

NOW IS THE TIME FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT TERRORISM

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1. It is always a pleasure to be in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but I am especially glad to be here in Riyadh for what His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has rightfully referred to as this “historic” US-Arab Islamic summit. Our meeting could not be more timely or more necessary, and I am confident that this gathering will renew and re-energise the friendship between all present and produce new roadmaps for cooperation, security and understanding.

2. High on the agenda will be the fact that although the so-called caliphate established by Daesh in Iraq and Syria is diminishing, none should doubt that the threat from terrorists who blaspheme the name of Islam remains high. For the nations gathered here for the summit it may in fact be higher, as fighters fleeing the land they have occupied and despoiled return to their own countries and plot to bring terror to our cities.

3. Few have been spared. In Malaysia we suffered our first attempted Daesh-linked attack last year, and it is only through the determined, heroic actions of our police and security forces that there were no fatalities and further atrocities have been thwarted. Now more than ever the world needs the new partnership to confront extremism and terrorism that His Majesty King Salman proposes we build at this summit, and I thank him for his invitation and welcome the participation of the other states attending.

4. It is crucial that all Muslim countries and leaders make it absolutely clear that there is nothing Islamic about terrorism. Any who say it is have been deceived by false preachers and by those who are ignorant of or misinformed about our religion. Authentic Islam is a religion of enlightenment, civilisation and scholarship, not of destruction and death.

5. The true Islam is a religion of peace, as is shown by the way that for over one thousand years Muslims, Christians and Jews have lived and traded with and befriended each other

in the Middle East, just as in Malaysia Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Taoists and others work and play side by side in harmony.

6. To reinforce that the Malaysian Government has promoted the concept of wasatiyyah, the Quranic injunction towards moderation, and I am pleased that our efforts will be further boosted by the establishment of the King Salman Centre for International Peace in our capital, Kuala Lumpur.

7. Saudi Arabia is a true friend to Malaysia, and we were delighted to host His Majesty on his recent state visit, during which Saudi confidence in our economy was shown by Aramco's announcement of its US\$7 billion investment in a refinery project with our state oil and gas company, Petronas.

8. These historic high ties are just one of the reasons that Malaysia fully supports this summit. We are in total accordance with its aims to increase tolerance and coexistence and to enhance security, stability and cooperation.

9. Both at home and abroad, Malaysia is fully committed to fighting the threats of terrorism and violent extremism. As a member of the United Nations, Malaysia has fully supported UN efforts such as the Secretary General's 'plan of action in preventing violent extremism', which calls for intelligence sharing among member states. We are a state party to nine out of 14 international legal instruments concerning counter terrorism, and we are part of the global coalition against Daesh.

10. Malaysia also supports the Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding, an initiative of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah.

11. This strong stance has been translated into reality with considerable practical effect in our own country. We have placed great emphasis on pushing counter narratives through social media, and have founded the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Centre to combat extremism in Malaysia, Southeast Asia and beyond.

12. We in Malaysia also have considerable experience in rehabilitating people who have succumbed to the siren voices of terrorism. This is something we have pursued because we

know we should not give up on those who have been led astray, but could still return to being useful members of society.

13. Our deradicalisation programme has worked with hundreds of extremists, and has had a 95 percent success rate in reintegrating them so that they can return to the mainstream and show that even those who have fallen prey to false and evil ideologies can ultimately reject them, and be a warning, an example and an instruction to others.

14. We are willing and happy to share our experience and expertise in this with all countries at the summit. For just as with my call for a Global Movement of Moderates at the UN in 2010, and our establishment of a foundation to support it in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia will never falter in our efforts to fight for moderation and the true path of Islam, and to say loudly and clearly to the extremists that they do not speak for us.

15. I believe that this summit represents an important attempt to bring ties between the Muslim world and the US to new levels. With even greater mutual understanding, we can work together all the better to fight the ignorance, exclusion and sense of grievance that can fuel violent extremism,

16. We know that President Donald Trump is committed to eradicating Daesh. Under my leadership, so will Malaysia be – as should all Muslim countries at this summit and beyond.

17. We must ensure that the barbarism we see in Syria and Iraq is rooted out. We must show that we stand ready to confront terror swiftly and decisively wherever and whenever it manifests itself. We must never surrender.

18. It is up to all of us at this summit to forge this partnership and prove, once and for all, that there is no clash of civilisations, with the Muslim world on one side and the West on the other. There is only a clash with civilisation, and on that we all – members of all religions – must stand united together as one; firm, determined and ready to act.

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