the think-tank should rightly be a monument to the father of modern Malaysia.