



'What I said about Jews

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FIRSTLY I would like to say that this conference has come to an end and the general consensus is that the conference has been successful.

Of course, you may have different opinions, but I would like to say there has been a trend to twist the actual words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It was reported that he apologised for my speech. He did not apologise for my speech.

(PM then asked Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar to explain.)

Can you please say what you actually said? (laughter in the room).

Syed Hamid said, "I am sorry if you have taken it out of context. You have the whole story taken out of context. I am sorry if you have misunderstood... I apologise, it's my mistake."

(PM then took over the floor.)

It's the wrong interpretation of what he said that I had said. Now, what I said in my speech was that we should stop all this violence, all these killings, all these suicide bombings and massive retaliation.

Instead, we should pause and think about what we should be doing. In other words, I am against violence and terrorism.

And yet, this part of my speech was not noted. Instead, I am accused of being anti-Semitic. You may appreciate, of course, that Arabs are also Semitic people.

the Arabs. The Arabs from killing the Jews. We should stop terrorist acts like what was seen in Bali.

Instead, we should pause, think and employ strategies.

Obviously, the Muslims are being oppressed and if they are right, we should think a way out of this to prevent people from oppressing them.

Are they supposed to be oppressed and accept the fact that as Muslims they must be oppressed?

If people have weapons of mass destruction against them, aren't they allowed to defend themselves? Without weapons of mass destruction, at least to defend themselves in the only way they can?

I think it is grossly unfair and it is a manifestation of the bias against the Muslims that there is such an attitude that you cannot criticise the Jews without being called anti-Semitic.

On the other hand, Jews and others can call Muslims terrorists.

There are other terrorists... There are Christian terrorists, there are Catholic terrorists in Northern Ireland, there are Hindu terrorists and even Buddhist and Japanese terrorists.

Nobody ever takes into consideration their religion.

The problem that we face is that land belonging to the Palestinians has been wrested from them and they are being chased out of their country to become refugees for the last 50

the right to criticise them. And we have gone through history, we have been colonised by them, we have been badly treated by them and after we have attained independence there is still an attempt made to recolonise us not directly, maybe indirectly through economic dominance for example, through currency manipulation and other means.

Of course, every now and again sanctions are applied to some countries in order to punish their people because their people did not engineer a Government that is to the liking of the West. I am not anti-West. I am just stating fact. I think I have as much right to state the fact as anybody else.

Q: Obviously the Associate Press and the CNN don't understand the language in which you delivered your speech yesterday. It has resulted in the EU and some other nations condemning your speech and also we have some comments from Australia likening you to Osama bin Laden, maybe you like to comment on that..

A: I thought it was in English. Maybe my English was bad, They can't understand.

Well, it would seem that these people do not appreciate my suggesting that we should stop acts of terror. They would like to see acts of terror go on. Perhaps, this would give them an excuse to take pre-emptive

people have other religion and they pray their own way and we pray in our way. They have their own belief and we have our own belief. And there should be no force in religions". So we are practising the teachings of Islam and I think in Muslim countries unless they are goaded and made to be angry by very unfair treatment, they would be tolerant.

As I mentioned just now, the Muslim countries accepted the Jews who ran away from Europe because of the pogroms and the inquisition. They migrate to Muslim countries because they know Muslim countries are tolerant of the Jews and of people of other races. And among the Palestinians, you know, there are quite a lot of Christians. They are tolerated, there is no bias or anger against them. So what we are practising here is, well actually the proper practice by Muslims. But Muslims, like everybody else, will react angrily if they are oppressed and being treated unfairly, that is all. So other countries too can have the kind of tolerance that we have, provided they are not oppressed.

Q: And my question to you honourable future Prime Minister if I may say so, do you think that the clashes of Western and Muslim civilisation could be avoided by economic and political means and is there enough space to do it or is the clash inevitable?

A: Datuk Abdullah: I thought this is Dr Mahathir's Press conference. Anyway since you have asked and with his permission, I think we are

Q: Thursday's resolution of the United Nations on Iraq encourages all members of the United Nations to help Iraq economically. Is Malaysia going to give any financial help for the reconstruction of Iraq?

A: We are too poor to extend any help so we will watch how the rich countries help and we'll give our contributions proportionately.

Q: The OIC Business Forum had suggested the establishment of the Islamic Free Trade Area. Do you think this is something attainable given the fact that Muslim countries have been talking for years about the Islamic common market. What role do you see can the OIC assume?

A: OIC countries are now forming FTA bilaterally and it is quite possible for two Islamic countries to have an FTA which can be expanded later on. It all depends on the stage of development that they are in. It is an idea that we should consider.

Q: According to a Reuters report, American Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has refused to criticise his Undersecretary of Defence for Intelligence and War Fighting Support Lt Gen William Boykin, for portraying the US battle with Islamic radicals as a fight with 'Satan'; instead Rumsfeld commended Boykin's outstanding military record. Boykin has been telling Christian gatherings that Muslims worship idol and not a real God. What is your comment?

A: This is it! You know if I say

scold other people. I would rather look at ourselves which is one reason why I criticise so many things that the Muslim countries are doing. Of course, I do not know what their reaction is because they haven't said anything except support my speech. If you have heard otherwise, I would like to know whether they are unhappy about my speech. But I would not be surprised at all if they are unhappy because I criticise them. You know my bad habit — I criticise my own people, I criticise Umno, the Malays, I criticise the Malaysians and sometimes I even criticise myself. So that is something you have to do. When something is wrong it is better for you to say it. Some people are very nice, especially in front, but not so nice behind.

As far as the candidate is concerned, at the moment, there is no decision on this. We will look into the candidacy later on.

Q: You never failed to make headlines with your hard-hitting speeches even two weeks before your retirement. Is that trend going to continue after your retirement? Within these two weeks, are there more agendas to come in Apec Summit next week?

A: I have said before I will be more irresponsible after I have stepped down from being the Prime Minister. But, of course, not being the Prime Minister probably people would not take notice of what I say. So I'll be freer to say more nasty things. Thank you.