

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
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*“KEEPING THE WORLD SAFE: PERSPECTIVES ON THE THREAT OF GLOBAL
TERRORISM AND HOW TO RESPOND TO IT”*

Mr. Andronico Luksic, Chairman of the
APEC CEO Summit 2004,

The Honourable Helen Clarke, Prime Minister
of New Zealand,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to address this important gathering of corporate leaders and distinguished participants from the Asia Pacific region. I am also pleased and honoured to be sharing the same stage with Prime Minister Clark, in leading this morning's dialogue on the issue of global terrorism that we face today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be condemned because terrorists are prone to indiscriminate violence and cruelty in the extreme, wreaking death and destruction through their actions, without any respect for the sanctity of human life or the value of property.

3. However, no amount of international condemnation or rejection of terrorism will make any impression on the perpetrators of terror. It is also not possible to check international terrorism by unilateral, ego-centric action carried out in the manner of punitive retaliation. What we need is worldwide cooperation to identify the terrorists, fight the scourge and ultimately eradicate terrorism as a constant threat to our daily lives. The global scope of the war against terror requires the widest possible collaboration among all nations which can only be galvanized through an international conference, preferably held under the auspices of the United Nations.

4. United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1566 of 8 October 2004 condemns in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism irrespective of their motivation. The Resolution also describes certain criminal acts which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in international protocols relating to terrorism.

5. The UN Security Council Resolution of 8 October 2004 could be the basis of discussion for elaborating the agenda for an international conference on terrorism, which can in turn come out with an appropriate definition of terrorism and terrorists. The international community needs to be equipped with an agreed definition of terrorism to enable it to address the problem effectively.

6. It would be pertinent to note as well that the same UN Security Council Resolution No. 1566 reminds States that they must ensure that any measure taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, and should adopt such measures in accordance with international law. If I might add, the principles governing inter-state relations must also never be sacrificed. Indeed, all civilized people must avoid doing the despicable things that terrorists do. We must count on the United Nations for leadership in the fight against global terrorism which is actually a trans-national crime of the gravest order.

7. To enable us to fully grasp and deal with the threat of terrorism, we must know the enemy. We must identify the adversary and have a clear knowledge of its characteristics. In any conventional warfare, it is necessary to understand the enemy and know their tactics as a prerequisite to defeating them on the battlefield. In the fight against terrorism, the task is made even more difficult because the terrorists operate on unconventional battlegrounds. Unpredictability is their greatest ally. We must neutralize this advantage possessed by the terrorists by developing expertise to be one step ahead of them all the time. We need to establish a system of intelligence sharing to enable exchange of information between national authorities, particularly regarding terrorist travel and financing.

8. We must also have the capacity to distinguish who is a terrorist and who is not. We must realize that the terrorists do not accept that description of themselves. While terrorism must be rejected under any circumstances, we must also be able to recognize true nationalists fighting for national independence or freedom fighters battling foreign occupation and oppression. A distinction must always be maintained between terrorism and the right of people to self-determination.

9. It is also unjustifiable to associate terrorism with any particular race or religion. Throughout history, all religions and races have their respective shares of terrorist groups. Terrorists must be singled out only by their acts of terror and nothing else. Without reference to race or religion, the fight against terrorism can become less emotive and be carried out with greater objectivity. We must avoid polarizing the world along religious or ethnic lines by profiling race or religion in the global war to combat terrorism.

10. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. It had many manifestations in history, perpetrated by both secular and religious persons. It must be clearly understood that the criminals who commit acts of terrorism in the name of their religion are motivated by their own misguided interpretations of their faiths. None of the world's religions, including Islam, condone terrorism in any form or manifestation.

11. Terrorism goes beyond al Qaeda. Terrorism not only predates al Qaeda; terrorism will also outlive al Qaeda. Above all, there is a vital need to clear the confusion created by some extremists who claim to carry out certain heinous deeds as an Islamic religious obligation. Let me be very explicit that Islam abhors terrorism. Terrorists who commit crimes in the name of Islam desecrates the purity of the religion and they are indeed damned in the sight of the Almighty.

