

**Oleh :** DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB TUN ABD RAZAK  
**Tempat :** HOTEL NIKKO, KUALA LUMPUR  
**Tarikh :** 09-05-2005  
**Tajuk :** PERASMIAN ASIA MEDIA SUMMIT 2005

UCAPAN YANG AMAT BERHORMAT  
DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN ABDUL RAZAK  
TIMBALAN PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA  
DI MAJLIS PERASMIAN ASIA MEDIA SUMMIT 2005  
DI HOTEL NIKKO, KUALA LUMPUR  
PADA 9 MEI 2005, ISNIN  
JAM 8.45 PAGI

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YB Dato' Sri Abdul Kadir bin Haji Sheikh Fadzir, Menteri Penerangan Malaysia,

YBhg Dato' Abdul Rahman Hamid, Pengerusi, Persidangan Awam, Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD),

Yang Berusaha Dr Javad Mottaghi, Pengarah, Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD),

YBhg Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato', Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan sekalian.

Assalamualaikum W.B.T. dan Selamat Sejahtera.  
Distinguished guests, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

1. I understand that there are over 400 media professionals from more than 55 countries participating in this Asia Media Summit. I welcome you all to Kuala Lumpur and thank you for choosing Malaysia as the meeting place for your deliberations. I hope you will feel at home during your stay here.

2. Malaysia is truly a melting pot of cultures, ethnicities and religions. We are home to many major religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and the various races such as Malays, Chinese and Indians. Malaysia could be called a microcosm of Asia, Truly Asia " as our slogan goes. Nevertheless, we are also open to other cultural influence, such as from the Middle East and the West. There are about 60 ethnic groups, large and small, in Malaysia. While Malays make up 54 percent of the population, the Chinese constitute a solid quarter of the country's population, and Indians constitute another eight percent. Other indigenous groups form the remaining of the population.

3. One could argue that in the world there are two groups of civilization – one that perceives diversity as a threat and the other, which sees it as an opportunity and an integral component for development and growth. In this respect, Asia Media Summit is well established to redefine diversity and to improve dialogue between these two groups. Hence, the goal of such an important media gathering is to nurture a

dialogue, which is both preventive of conflicts –when possible – and inclusive in nature. The path to coexistence is nothing but "thinking together", and the path of "thinking together" is nothing but the path of "having dialogue with each other".

4. Participation in a dialogue is the same as "playing together" and not "playing against each other". Any individual, school of thought, or civilization that believe in dialogue, would be a winner and the prime need of the information age and living in a "network society" is that everyone should be a winner. Dialogue is necessary for global security. The key to the survival of humankind is being together, going along with each other and talking to each other. It is through reaching common understanding that we will be capable of generating collective efforts, and it is through collective efforts that we will be able to develop our socio-cultural sphere." Dialogue is a collective search aiming at a better mutual understanding, the prerequisite to gain knowledge as well as to live in harmony and knows no geographic, cultural or social boundaries.

5. However, that the present world has come under the threat of certain anti-dialogue forces and anti-dialogue atmosphere, which breeds disillusionment, hatred and violence at the national, regional and international levels, causing insecurity, despair and hostility to become integral parts of the life of contemporary man.

6. There is a great temptation to insist on a one- size – fits – all model for all countries. Unfortunately this approach demonstrates little regard for the history and the unique characteristics of different socio – political climates. It ignores the need to adopt systems to local peculiarities and characteristics, and therefore, creates more problems than it solves. Managing societies with many cultures, ethnic groups and religions is an extremely complex task, especially if the foundation of these societies is not yet secured. Our approach in Malaysia is to be inclusive, empowering all ethnics and religious groups by giving them a share in decision-making, a say in collectively charting the future of our country.

7. Media is both the vehicle and the product of Dialogue. As the saying "World needs Words, not Wars", man needs words, not wars and the media is the means for mutual understanding, not war. It is through media that one can truly settle dialogue, and it is through the process of carrying out dialogue that media, while borrowing significantly from "common meanings", gain the capability of sharing meaning and taking part in the various collective efforts of individuals as well as communities. Media can make one's voice familiar to the others. It can thus become a medium for the development of values such as tolerance and compassion.

8. By and large the mainstream media has done very little to foster better understanding among different cultures.

9. I am afraid; the news media thrives on conflict. "If it bleeds it leads," says the dictum. The lead story for most news programs is typically the most recent conflict, crime or disaster. It is assumed that the sensation that conflicts produce will attract viewers, listeners, and readers to the media. And large audiences are crucial to the financial success of media outlets. Therefore, it is often in the media's interest to not only report conflict, but to play it up, making it seem more intense than it really is. Long-term, on-going conflict-resolution processes such as mediation are not as dramatic and are often difficult to understand and report.

10. A true example is that there is no doubt that in the interface between Islam and

the West lies one of the greatest challenges confronting humankind today and media has not played a positive role in this respect.

11. In Muslim countries and in Asia in particular, people are of the opinion that some of the media in the West has contributed heavily to the negative image of Muslims. The association of Islam and violence is a common misconception that some of the Western media have developed about Islam. This "radical Islam", a stereotype common to Western thought, portrays Muslims as potential terrorists.

12. On the other hand, the Islamic world views the West, as imperialist regimes trying to suppress Islamic propagation and values. The invaluable culture, history, rules, regulations and management system in some countries in the West along with many lessons that could be appreciated and learnt from the West, are being undermined through media in some Islamic countries.

