

Najib Proposes Moderation To Solve Many Of World's Problems
Bernama
27 Sept, 2013
From Khairdzir Md Yunus

NEW YORK, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak believes many of the world's current problems can be solved if society subscribed to the whole concept of moderation.

He said if the society and governments used moderation in their actions and policies, then the country would have a much more just, fair and inclusive society.

He said moderation was based on certain principles and sound values, like justice, sense of fairness, and choosing dialogue over confrontation, and negotiation over conflict.

"And, if you choose moderation and reject Nazism or militancy and extremist-thinking, there is every chance that we can work in a peaceful world," he said in his lecture, 'The New Meetings, Moderation: The New Modernity'.

The lecture was co-sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)'s Religion and Foreign Policy Initiative, at the Peter G. Peterson Hall, The Harold Pratt House in New York.

The session was hosted by CNN's Fareed Zakaria, who is Editor-at-Large, TIME Magazine and Member, Board of Directors, CFR.

The CFR members in Washington, DC, were participating in the meeting via videoconference, and the meeting was being streamed live on CFR's website (www.cfr.org).

Najib said, what people in Malaysia and other parts of the world wanted to see was peace, prosperity and harmony, which could be achieved if society subscribed to the whole concept of moderation.

"You don't marginalise anyone...do not allow the voices of extremism, racism and bigotry drown your voice," he added.

Najib said he was promoting the Global Movement of the Moderations through his talks worldwide because he believed that the problem in the world today, was not between the Christians, Muslims and Jews, but it was really between the extremists and moderates.

Najib said he was looking for an alliance which subscribed to the same belief and principles, including from the United States, to promote and strengthen the cause.

Asked on his perception of Muslim suicide bombers during the Q&A session, Najib said he had spoken about it in his last talk at Oxford University in the UK that Islam was against suicide bombings.

"Islam tells the Muslims not to kill innocent people, even during war. That act does not have the consent of Islam, and they are done by people who 'hijacked' Islam with their narrow and selfish political objectives," he said.

As such, he urged the media, especially in the West, not to describe them as 'Islam terrorist' or 'jihadist' because they were merely extremist, regardless of their religious

beliefs.

"There is a danger in fuelling the Islam-phobia in the West. It would be useful if the media in the West is more discerning...they are just terrorists belonging to a certain group," he said.

Asked to comment on the 9/11 terrorist bombings of the World Trade Center in New York in 2001, Najib said it was a combination of several factors.

He said Islam was never associated with violence, and based on historical facts, the people in Southeast Asia embraced Islam from Hinduism in a very peaceful manner.

"After 9/11, there were incidents of suicide bombings in Indonesia, and the governments of Malaysia, Indonesia and to some extent, Singapore, had taken effective steps to fight against terrorism.

"But, do not call them terrorist, because the most important thing is the underlying reasons why they carried out such terrorist acts...that's how, we approach the whole challenge," he said.

Najib said it had to be explained that Islam's stand was for progress and its priority was in education and the economic gain of the people, and even the Prophet taught Muslims not just to pray in the mosque all the time, but to work to earn a living.

"But, many people misunderstood and misinterpreted Islam," he added.

Najib, who is on a visit to New York to speak at the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament at the 68th United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, had a busy work schedule on Thursday.

He had several bilateral meetings with leaders of several countries, attended business luncheons with the US-Asean Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce, visited the New York Academy of Sciences, and attended a private high-level dinner hosted by Asia Society.

Najib is scheduled to deliver Malaysia's statement during the General Debate on Sept 28.

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