

## **Zahid's Visit Further Boosts Malaysia-UK Ties**

**Bernama**

**Nov 11, 2016**

**From Ahmad Fuad Yahya**

LONDON, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi ended his five-day work visit to United Kingdom (UK) on a highly successful note with Malaysia strengthening bilateral ties even further, particularly in the effort to combat terrorism and global security issues.

The visit also brought a positive impact on the economic ties of both countries whereby total bilateral trade stood at RM10.6 billion last year and RM10.1 billion from January to August.

On a personal note, it was a meaningful trip for Ahmad Zahid who was the first leader to speak at the newly-built Malaysian Auditorium at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS), Oxford University.

He delivered a keynote address entitled "De-Rooting Radicalism and Extremism".

The deputy prime minister explained in detail on the causes of radicalism, extremism and terrorism, in addition to giving a clearer picture on the misunderstanding by the international community on the issue.

He also urged the global community to join hands and be responsible to de-root radicalism, extremism and terrorism.

Despite his packed schedule, Ahmad Zahid managed to attend meetings and discussions with security agencies, as well as captains of industry in the UK.

"This trip highlighted the concern of the United Kingdom (government) towards Malaysia, not only limited to traditional relations but they want to further strengthen the relations between the two countries in various fields of common interest," Ahmad Zahid told the Malaysian media at the end of his visit on Friday.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, met newly appointed UK Home Secretary Amber Rudd for the first time and their discussion led to a positive outcome from both countries in their bid to overcome issues concerning terrorism and security.

The UK government has also expressed its interest on the moderation or 'wassatiyyah' concept espoused by Malaysia, which has been viewed as the basis for a solution to issues involving the world's Muslim community.

UK agreed to Malaysia's proposal to co-organise an international conference on wassatiyyah' here.

Ahmad Zahid said on the other hand, Malaysia supported UK to become the host for an international conference on modern day slavery, following a decision made during a roundtable discussion in New York on Sept 18.

Speaking on his public lecture at Oxford, Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia and other Muslim countries must explain to the world on the roots of radicalism, extremism and terrorism which have been associated with Islam, when it is actually a peace-loving religion.

"We should deal with the perception of the West. We should give a clearer picture that Islam does not promote terrorism," he said.

On the views of newly elected United States (US) President Donald Trump on Islam, Ahmad Zahid said he believed Trump would implement moderate policies and look at Islam in the right perspective, and not to be driven by emotions.

He also believed that the US' foreign policies would not change that much regardless of whether the president came from the Republican or Democrat party because the existing policies would continue to be handled by the State Department's diplomats.

"I believe what the new US president will do might certainly not change that much from the existing policies. I'm confident that Malaysia's efforts to obtain the visa-waiver programme can be implemented when Malaysia has fulfilled all the requirements," he said.

In terms of military cooperation, Ahmad Zahid reiterated Malaysia's commitment to continue joint exercises under the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) which comprises UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia.

On the private sector in the UK, he said captains of industry in the country were still hoping to have good ties with Malaysia due to its location which served as a gateway for goods and services from the UK to ASEAN countries.

As such, they hoped Malaysia would continue to play its role so that ASEAN can be a hub for marketing UK products, Ahmad Zahid said.

"This includes military and police assets and other products. I think their state-of-the-art products are as good as products from other European or North American countries," he said.

Ahmad Zahid also said that the security and terrorism issues that he brought up in the world stage such as the United Nations (UN), UN General Assembly and other international forums, were the views of the Malaysian government for the sake of global peace and not his personal views.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 216 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1301330>