

**DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK  
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA  
INTER CONTINENTAL HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR  
28/05/2012  
26TH ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE -ISIS**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

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ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies Chairperson and Permanent Secretary of the  
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Chief Executive  
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Heads of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Role Players and Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good evening. I am delighted to be back at the Asia-Pacific Roundtable and I thank ISIS Malaysia and ASEAN-ISIS for inviting me to deliver the Keynote Address.

Distinguished Participants,

2. We live in challenging times. There is a dark cloud descending over us as Europe struggles to find its feet in tackling the debt crisis. Greece's possible withdrawal from the Euro-zone may be the precipice looming over greater economic stress. At the same time, the Chinese economic juggernaut is losing steam albeit still competitive in terms of its growth rate and the US economy shows little signs of sustained recovery. Closer to home, the once calm and tranquil waters of the South China Sea have become increasingly more challenging to navigate in more than one sense.

3. As we utilize our collective minds and resources to address these challenges, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture. The most important development of the 21st century is perhaps the rise of China and India as well as the shifting of the economic pendulum to Asia. Malaysia is a beneficiary of such development, and China is our largest trade partner. I was informed that the Chinese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur is the second highest issuer of Chinese visas in the world. These are but two indicators of the vibrant relations we have with China. But some will argue that managing competing interests and visions is the most important and critical issue of the twenty-first century. In fact the future of Asia rests on our ability to do so.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. Asia has come a long way in the last few decades. At the turn of the century, Asia accounted for

10.7% of the world's GDP. Today, that figure is 19.2% and growing. Success, however, can be fleeting. It would be a mistake to focus myopically on the economic success story alone. Prosperity cannot take root unless accompanied by stability and peace. Herein lies the most important strategic challenge for Asia: the management of intra-mural relations. How do we moderate our differences, and ensure that conflicts, when and if they do occur, are managed in a manner that is fair, just and most of important of all, without the threat and certainly the use of force? The theme of this year's conference, Asian Security Order and Governance, is highly relevant and speaks to these questions. I am confident that your deliberations will help to unpack this strategic puzzle and provide the impetus for a peaceful and secure Asia.

5. This pivotal question is urgently in need of an answer to ensure that the fruits of our toil and sweat are not wasted away by our destructive quest for power and influence. To begin with, we in Asia must take greater responsibility for our own security. While we value the assistance from our friends who have contributed immensely to regional stability, Asia must transform itself from a consumer to a producer of security. More specifically, we must assume greater responsibility for our own security and establish frameworks to ensure our safety and to uphold our interests.

6. It also follows that we need to change our mindsets that have heretofore been programmed to focus on economic development at the expense of security issues. If Asia is to be a force in global politics, we cannot shy away from speaking out and taking positions on seemingly sensitive issues such as nuclear disarmament, arms build-up and military alliances. Asia must stand up and be counted.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. In charting our future, we should be mindful of two important considerations. Firstly, relationships must be founded on a broad spectrum of areas, and not be defined by single issue. Just as we should not be fixated on economic benefits alone, it would be harmful for regional stability if we were to allow ourselves to be conditioned by military concerns. Take ASEAN as an example. The three pillars – political-security, economics and socio-cultural – need to be equally strong; otherwise, the stability of the 10-member organization will be in jeopardy. Asia cannot stand on one leg; it needs to strengthen its foundation, and that will include among other things, deepening its people-to-people relations.

8. Secondly, there is no place for rivalry in Asia. We have lived through the second half of the 20th century divided by ideology. We should not allow conflict and the jostling for power to divide us again. What we need is cooperation, and thankfully there is an abundance of that in Asia. Since 1967, ASEAN has recognized the value of stability and has founded its relations based on the principles of mutual respect and "prosper thy neighbour." This spirit of cooperation pioneered by ASEAN has since been extended beyond Southeast Asia. When the five visionary statesmen signed the Treaty of Bangkok to establish ASEAN, they were guided by the idealism of a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asia. Never in their wildest imaginations would they have envisioned that ASEAN would become the focal point for region-wide cooperation. Without a doubt, the "investment" in 1967 has paid off handsomely, and it is time for us to make a similar investment in our future. I am confident that as long as we continue to make "cooperation" the centrepiece of our relations, Asia is poised for a golden age.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. You will recall that last September when I addressed the United Nations General Assembly, I called upon all peace loving peoples to join us in embracing, and striving toward, a way of life based on tolerance, mutual respect and moderation. The Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) builds on the inspirational work and ideals of our forefathers. Manifestations of GMM are found everywhere. Take ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), for example. TAC, which is the bedrock of intra-ASEAN relations, and engagement with friends far and near, is the epitome of moderation. Eschewing confrontational politics and recognizing that might is not necessarily right, TAC institutionalizes the norm of peaceful resolution of conflicts.

10. It is easy to advocate peace, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. But, as members of the diplomatic corps will no doubt agree, putting these ideals into practice is anything but easy. Be that as it

may, I would like to venture some thoughts for consideration. I offer that the world will be a better and certainly more peaceful place, if we take heed of the Golden Rule, "do unto others, as you want others to do unto you." Mutual respect is the foundation of all relationships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. We reject extremism in all forms, but recognize that when differences and diverging interests manifest themselves, the outlier voices must be heard. Marginalizing opposing opinions is counterproductive and will only serve to harden old grievances and fuel new ones. The great British statesman, Winston Churchill, wisely noted, "jaw jaw is better than war war." Only through communication and dialogue can we work out our differences.

12. On a positive note, I am heartened that GMM has found traction, and has received encouraging support from the international community. I am particularly grateful that my ASEAN colleagues have endorsed GMM at the 18th ASEAN Summit in May 2011 and that a concept paper to implement GMM was adopted at the recently concluded ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh. As gratifying as these developments are, we need your support to mainstream GMM around the world.

13. As proof of our commitment to advocate and sustain the GMM concept and core principles regionally and globally, Malaysia has initiated the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation which is based in Kuala Lumpur in January of this year. I am happy to announce that currently the GMMF is fully operational.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. Asia's economic prosperity has been accompanied by alarming concomitant effects. Throughout history, states have been taking measures to bolster their defences and military power as they became richer. History is repeating itself in Asia. The top five country recipients of arms transfer from 2007-2011 are Asian: they are India, South Korea, Pakistan, China and Singapore, and they account for 30% of the volume of international arms imports. Granted that the right to self-defence is permitted under the UN Charter. However, it bears reminding that history is replete with instances of wars fought under the guise of self-defence. While, it is difficult to ascertain the underlying reasons for the arms-build-up, it is critical that mechanisms and structures are in place to ensure that this region will never display the proclivity to the extreme action of taking up arms.

15. Because the stakes are high, we cannot leave the protection of the region's peace and security to chance. We have to take proactive steps towards the construction of a pluralistic security community in which the use of force is not an option. We cannot rely merely on pronouncements of friendship and peaceful intent. We need to work through our problems, and to accommodate diverging interests, if these emerge. A good starting point would be to forge a common vision for the region. What is the preferred regional order? How do we institutionalize our strong bilateral and multilateral bonds of partnership and friendship into workable arrangements that are nimble enough to accommodate diverging interests without sacrificing organizational efficacy? In this regard, I look forward to the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) II's final report which will be submitted to the 15th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in November this year.

16. I congratulate and commend ISIS Malaysia and ASEAN-ISIS for proposing the timely and relevant theme of Asian Order and Security Governance for the Roundtable. I am keen to hear your thoughts and suggestions, generated over the course of this conference. I wish you a productive round of deliberations and I am honoured to declare open the 26th Asia-Pacific Roundtable.

Thank you.