

Need for mutual respect between Islam and West

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KUALA LUMPUR: Respect, reciprocity and equality.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said these were the prerequisites for a harmonious relationship between the West and Islam.

He said in the context of relations between the Christian West and the Muslim world, it should be emphasised that Islam was a religion that upheld peaceful co-existence with other religions.

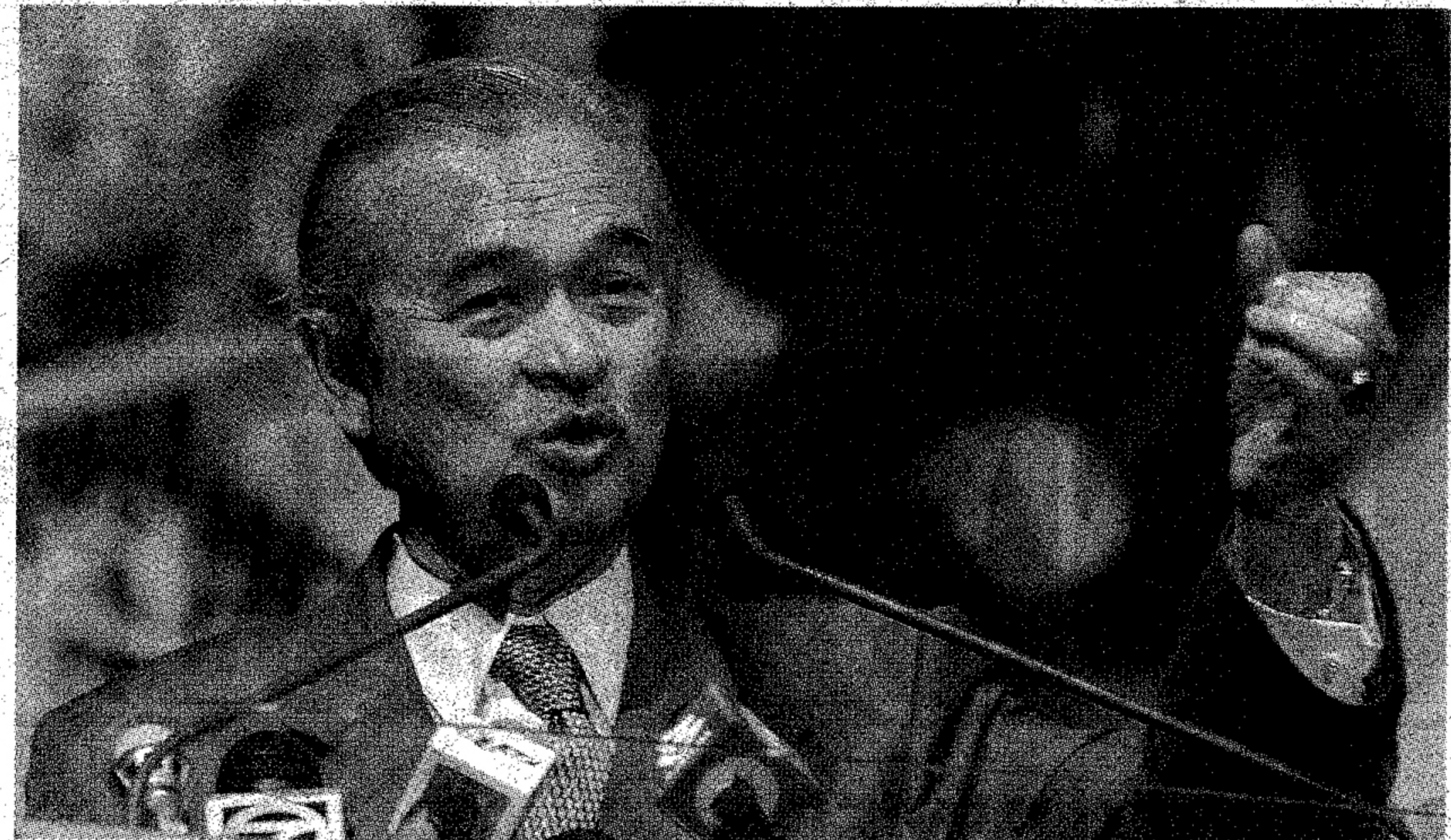
“Islam stands for peace and co-operation between cultures and civilisations.

“The antagonism between the Western and Islamic civilisations will grow and intensify for as long as one side attempts to control and dominate the other. There must be mutual respect for one and another.”

The Prime Minister was addressing participants at the Global Risk and Crisis Forum, “The Hadhari Approach, its Explanation and Relevance to Contemporary Global Challenges”, organised by the Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding here yesterday.

Abdullah said all communities should reject any extremism which emphasised differences and preached the politics of fear and hate.

Citing the recent turmoil in many countries which was brought about by an irresponsible



Abdullah tells the people to reject extremism which preaches the politics of fear and hate. — NST picture by Hadzme Mohd Jaafar

and insensitive act against Islam by some Western newspapers, he said that was an example of how powerful religion could be as an imperative for people to act.

He said it also served as a lesson for the leaders and people to recognise there was an urgent need to address the state of relations between the Christian West and the Islamic world.

“It must be addressed because peace and stability of the world is

at stake, as Christians and Muslims make up more than half of the world’s population,” he said.

Abdullah called on the people to go on *jihād* against the problems and crises faced by the country and the world in general. He said it could be done if people of all races and religions worked together in addressing contemporary global challenges.

“The concept of *jihād* must be given a broader interpretation

covering all aspects of life, including the pursuit of knowledge, the mastery of science and technology and economic activity.”

Abdullah said global challenges were one of the many concerns shared by all people whether they were Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists or Jews.

He said it was time for the people to build something out of their differences and strive for a better world.