13. There are many commonalities between Islamic thought and various strains in Western philosophy. The media, both Western and Muslim, have given very little emphasis to these shared values. Neither have they sought to make Muslims and Westerners aware of the significance of these values to their lives and to the contemporary world.

14. Undeniably, there are also significant differences between the two civilizations. If the media has failed to highlight commonalities, it has also made no progress in explaining the differences between Islamic and Western cultures. In both the West and the Muslim world, segments of the media have instead chosen to project their differences as a way of proving that it is only their position that is right and legitimate while the position of the other is wrong and illegitimate. Why has the media not been able to meet the challenges of improving relations between Islam and the West? This is a question that has to be addressed in your deliberations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. Asians in general, are peaceful people. That is not to shut our eyes to the conflicts between religions and regions. We have to accept that there are conflicts: we should be realistic. However, we must also accept that dialogue is the most peaceful way of resolving the conflicts.

16. Media plays a major role in this. While media has been used for propaganda, to orchestrate alarm, to arouse fear and hatred, and ultimately to lead trusting people to unnecessary wars, it has also the potential to provide true understanding. Media has a catalytic role in shaping opinions, in leading the thought of the citizens, in constructing consensual solutions. And you, ladies and gentlemen, who are here today, are the prime movers of this extraordinary power. You have so amply demonstrated the power to do good in canvassing such a massive support in mitigating the impact of the recent tsunami. So there is no doubt about the capability of the media to do good. And towards this end, I have a few requests that I would like to make.

17. First to the western media: Please do not make all Muslims appear as terrorists or fanatical. Please accept that there are religious fanatics and terrorists of many other shades also.

18. Secondly to the Islamic media: let us not throw away all that is western just

because some aspects of the western society is not acceptable to us. There are some aspects of the western society that we should adopt or at least adapt. We should be open minded about it.

19. And thirdly to the Asian media: Let us use the power of the media to create harmony and peace, which is so necessary for prosperity of our nations. Let us use it to evoke participation of the people in the public sphere. Let us use it to fight poverty, illiteracy and other ills of society.

20. It is possible for us, Asians, Africans, Arabs, Europeans, and Americans, to live in harmony and peace, in spite of our differences, if only we respect our differences and rejoice in it. Malaysia is a good example for this kind of unity in diversity. If we can have peace, harmony and prosperity in a country with such diverse population living in such close proximity to each other, I am sure the world can also co-exist harmoniously.

21. Malaysia's experience is that a strategy of inclusion, participation, respect for the legitimate rights of all ethnic, religious and cultural groups is the best formula to manage its diversity. As has been the lesson elsewhere, we in Malaysia have found that economic growth and, more importantly, the equitable sharing of the fruits of such growth, which has a positive impact on the stability of multicultural societies. It provides an environment conducive to social harmony. Three decades of economic expansion has been especially critical to our nation building efforts. We have been able to avoid the kind of difficult economic conditions that breed hostility and confrontation between groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

22. I am thankful to AIBD and its partners for taking the initiative to open a dialogue between broadcasters from different parts of the world. Initiatives such as the 1st Arab- Asia and the 1st Afro – Asia Media Dialogue will contribute to a better understanding among media leaders who are opinion makers at the global level. Let us create a better knowledge and understanding of the rich African culture for our children. Let us stop attaching violence and discrimination with the rich culture of the Arab world. Let us create better relations among people in Europe, Asia and North America. Let us put an end to hostility and hatred created by people who have nothing to do with religious beliefs. We are all God's creations and we should be able to live with one another in harmony and mutual regard. The key is to accept and respect other people with other forms of cultures, beliefs and traditions. The beauty of a garden is the beauty of its so many colourful flowers.

23. Media could put Cultural Dialogue at the head of its agenda by institutionalizing the culture of dialogue with a view to settle existing differences and conflicts at the national & regional levels. Media could become a meeting place for public dialogue where all citizens are welcomed and considered equals to promote diversity, mutual understanding and tolerance. Media can initiate public debate and common ground talks between policy-makers, academics and media professionals to counter social constraints and build up consensus on matters related to the good of the public.

24. Media can consistently demonstrate the ability to become society's voice and act as people's network, people's voice by upholding the principal of impartiality and developing pluralistic program structures of interest to all groups of society. Media can create a better understanding of various religions & remove misunderstanding,

misinterpretation & monopolization. Media can maintain credibility of information and news. The strength of the Public Service Broadcasting is its credibility.

25. Media can create a coalition for peace by avoiding war, violence and occupation as a key to uprooting international terrorism. The Dialogue of cultures and coalition for Peace are the means to end the current atmosphere of hostility in the international community.

26. Coalition for peace, this is something no one can do better than the Media. Let us remember that the world information society can sustain and grow only in times of peace and prosperity. This is what you can offer to the World Summit on Information Society in Tunis later this year as broadcasters' contribution.

27. I would like to wish you fruitful deliberations. Do take some time off to enjoy the beautiful garden city of lights and warm hospitality of the people of Malaysia.

28. Dengan lafaz Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, saya dengan ini dengan sukacitanya merasmikan Asia Media Summit 2005.

Wabillahi Taufiq Walhidayah W.B.T.  
Thank you.