

**SPEECH BY  
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE ASIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA  
AT SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
8 APRIL 2005**

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*"ISLAM HADHARI IN A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY"*

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I FEEL VERY HONOURED THAT THE ASIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA HAS INVITED ME TO SPEAK TO THIS DISTINGUISHED GATHERING TODAY. THE LINKAGE WITH ASIA PROVIDED BY THE ASIA SOCIETY, INTELLECTUALLY AS WELL AS IN REAL TERMS BETWEEN PEOPLES, IS INDEED A VALUABLE ASSET WHICH SHOULD BE PRESERVED AND NURTURED.

2. I SPEAK BEFORE YOU AS A MUSLIM. I AM ALSO SPEAKING AS THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IN A MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS COUNTRY WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE ARE MUSLIMS. BY THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAH, MALAYSIA TODAY IS PEACEFUL, STABLE, DEMOCRATIC AND RAPIDLY DEVELOPING. PEOPLE OF MANY FAITHS - MUSLIMS, BUDDHISTS, CHRISTIANS, HINDUS AND OTHERS – LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY WITH MUTUAL RESPECT AND TOLERANCE TOWARDS EACH OTHER. WE HAVE ACHIEVED ALL THESE NOT BY CHANCE BUT BY DELIBERATE AND SENSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF RACE RELATIONS THROUGH POWER SHARING IN OUR GOVERNMENT AND MANAGING OUR ECONOMY FOR GROWTH AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND BENEFITS. OUR GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF OUR PEOPLE. IN MY COUNTRY, THE OPPOSITION PAN MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC PARTY HAS POLITICIZED RELIGION TO THE EXTENT THAT IT CLAIMS A MONOPOLY ON ISLAM. THEY CANVASS FOR VOTES BY TELLING VILLAGERS THAT THEY WOULD BE ASSURED OF HEAVEN BY VOTING FOR THE PAN MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC PARTY.

3. DURING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 1999, THE ISLAMIC PARTY SAW ITS BIGGEST GAINS EVER. IT TRIPLED ITS REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND TOOK CONTROL OF AN OIL-RICH STATE. FACED WITH A STRENGTHENED ISLAMIST OPPOSITION, SOME IN MY PARTY - WHICH PROMOTES AN INCLUSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE ISLAM – THOUGHT THAT WE HAD TO BECOME MORE ISLAMIST THAN THE OPPOSITION. THIS WAS, OF COURSE, A VERY DANGEROUS SLIPPERY SLOPE. I BELIEVED THAT MALAYSIAN POLITICAL CHOICES WERE INFLUENCED TO SOME EXTENT ON THE ISSUE OF RELIGIOSITY, BUT WHAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE VOTERS WERE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND BROAD-BASED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

4. WHEN I TOOK OVER IN OCTOBER OF 2003, I EMBARKED ON SOME MODEST REFORMS IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE GRIEVANCES WHICH LED TO OUR EROSION OF SUPPORT IN 1999. I TOOK A HARD LINE ON CORRUPTION. I ORDERED AN EXTENSIVE REFORM PROGRAM FOR THE POLICE FORCE. I STRESSED ON THE NEED TO HAVE CREDIBLE AND INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT LIKE THE JUDICIARY. I EMBARKED ON BALANCING THE BUDGET AND REDIRECTING GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON NEEDY SOCIOECONOMIC PROGRAMS. I EMPHASIZED ON THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR SO THAT THE RURAL AREAS – WHICH ARE PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM - WOULD NOT BE LEFT BEHIND.

5. BY THE GRACE OF ALLAH, THE ELECTORATE RESPONDED. MY PARTY WAS RETURNED WITH ITS BIGGEST MAJORITY SINCE INDEPENDENCE AND WE WERE ABLE TO WIN BACK THE STATE WE LOST IN 1999. WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WE CAN ROLL BACK THE ISLAMISTS, NOT BY ENGAGING IN A 'HOLIER-THAN-THOU' CONTEST, BUT BY ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. I POSTULATE THAT THE ISSUES THAT WE ADDRESSED ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN MANY OTHER MUSLIM COUNTRIES, AND BY TACKLING THESE ISSUES, ISLAMISTS CAN BE OVERCOME IN A DEMOCRATIC CONTEST.

6. BUT THERE WAS AN ISLAMIC DIMENSION TO ALL OF THIS. IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT ISLAM HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY POWERFUL IMPERATIVE FOR MUSLIMS TO ACT TODAY. MUSLIMS FIND IT COMPELLING AND OBLIGATORY TO ACT IN THE NAME OF ALLAH AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE RELIGION. SADLY, THIS GREAT IMPERATIVE HAS RESULTED IN ACTIONS THAT ISLAM PROHIBITS AND CONDEMNS. KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE AND BOMBING HARMLESS TARGETS ARE ALL ACTS THAT HAVE BEEN MISGUIDEDLY COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF ALLAH.

