

**SPEECH TEXT BY PRIME MINISTER: WORLD CONFERENCE ON
ISLAMIC THOUGHT & CIVILIZATION (WCIT2024)**

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SPEECH TEXT

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PERDANA MENTERI

FOR

**WORLD CONFERENCE ON ISLAMIC THOUGHT &
CIVILIZATION (WCIT2024)**

29 JULY 2024 (MONDAY)

CASUARINA CONVENTION CENTRE, IPOH

PERAK

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan Salam Sejahtera.

Alhamdu lillaahil lazeee anzala ‘alaa ‘abdihil kitaaba wa lam yaj’al lahoo
‘iwajaa Qaiyimal liyunzira baasan shadeedam mil ladunhu wa yubashshiral
mu’minin Nahmaduhu Wa Nusalli Ala Rasoolilah Kareem Wa ‘ala alihi
wasahbihi ajma’in

Mengadap Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Seri Sultan Perak, Darul
Ridzuan,

Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

Ampun Tuanku.

Satu penghormatan besar untuk bersama-sama meraikan kehadiran
Tuanku yang menjadi pendorong utama dalam majlis wacana segar seperti
ini dan izinkan patik meneruskan untuk menyampaikan pandangan kepada
rakan-rakan.

YAB Dato’ Seri Diraja Zahid Hamidi,

Timbalan Perdana Menteri;

YAB Datuk Seri Saarani,

Menteri Besar Perak;

Ahli-ahli Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri;

Yang mulia Pro Canselor, Naib Canselor dan keluarga Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah; dan

Saudara-saudari yang dimuliakan.

1. Alhamdulillah, kita dapat bersama-sama dan saya tentunya mendokong ikhtiar yang dimulakan sekian lama meneruskan wacana segar bicara permasalahan umat Islam, kebudayaan, tamadun dan boleh diserasikan dengan tuntutan semasa dalam masyarakat pelbagai kaum, pelbagai agama dan dunia yang begitu rencam.
2. We cannot survive and succeed without a reasoned discourse. We are living in a world termed as post normal times, where there are chaos, contradictions and complexity, where there is deficit in moral values, in fact abandonment of moral principles, where politics believe in post-truth principles and devoid of ethical values, where the economy can be propelled with unbridled capitalism, without care and concern for the environment or the welfare of the majority marginalized, poor, urban poor, rural or in the rural heartland.
3. We're living in a society where families have quite disintegrated. So, this conference, of course, to me is timely not to clamor about change by reflecting on the experience of the past. To effect change in a meaningful manner, in a practical manner, I don't need to deliberate

further on the issues of complexities and the unprincipled attempt by both in the political arena on the economic and the cultural sphere where we have lost humanity.

4. Gaza, of course, is a classic example, where in the name of democracy, you can allow and condone total chaos, oppression of the worst kind known to mankind in recent times. So, there is a challenge, therefore, to offer a viable, meaningful, effective, alternative and not to be in despair. So, this is therefore something that we need to not only engage but strongly support. And I, of course, encouraged by the presence of luminaries like by Pak Jussuf Kalla, who has been consistent and determined in promoting understanding and peace, even in more troublesome muslim minority areas.
5. My old colleague George Yeoh, you remember, George, who involved decades ago, while trying to dismantle this concept of clash of civilization, promoted strongly by Samuel P. Huntington. We were there to promotes feast of civilizations. Civilizations can be a feast and not necessarily to be used to promote enmity, discord and chaos. And this reminds me of the classic work, a very small, short article by the Arab-Palestinian scholar Edward Said on the clash of ignorance, is very effective way of debunking, or should I say devastating critique of that notion of clash of civilizations by Edward Said in his article “I think in The Atlantic Clash of Ignorance”.
6. The problem that we confront in this world is complete ignorance. We assume that we know, but we don't. We try and attempt to deliberate

most issues, engage in discourses out of prejudice, not out of empathy.

7. The west post-colonial period must still retain the old precepts of the other, and therefore the misunderstanding, misinformation and rejection of the other, what we term now Islamophobia. And we need to be blamed too when we talk about civilization. That's why I commend this university for trying to attempt engage with all the others. How do you then survive and live in a society like a multiracial, multi religious country in Malaysia and avoid discussing other religions, other cultures, other civilizations.
8. And then demanding that the west must understand us. So, I think it is an engagement that is required by us to get others to understand us and for us to understand them. That is why we have encouraged other than conferences such as this dialogue of civilizations, Islam and Confucianism, because it is very relevant not only in Malaysia, but in this region.
9. Saidina Ali Bin Abi Talib RA talking about knowledge and learning and scholarship as Lazzatul Maarifah there's a love for scholars. You yearn to get the best to understand and appreciate. As much as we have understood the injunction of the Quran, using in terms of epistemology, very relevant, pertinent terminology, not just tolerance, but lita'arafu.

10. Ya ayyuhan-nas, inna khalaqnakum min dzakarim wa untsa, wa ja'alnakum syu'ubaw wa qaba-ila, lita'arafu
(surah Al-Hujurat)

It is not tolerance, it's learning for one another, it's understanding one another is appreciating the differences, because the differences in terms of race or tribe or color is not of our own volition, but what was ordained by Allah SWT.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

11. My contention is that we must have the courage and conviction to continue this course. The discourse there is the spirit of lazzatul ma'rifah to understand and appreciate and realize that this is a requirement to achieve not only peace and prosperity or even sustainability through reason this course.
12. Ts Elliot summarizing somewhat the same message. Where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge, where is the knowledge we have lost in information. Saidina Ali Ibn Abu Talib differentiates between information, knowledge and ma'rifah. We have this mushrooming of information.
13. We have a problem now in the government trying to introduce some restrictions, not necessarily popular, because those who believe in unbridled freedom means we have every right to express our views

regardless of the impact to the society, even ignoring the fact that girls decided or forced, compelled to commit suicide because this was harassment. So, the challenge is therefore to place order and not unbridled freedom or capitalism but to place values about the expression of individual freedom at the expense of peace and welfare of the society.

14. May the conference live up to that spirit of *lita'arafu* and *lazzatul ma'arifah* and I, without the need to apologize, no apologies, would also recommend to strongly address the issue of governance.
15. Now I must state that our chief guest, Your Highness, has impeccable academic credentials. So, I don't welcome him just as a Sultan or the desk pertinent, but more so because rarely do you have Your Highness, someone with your impeccable academic credentials addressing the audience.
16. I think through because of this that what you have to say and advise is very, very pertinent and relevant indeed that our country, as in most Muslim societies, require this message of understanding of wisdom beyond just tolerance to understand that what we lack, what we have lost in our societies today is the meaning of justice. Deficit in values, therefore poor governance and lack of compassion. We decide what is right, what is wrong, what is just, what is not. Whether we have empathy to the plight of the poor based on interests, values or parties, not on the principles of justice and humanity. And if you understand Muslim, the Islamic message, the *khair ummah* that we heard, it is beyond race and creed.

17. May Allah give us strength. In front of Your Highness, I decided to shorten my speech because we are here to look forward to His address. I must reiterate this point without exaggeration that we are blessed, Your Highness, with your presence and your wisdom.

Terima kasih.

Assalamualaikum warahmatuallahi wabaratu.

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