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Fighting terror with 'renewed urgency'

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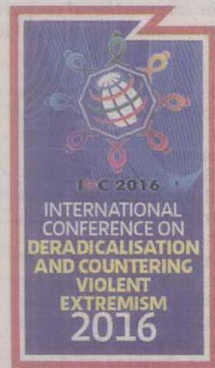
VIGILANCE: All steps in place to counter threat, says DPM

KUALA LUMPUR

A NEW and more comprehensive approach is needed in view of the constantly changing nature of terrorism and radical activities.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, in his welcoming address at the International Conference on Deradicalisation and Countering Violent Extremism (IDC) here yesterday, said the conference aimed to be a platform to share experiences and best practices among participating countries to address radicalisation and violent extremism.

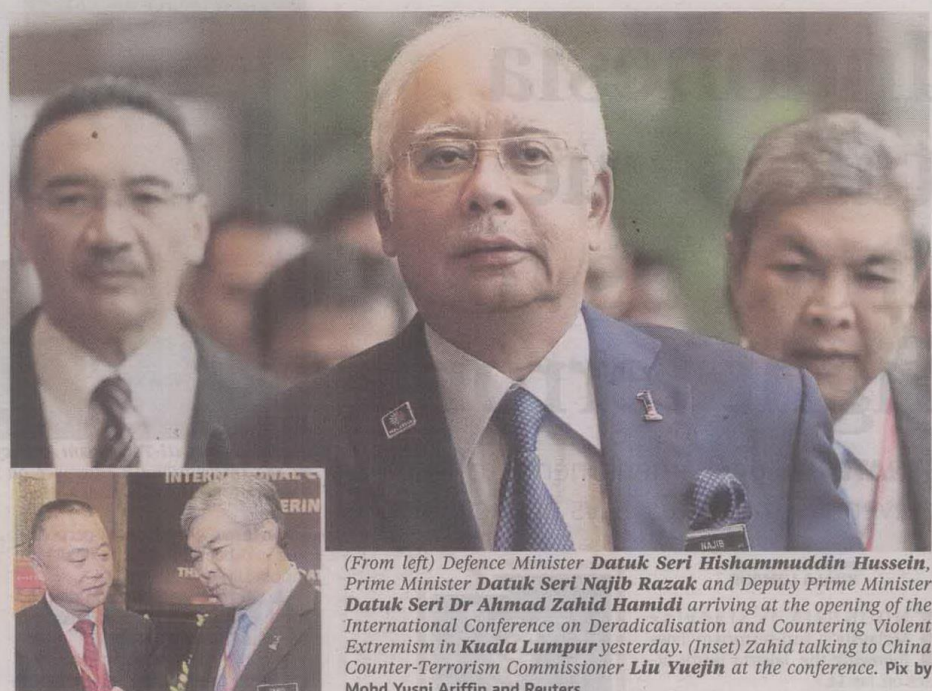
"IDC's timing is fitting as recently, the world and this region, especially Indonesia, was rocked by a terrorist attack that killed innocent people.



The Jakarta attack on Jan 14 was despicable and Malaysia strongly condemns the act. Terrorism and violent extremism must be looked at with renewed urgency.

"Malaysia has taken steps to address this threat. We have strengthened legislation and intensified the operations of law enforcement, intelligence and security forces.

"We have also widened our international cooperation. It is time for us to enhance this cooperation and



(From left) Defence Minister **Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein**, Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and Deputy Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi** arriving at the opening of the International Conference on Deradicalisation and Countering Violent Extremism in **Kuala Lumpur** yesterday. (Inset) Zahid talking to China Counter-Terrorism Commissioner **Liu Yuejin** at the conference. Pix by Mohd Yusni Ariffin and Reuters

effectiveness of our deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes."

Zahid, who is home minister, said rehabilitation of terrorists and extremists was not an easy task.

"It is a dynamic process, which means our methods and approaches must be constantly reviewed and improved. Terrorists carry out attacks in various forms. While some openly reveal themselves and carry out attacks in the open, it is suicide bombers who are fast becoming bigger threats as they could (be) disguised as anyone.

"They are committed without knowing how it will affect them, their family and society," he said,

adding that they could move around as tourists, office and factory workers, students and even preachers.

Zahid said bomb-making materials could be sourced from the very vicinity of the places they planned to attack. Manuals to make explosives can also be obtained online.

"It is a challenge for us to be steps ahead of them. The exchange of ideas and experiences is crucial. It is our hope that the mutual cooperation developed through this conference will continue in the future."

He said reintegration of released terrorism detainees was equally important.

"When they are released, they

may be ideologically and psychologically vulnerable. They are often out of touch with family and are unemployed," he said.

To address this, he said, training programmes for former detainees were included in rehabilitation modules to allow them to obtain skills to secure employment.

He said deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes were conducted in a collaborative effort with government agencies and non-governmental organisations, as well as engagement with members of the community, including ulama and former terrorists, to improve their effectiveness.