7. IT DEMONSTRATES, HOWEVER, HOW POWERFUL AN IMPERATIVE RELIGION CAN BE. IN MALAYSIA, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS COMPULSION TO ACT BECAUSE OF RELIGION CAN BE DIRECTED TOWARDS GOOD, TOWARDS PROGRESS, TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT. WE CALL THIS APPROACH ISLAM HADHARI, LITERALLY CIVILISATIONAL ISLAM, OR AN APPROACH TOWARDS A PROGRESSIVE ISLAMIC CIVILISATION.

8. IT IS NOT AN APPROACH TO PACIFY THE WEST. IT IS NEITHER AN APPROACH TO APOLOGISE FOR THE PERCEIVED ISLAMIC THREAT, NOR AN APPROACH TO SEEK APPROVAL FROM THE NON-MUSLIMS FOR A MORE FRIENDLY AND GENTLE IMAGE OF ISLAM. IT IS AN APPROACH THAT SEEKS TO MAKE MUSLIMS UNDERSTAND THAT PROGRESS IS ENJOINED BY ISLAM. IT IS AN APPROACH THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH MODERNITY AND YET FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE NOBLE VALUES AND INJUNCTIONS OF ISLAM. IT IS AN APPROACH THAT VALUES SUBSTANCE AND NOT FORM.

9. IT POSITS TEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WHICH MUSLIM COUNTRIES MUST DEMONSTRATE, NAMELY:

- I. FAITH AND PIETY IN ALLAH;
- II. A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT;

- III. A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PEOPLE;
- IV. A VIGOROUS PURSUIT AND MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE;
- V. BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- VI. A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE;
- VII. PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN;
- VIII. CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY;
- IX. SAFEGUARDING NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT;
- X. STRONG DEFENCE CAPABILITIES

10. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ACCEPTABLE TO OUR NON MUSLIM POPULATION OR FOR THAT MATTER, TO OUR NON MUSLIM COLLEAGUES IN THE GOVERNMENT. WITH THESE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US, WITH OUR CONSISTENT AND CONTINUING RECORD OF IMPROVING GOVERNANCE FOR THE PEOPLE, AND BY PRACTISING AND OBSERVING A HIGH COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, MALAYSIA OFFERS A MODEST WORKING MODEL OF RENEWAL, REFORM AND, PERHAPS, RENAISSANCE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD. I DO NOT PRETEND THAT MALAYSIA HAS ALL THE ANSWERS TO THE MANY PROBLEMS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD. I AM ALSO AWARE THAT DIFFERENT COUNTRIES NEED DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT MALAYSIA CAN BE A SHOWCASE OF WHAT IT IS TO BE A SUCCESSFUL, MODERN MUSLIM COUNTRY.

11. ISLAM HADHARI IN MALAYSIA WILL PROVIDE THE WAY IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HOPES TO ADMINISTER TO THE WELLBEING OF THE COUNTRY AND THE WELFARE OF ITS MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS POPULATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

12. THIS IS THE FOURTH OCCASION I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT ISLAM HADHARI TO A MAINLY NON-MUSLIM AUDIENCE, IN A NON-MUSLIM COUNTRY. I DO SO TODAY BECAUSE I CONSIDER AUSTRALIANS A TOLERANT PEOPLE WILLING TO GIVE OTHERS A HEARING AND BECAUSE I CONSIDER AUSTRALIA AN OPEN COUNTRY WHICH IS COMMITTED TO DEFENDING THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND DEVOTED TO FOSTERING PEACE AND GOODWILL AMONG NATIONS.

13. TODAY, I SPEAK ALSO AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, OR O.I.C, A GROUPING OF 57 COUNTRIES WITH A POPULATION TOTALING 1.4 BILLION PEOPLE, WHICH MAKES UP A LITTLE MORE THAN ONE FIFTH OF HUMANITY.

14. MALAYSIA CHAIRS THE O.I.C. AT A VERY CRITICAL JUNCTURE FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD. I BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE O.I.C. THAT RECOGNISE THE SHORTCOMINGS AND FAILURES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD. SOME ARE EMBRACING THE INITIATIVES TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE AND AN INTELLECTUALLY MORE OPEN AND VIBRANT UMMAH. BUT THESE STEPS CANNOT BE TAKEN IN ISOLATION. REFORMS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY VISIBLE AND MEANINGFUL CHANGES TO THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF KEY WESTERN COUNTRIES.

