

Foreign leaders hail Pak Lah's big victory

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WASHINGTON: The United States has congratulated Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for leading Barisan Nasional to a "very convincing" victory in the general election.

A senior US government official told *Bernama* here: "We congratulate Malaysia on the conduct of the election and how the process was handled.

"The decision was made by the people of Malaysia and we're happy the election went well."

He added that "the Prime Minister, who is very well regarded here for his integrity and personal characteristics would likely pursue Malaysia's interest and we expect nothing less from him."

Meanwhile, the American business community here commented that the landslide victory gave the Prime Minister the political mandate and support for the economic agenda Abdullah has articulated.

Marc Mealey, an executive at the US-Asean Business Council for Malaysia, said that American businessmen who recently visited Malaysia and met Abdullah "felt good" about the economic agenda with a strong emphasis on transparency and corporate governance.

The results of the election had sent a message that Malaysians want a



Koizumi: Wants to further strengthen the friendly and close relations

country that was progressive, moving forward and moderate in terms of religion, he said.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said he was glad to continue working with Abdullah to further strengthen the friendly and close relations between the two countries.

Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said Malaysians from all walks of life like what they see in Abdullah.

"They like your humility and sincerity, your style of leadership, your 'Islam Hadhari', emphasis on rural



Goh: Malaysians like what they see in Abdullah

development and your fight against corruption. They trust you and have full confidence in your leadership. They strongly endorsed your vision for a progressive Malaysia."

"I look forward to continue working with you to strengthen our bilateral ties," he said.

Goh expressed his best wishes for Abdullah and Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood's good health and further success.

Moody's Investors Service vice-president Steven Hess said Abdullah's mandate to fight corruption and PAS'

poor performance in the election were likely to attract more foreign investment to Malaysia.

It could help enhance its rating, Hess told Dow Jones newswires.

The *Australian* newspaper said Malaysians had voted for economic growth, social stability and political choice and in the process renounced religious fundamentalism.

In an editorial, it said it was a personal triumph for Abdullah who after just five months in office has received a ringing endorsement for his reform programme.

"And they are very good news for everybody who understands that democracy is the best antidote to the Islamic fundamentalism that fosters political terrorism," the editorial said.

"The governing Barisan Nasional coalition has won a thumping majority in the Parliament. And in state polls the Islamist PAS party lost one, and just held on in the other of the two states it governed."

The newspaper said that Malaysian elections "are free and fair, the ballot boxes are not stuffed and while opposition parties may not get much of a run in the national media, they can campaign hard".

And voters had access to all the information they need to make their own judgments, it added. — *Bernama*