12. It would be instructive for us to know the motives of terrorists in order to identify the root causes of their actions. These could be political injustice, the denial of human rights, a brutish life entrenched in pervasive poverty or something else yet to be uncovered. We must take action to address the root causes so as to render their motivations irrelevant. It is possible to identify, disrupt, capture or kill individual terrorists. However, unless the root causes are addressed and removed, new recruits will take the place of leaders and groups killed or destroyed in the battle against them. We need to pin-down the motivating forces of specific terrorist groups so that appropriate counter-measures can be put in place. There is no single solution applicable to all situations.

13. Terrorists deserve neither compassion nor sympathy. But we do need to know their minds and their mentality.

14. Today, terrorism attracts global attention and thereby influences events on the international stage to a degree never before achieved by terrorists. The international community, particularly the international media, may have unwittingly contributed to the development of this situation. Terrorists know the publicity value inherent in their acts of terrorism. The international media must always be wary and alert to this aspect of terrorism. Terrorists orchestrate their violence to capture the attention of the widest possible audience.

15. As a contribution to the war against terror, Malaysia has established the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism. It is an institution for training and capacity building in the prevention of terrorist activities, the management of terrorism-related situations and enhancement of public awareness towards countering the terrorist threat.

16. Indeed, Malaysia is very familiar with terrorism and had actually fought a long war against subversion which used terror tactics to intimidate the population and overthrow the government. In fact, Malaysia had officially labeled the enemy as "CTs" or communist terrorists even in those early years of the 1960s. The terrorists burned houses and rubber factories, derailed trains, ambushed passenger buses, attacked police stations, murdered innocent people and generally spread fear into the daily lives of the population. It took us some 20 years to finally defeat the terrorists and secure a formal surrender. Thank God we won that war ! The important lesson to be learned from the Malaysian experience is the fact that the war was not won by the use of conventional military force alone. We also worked to win the hearts and minds of the people including their family members as well as

supporters and sympathizers of the terrorists. We made earnest efforts to understand the underlying causes and grievances of the people. We secured victory by psychological warfare as much as we did by military action. It is on the basis of this documented success that Malaysia has been calling for an understanding of the root causes of terrorism. Such an understanding would enable the international community to apply the appropriate remedies for various circumstances and in different situations. Malaysia strongly feels that an international conference dedicated to the fight against terrorism would be an appropriate forum to address all the related issues. Regrettably, Malaysia's repeated calls for such an international conference have evoked no response.

17. As a closing note, let me recall that all of us, the leaders of the Asia Pacific Economies in particular, are gathered here in Santiago with the main purpose of advancing the economic dynamism of our countries and fostering a greater sense of community among ourselves. Therefore, we should ensure that our counter-terrorism efforts do not become detrimental to the free flow of people, trade and services in our region. Neither should our responses in any way hinder the growth of international trade and investment or erect unnecessary barriers against international trade and investment. Both play a great part in the economic development and well-being of the economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

18. In the fight against terrorism, it is essential for APEC economies to remain strong and vibrant. Nations must accept that the driving forces of terrorism thrive on discontentment and instability. In this connection, we must also be particularly sensitive to the hopes and fears of a particular segment of our societies. I am referring to the young people in our countries. If we do not instill confidence in them for a better future for themselves, they may indeed become sympathizers of the destructive forces scouting for new recruits in the midst of our communities.

19. We must also accept that the fight against terrorism and violent extremism is a long-term challenge. We cannot afford ad-hoc or short-term solutions. We must think of ways and means to make the world forever free of terrorists and terrorism. We will not be able to successfully eliminate terrorists until we know who they are and that all nations fully cooperate to hunt them down. At the same time, we must also make a determination to win the hearts and minds of the terrorists, their supporters and sympathizers. We can only declare victory when we succeed in prevailing upon potential terrorists to accept the utter futility and senselessness of terrorism in any form or manifestation. In this endeavor, we may need to be prepared to be fighting for decades, not years.

I thank you for your attention.