15. I HAVE ALSO CHOSEN TO SPEAK ABOUT ISLAM HADHARI ON THIS OCCASION BECAUSE THE APPROACH WE HAVE CHOSEN IS IN FACT A PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND RENEWAL. IT IS A PROCESS OF DISCOVERING HOW TO CONSTANTLY IMPROVE OURSELVES AS INDIVIDUALS AND OUR SOCIETY AS A PEOPLE. FOR MANY OF US IN MALAYSIA, AUSTRALIA IS INDEED A PLACE OF LEARNING AND DISCOVERING. OVER THE YEARS, MORE THAN 100,000 MALAYSIANS HAVE GRADUATED FROM VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES IN AUSTRALIA. CURRENTLY, MORE THAN 30,000 MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ARE STUDYING AT AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND IN MALAYSIA.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

16. ISLAM HADHARI PLACES A VERY HIGH PREMIUM ON THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ON THE CAPABILITY OF THE PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION. THIS IS BECAUSE THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE IS KEY TO ELEVATING THE POOR FROM POVERTY. FURTHERMORE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, ARE ALSO KEY TO UPLIFTING COUNTRIES AND NATION STATES TO BECOME DEVELOPED AND MODERN ENTITIES. EDUCATION AND THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE IS THE GREATEST EQUALIZER AMONG INDIVIDUALS IN A SOCIETY AND THE GREATEST LEVELER WHICH CAN BRIDGE THE PROSPERITY GAP AMONG THE NATION STATES IN THIS GLOBALIZED WORLD.

17. THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IS DEFINITELY HIGH IN THE PRIORITIES OF ISLAM HADHARI. IN ORDER TO RID THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES OF POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD TO PROGRESS, IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE MORE PROSPEROUS AMONG THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES MUST GET TOGETHER AND HELP THE OTHERS. I HAVE CALLED UPON THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO TAKE THE LEAD BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE DICTUM OF LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE. THE REALITY CHECK FURTHERMORE DICTATES THAT WE CAN ONLY EXPECT OTHERS TO HELP US IF WE START BY HELPING OURSELVES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

18. LET ME DIGRESS A LITTLE AT THIS JUNCTURE AND POINT OUT TO YOU THAT POVERTY IS CERTAINLY NOT A PROBLEM AFFLICTING ONLY POOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES. TODAY, POVERTY IS SO SERIOUS A GLOBAL PROBLEM THAT IT IS IN FACT A GRAVE THREAT TO GLOBAL STABILITY. POVERTY COULD BE THE "TROJAN HORSE" FOR PEOPLE WHO EXPLOIT THE ISSUE OF POVERTY TO CAMOUFLAGE THEIR OWN SECRET AGENDAS. NEARLY HALF OF THE WORLD'S SIX BILLION PEOPLE ARE POOR. ALMOST HALF OF AFRICA LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY, WHICH IS DEFINED BY THE WORLD BANK AS THOSE WHO GET BY ON AN INCOME OF LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR PER DAY. ONE PERSON WHO HAS BROUGHT TO THE FORE THIS PROBLEM IN MOST ELOQUENT TERMS IS JEFFREY SACHS, THE DIRECTOR OF THE

UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM PROJECT. IN HIS NEW BOOK, "THE END OF POVERTY", HE POINTS OUT THAT EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD DIE EACH YEAR BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO POOR TO STAY ALIVE. CLEARLY, THE SOLUTION FOR EXTREME POVERTY REQUIRES EXTREME MEASURES. I BELIEVE AUSTRALIA, AS ONE OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, SHOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THIS GLOBAL MISSION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

19. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SUMMIT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, MALAYSIA HAS INITIATED A SERIES OF SELF-HELP PROJECTS INVOLVING O.I.C MEMBERS WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING CAPACITIES IN SEVERAL POOR MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE O.I.C. THE IMMEDIATE PURPOSE IS TO GENERATE INCOME AND PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT. THE LONGER TERM INTENTION IS TO ASSIST THESE O.I.C COUNTRIES UPGRADE THEIR GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. SEVERAL PILOT PROJECTS IN THESE SERIES WERE LAUNCHED IN KUALA LUMPUR ON 29 MARCH 2005, LESS THAN TEN DAYS AGO. THIS MAY ALSO BE TAKEN AS AN EXAMPLE OF ISLAM HADHARI BEING PUT INTO PRACTICE. THE UNDERLYING PURPOSE IS TO DEVELOP HUMAN CAPITAL BY ENHANCING THE CAPACITIES OF THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL. I HOPE THIS PROGRAMME WILL ACHIEVE SUCCESS. FRIENDS OF THE O.I.C ARE WELCOME TO SUPPORT IT IN APPROPRIATE WAYS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

20. EXTREMISM AND RADICALISM HAVE INDEED BECOME A SCOURGE IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD TODAY. THEY MUST BE CONDEMNED WHEN THEY MANIFEST IN THE FORM OF TERRORISM. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT JUSTIFIABLE 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.

