



Stop the bias

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The demonisation of Islam must be stopped and Islamophobia must be removed.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the 61st UN General Assembly.

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NEW YORK: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made an impassioned plea to Western countries to have a better understanding of Islam and not be prejudiced by the works of extremists.

"Much of the ills in the affairs of our world were the result of irrational actions caused by prejudices," said the Prime

Minister, adding that much of the prejudices stemmed from ignorance about what Islam stands for.

Abdullah told the 61st UN general assembly here on Wednesday night of his concerns over the growing schism between the West and the Muslim world, citing that dialogues which had taken place involved parties "talking at" instead of "talking to" one another.

> TURN TO PAGE 4

Evil deeds of extremists not Islamic, says Pak Lah

The Star - 22/9/2006

FROM PAGE ONE

Calling for more honest dialogues, he said: "Any dialogue would certainly fail if it is already predetermined that certain states are 'rogues' or that certain countries are necessarily 'evil'."

He explained that Islam was not the source of intolerance between peoples of different faiths.

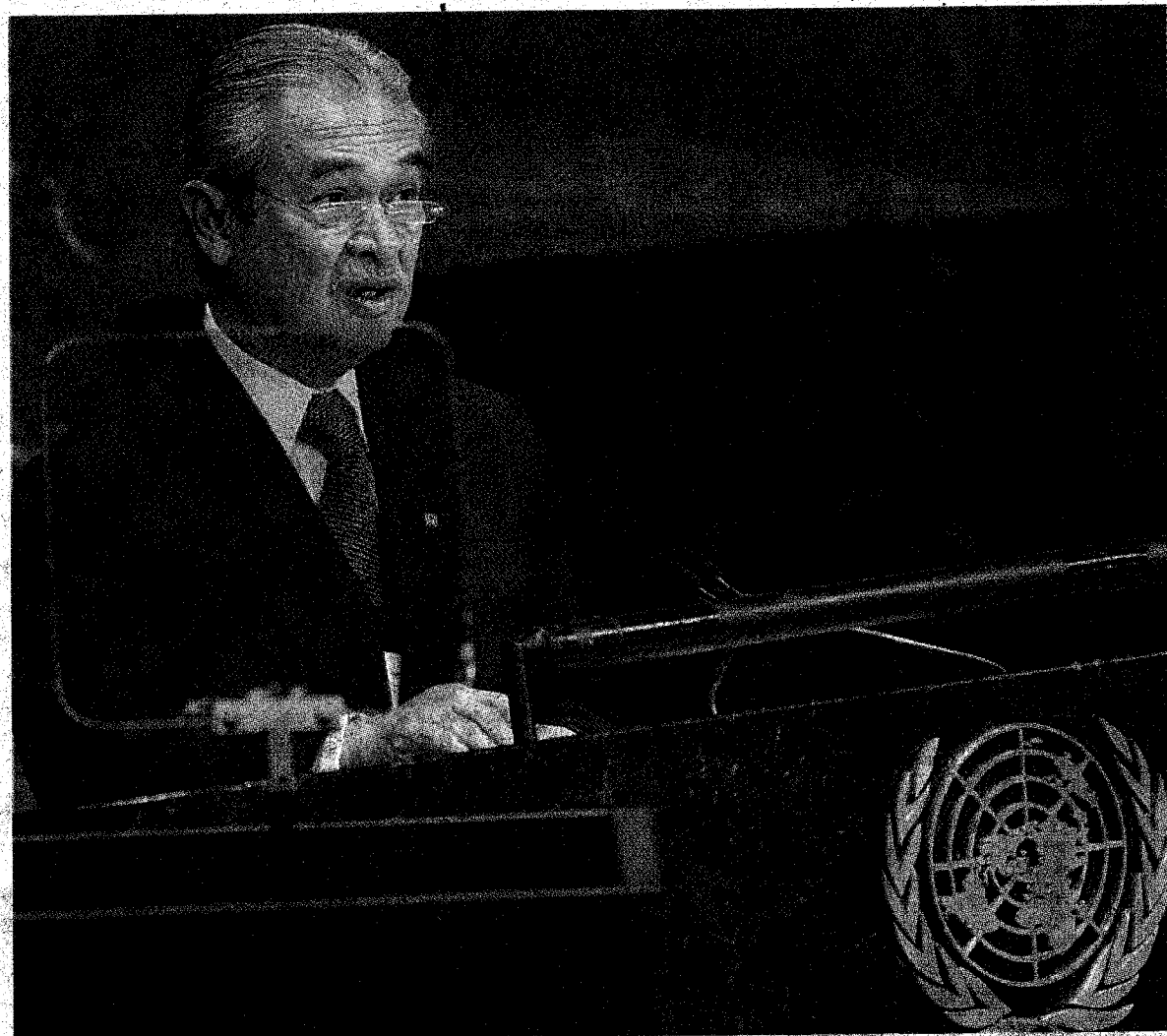
The "perverse words and evil deeds" of extremists from the fringes of Muslim societies must not be confused as a reflection of Islamic culture, he stressed.

"The demonisation of Islam must be stopped and Islamophobia must be removed," he said.

The suppression of Palestine, the invasion of Afghanistan and the destruction of Lebanon, among others, were carried out in the name of the war against terrorism, he said, but the Muslim world would view these actions as a complicity to humiliate Muslim countries.

"The fact is that the sense of humiliation felt by the Muslim world is the root cause for the loss of trust between the Muslim world and the Judeo-Christian civilisation."

He pointed out that the greatest discord today existed among the descendants of Abraham - the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam - who had shared a common beginning which was the religion of Abraham.



SPEAKING FROM THE HEART: Abdullah addressing the 61st session of the UN General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York on Wednesday. — *Appic*

Abdullah also reminded UN member countries that the world body was created to be a "Parliament of Man".

"Six decades since then, we have yet

to achieve the intentions of the UN Charter," he said.

The "human family", he said, still could not find solutions to their own

problems.

He also urged the UN to stop social and economic injustices such as poverty and disease.