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Malicious, mischievous writing

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THE April 5 survey of Malaysia published by The Economist was a deliberately mischievous and malicious piece of writing - adopting a tone that ill-befits one of the world's most highly respected weekly news magazines. From its lofty perch in London's St James, The Economist chose to praise Malaysia whilst denigrating the achievements of its Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Umno Youth is deeply dismayed by the personal attacks on the Prime Minister. Obviously The Economist in its haste to cosy up to its largest market - the USA - has chosen to turn its back on its historic reputation as a champion for truth, intellectual rigour and independent thinking.

Instead, the magazine has succumbed to shallowness and verbosity. This only serves to reinforce the perception that a once great journal has collapsed under the weight of its own pomposity.

Furthermore, the nasty and ill-intentioned manner in which the writer expressed his views about Dr Mahathir has left many Malaysians feeling angry and frustrated. Certainly, Umno Youth rejects all such arguments. For our part, we fully recognise and commend Dr Mahathir for his instrumental role in nurturing modern Malaysia.

While we acknowledge that there have been hiccups along the path to development our Prime Minister has always proved the gainsayers wrong.

He has had the good sense and moral courage to question conventional wisdom - confronting the unthinking zealots promoting globalisation and liberalisation with his customary confidence.

Dr Mahathir has always shown himself to be brave enough to challenge conventional wisdom. He has consistently put the interests of 23 million Malaysians ahead of everything else, including, at times, his own personal popularity.

Amid the economic and political turbulence Dr Mahathir has emerged as a champion of his people - not to mention the Third World and indeed the Muslim ummah.

We in Kuala Lumpur know that The Economist does not speak for the world. It's Anglo-American world vision is hotly contested by many - indeed the majority of people across the globe - whether they live in Paris, Mexico City, Moscow, Johannesburg or Santiago.

We stand alongside our friends across the globe in defending Dr Mahathir and rejecting the magazine's immoral and amoral brand of neo-conservative