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ISIS honours Hussein

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Institute initiates Chair as tribute to Father of Unity

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KUALA LUMPUR: There is much that can be learnt from the country's third Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn, known as "Bapa Perpaduan" (Father of Unity).

Besides making racial integration and national unity his priority during his five-year tenure from 1976 to 1981, Hussein was renowned for his foreign policies.

In honour of him, the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia has initiated the Tun Hussein Onn Chair in International Studies.

During the launch here yesterday, his son Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the 1970s provided a strong test in the country's international policy.

With the global political and economic turmoil, the threat of communism was looming in the South-East Asian region.

"Closer to home, there was the rising threat of communists.

"Despite that, Hussein remained a neutral internationalist. There was so much turmoil in Indochina where Vietnam and Cambodia had fallen. Still, Hussein maintained that Asean should be non-aligned.

"He even went to Russia and China to meet the leaders there to get them to respect Asean's non-alignment," said Hishammuddin in his speech, which was read out by his brother Datuk Haris Onn.

Reminiscing about his father, Hishammuddin noted that Hussein had the conviction of steel, leaving Umno in 1951 to join his father Datuk Onn Jaafar in forming a multi-



Walking down memory lane: (From left) Nazrin, ISIS Malaysia chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan and Haris viewing some photos at the launch of the Chair yesterday.

racial party.

"Datuk Onn believed deeply that communalism was something that could destroy our hard won independence. My father was consistent.

"Later, when he rejoined Umno in 1968, he ensured that communalism was kept at bay and invested in strengthening racial relations," he said.

The first holder of the Tun Hussein Onn Chair, Datuk Dr Muthiah Alagappa, said there were similarities between Hussein and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, espe-

cially in the implementation of the 1Malaysia concept.

Dr Muthiah, whose appointment is for a period of two years effective Jan 1, is an internationally-renowned scholar who has held senior positions in leading think-tanks and research institutions in the United States.

Funding the Chair is the Noah Foundation, helmed by its chairman Datin Paduka Dr Faridah Abdullah. Also present at the function as guest of honour was the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Dr Nazrin Shah.