21. TERRORISTS WHO COMMIT CRIMES IN THE NAME OF ISLAM ARE VIOLATORS OF THE TENETS OF ISLAM. THEY CERTAINLY DO NOT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE RELIGION. ISLAM AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEM. MUSLIMS AS WELL AS NON MUSLIMS MUST ALSO NOT FALL PREY TO THE CONFUSION CREATED BY PEOPLE WHO CARRY OUT DREADFUL DEEDS AND LATER CLAIM THEM AS AN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION. ALL OF US MUST THEREFORE BE UNITED IN OUR DETERMINATION TO FIGHT TERRORISM AND ERADICATE IT COMPLETELY FROM OUR DAILY LIVES. BUT, THE FACT REMAINS THAT IN ORDER TO DEFEAT THE ENEMY, WE MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND THE ENEMY. WE MUST FIND AND IDENTIFY THE ROOT CAUSES OF TERRORISM.

22. ACTUALLY, MALAYSIA HAD, IN THE PAST, 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 1950S. 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 ! AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS TOOK PART IN THAT WAR AND THEY SERVED WITH GREAT DISTINCTION.

23. 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 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.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

24. UNDOUBTEDLY, THE UMMAH, WHICH IS A COLLECTIVE TERM IDENTIFYING ALL ADHERENTS OF THE MUSLIM FAITH, MUST ALSO SOLVE ITS OWN INTERNAL PROBLEMS. EXTREMISM MUST BE RENOUNCED, RADICALISM ERADICATED AND ALL SECTARIAN VIOLENCE MUST BE PUT TO A STOP. ISLAM CAN CERTAINLY TAP INTO ITS OWN RICH INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AND CHALLENGE DIRECTLY THE EXTREMIST DOCTRINES THAT HAVE LATELY BECOME LINKED, ALTHOUGH UNJUSTIFIABLY, TO ISLAM. MUSLIM LEADERS AND MUSLIM SCHOLARS MUST SUCCEED IN REVIVING FULLY THE TRUE SPIRIT AND THE TRUE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM. THE TRUTH MUST PREVAIL THAT ISLAM ABHORS EXTREMISM AND CONDEMNS TERRORISM.

25. HOWEVER, THE MUSLIM UMMAH ACTING ALONE ON ITS OWN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE TOTAL SUCCESS. ISLAMOPHOBIA MUST ALSO BE REMOVED AT THE SAME TIME. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST TAKE A STAND TO STOP ACTIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO THE PERPETUATION OF INJUSTICE, OPPRESSION OR AGGRESSION AGAINST MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND THE MUSLIM UMMAH ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS A CLEAR DUTY TO DISALLOW THE MARGINALIZATION OF MUSLIMS AND INSTEAD ENABLE THEM TO TAKE PART IN INFLUENCING AND SETTING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA. THE INCREASING GULF AND MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD MUST BE BRIDGED. BUT IT REQUIRES BOTH SIDES TO WORK IN TANDEM TO CLOSE THE CHASM.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

26. INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUES CAN TAKE PLACE AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS ALONG THE "SECOND-TRACK" AT THE NON GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL. THIS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE SUBJECT OF THE

DIALOGUE CONCERNS HUMAN RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES OF DIFFERENT CREEDS AND RELIGIONS. I BELIEVE AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE TAKEN INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE SUCH DIALOGUES.

27. THE NON MUSLIM WORLD, ESPECIALLY THE WEST, MUST BE PREPARED TO DISCARD THEIR PREJUDICES AGAINST ISLAM AND BE WILLING TO ENGAGE IN GENUINE DIALOGUE. AT THE SAME TIME, MUSLIMS TOO MUST BE PREPARED TO BEGIN A PROCESS OF REFORM AND RENEWAL IN THEIR RESPECTIVE MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

28. WE IN MALAYSIA FEEL THAT WE ARE VERY WELL PLACED TO BEGIN THIS JOURNEY OF REFORM AND RENEWAL. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEM WITH OUR MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY WHICH WE CONSIDER AN ASSET THAT WE CELEBRATE. WE MUST BUILD UPON THE TOLERANCE WE ALREADY OBSERVE AND THE INTER-FAITH COEXISTENCE WHICH WE ALREADY PRACTISE IN MALAYSIA. WE WOULD LIKE TO SHOW BY EXAMPLE THAT A MUSLIM COUNTRY CAN BE MODERN, DEMOCRATIC, TOLERANT AND ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE ISLAM CERTAINLY DOES NOT ENJOIN US TO TURN OUR BACKS AGAINST THE REST OF THE WORLD. IN FACT, ISLAM TEACHES US TO FIND SUCCESS NOT ONLY IN THE HEREAFTER BUT ALSO IN THIS WORLD.

29. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT ISLAM HADHARI CAN HELP BRING MUSLIMS INTO THE MODERN WORLD AND INTEGRATE THEM IN THE MODERN ECONOMY. ISLAM HADHARI PROMOTES TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING, MODERATION AND PEACE, CERTAINLY ENLIGHTENMENT.

30. JUST IN CASE THERE IS ANY DOUBT, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO STATE THAT ISLAM HADHARI IS ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH DEMOCRACY BECAUSE ISLAM HADHARI IS ALL ABOUT LIVING PEACEFULLY AND RESPECTING EACH OTHER IN THE SOCIETY. THE APPROACH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES STIPULATED BY JOHN DEWEY, THE DEMOCRACY GURU, WHO IN HIS BOOK, "DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION", SPOKE OF THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE AS REQUIRING THAT "EACH HAS TO REFER HIS OWN ACTION TO THAT OF OTHERS, AND TO CONSIDER THE ACTION OF OTHERS TO GIVE POINT AND DIRECTION TO HIS OWN".

31. AS I HAVE SAID EARLIER, MALAYSIA IS A MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY. I WOULD LIKE TO REEMPHASIZE THAT ISLAM HADHARI IS MEANT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL IN MALAYSIA, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS OR RACIAL IDENTITIES. IT IS CERTAINLY AN EXHORTATION TO THE MUSLIMS TO TREAT WELL AND FAIRLY THEIR NON MUSLIM FELLOW CITIZENS IN ALL THEIR DEALINGS. I HAVE ALWAYS STATED THAT THE APPROACH OF ISLAM HADHARI WOULD BRING EXCELLENCE, DISTINCTION AND GLORY TO ALL MALAYSIANS, MUSLIMS AND NON MUSLIMS ALIKE.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

32. PEOPLE OF GOODWILL, NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, LEARNED SOCIETIES SUCH AS THE ASIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA CAN ALL PLAY A PART TO PROMOTE A CRITICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE NON MUSLIM WORLD. WHILE IT IS NECESSARY ON THEIR PART TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS, MUSLIMS MUST ALSO OPEN UP THE DISCOURSE WITHIN THEIR OWN FAITH. IN THE COURSE OF MEETINGS LIKE THIS IN OTHER PLACES, I HAVE OFFERED MALAYSIA AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR PROMOTING MORE OPEN AND DIVERSE ISLAMIC DISCOURSE. I REITERATE THAT OFFER HERE TODAY. OUR UNIVERSITIES WILL WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD, AND I WELCOME THE ASIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA TO TAKE PART IN THIS ENDEAVOUR AND PROMOTE SUCH A CRITICAL DIALOGUE.

33. I HOPE THE GOVERNMENTS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES WILL, IN TANDEM, MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO NATIONAL POLICIES AND WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES. THE SPACE FOR DEBATE AND DISCOURSE AMONG THEIR PEOPLES MUST ALSO BE EXPANDED.

34. I AM CONFIDENT THAT TRUE ISLAM WHICH IS TOLERANT, CHARITABLE AND WHICH, ABOVE ALL, PROMOTES INTERNATIONAL PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION WILL FLOURISH. MUSLIMS EVERYWHERE DO HAVE AN OBLIGATION NOT ONLY TO BRING BACK THE GLORY OF ISLAM BUT ALSO TO PROMOTE GENUINE COEXISTENCE AMONG RELIGIONS IN THIS WORLD. FRIENDS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD, WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS OR PRECONCEPTIONS, CAN ALSO MAKE APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS GREAT ENTERPRISE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

35. I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE MY REMARKS BY EXTENDING MY BEST WISHES TO YOU, IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE, IN THE WAY MUSLIMS ALWAYS DO WHEN THEY GREET OTHERS, WHETHER FRIENDS OR STRANGERS, AND THEY SAY, "ASSALAM MU ALAIKUM" WHICH MEANS IN ENGLISH, "MAY PEACE BE UPON YOU".

I THANK YOU.