

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA ITEM "STRENGTHENING
MULTILATERALISM AND ADDRESSING SECURITY THREATS" AT HELSINKI
10 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

May I use my first intervention in this Meeting to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Her Excellency Madam Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, Mr. Maati Vanhanen, Prime Minister of Finland and host of the summit, his officials as well as the people of Finland for hosting this meeting and for the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded to me and my delegation during our stay in this beautiful country. I also wish to commend our host for the smooth and efficient organization of this meeting.

2. I would like to intervene and make some remarks about international terrorism and how the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, particularly in Palestine and in Lebanon, is adding fuel to international terrorism.

3. No amount of international condemnation or rejection of terrorism will make any impression on the perpetrators of terror. We need an international conference which can come out with an appropriate definition of terrorism and terrorists. Only then would the international community be able to isolate the problem and deal with the scourge of international terrorism.

4. As a contribution to the fight against terrorism, 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.

5. The task of knowing the terrorists and tracking them down is more difficult than dealing with conventional enemies in the battlefield because the terrorists operate on unconventional battlegrounds. Unpredictability is their greatest ally. We need to establish a system of intelligence sharing to enable exchange of information between national authorities, particularly regarding terrorist travel and financing.

6. We must examine and agree on the root causes of terrorism. It is possible to identify, disrupt, capture or kill individual terrorists but new recruits will take the place of leaders and groups killed or destroyed. We must prevent the recruitment and training of new terrorists by removing the root causes and motivations for terrorism. There is no single solution applicable to all situations.

7. There is also 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 must be singled out only by their acts of terror and nothing else. Terrorists who commit crimes in the name of Islam desecrate the purity of the religion and they are indeed damned in the sight of the Almighty.

8. But we must realize that Muslims all over the world do empathize with the sufferings of their fellow Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon. They see the sufferings in these countries as resulting from external aggression against Muslim countries and persecution of Muslims. They may not be legitimate or acceptable reasons but the terrorists have cited these as excuses for committing their criminal acts. I fear in particular that the recent excesses committed during the attack against Lebanon have added fuel which may increase the intensity of international terrorism and cause them to spread to countries and areas where there are now no terrorist activities.

9. We must also acknowledge that the struggle of the Palestinian people is a legitimate fight for self determination although some have resorted to terrorist practices. Their plight must never be forgotten. Their right to have an independent state living side by side with Israel must be secured. Unless the Palestinian problem is resolved, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

10. The moral of the story is that the international community has no choice but to find peaceful and enduring solutions to the problems of Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and most urgently, Lebanon.

11. The people in Southern Lebanon have become refugees in their own homes, in their own country. The international community, after having been so slow in stopping the destruction of Lebanon by Israel, now has a moral obligation to provide for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of that unfortunate country. The war has ended, the ceasefire has been ordered and the people of Lebanon must be allowed to return to their homes and rebuild their lives in safety. Israel must remove all remaining blockades.

12. On the issue of humanitarian and development assistance, Malaysia will provide them to Lebanon on a bilateral basis in accordance with our own capabilities. On the question of peace and security for Lebanon, Malaysia has offered to deploy 1000 troops for peace-keeping services under the United Nations mandate but has yet to receive a formal invitation from the United Nations to do so.

13. In support of ASEM's efforts in the fight against international terrorism, Malaysia is prepared to host in Kuala Lumpur a seminar to discuss the issues relating to international terrorism to be sponsored by ASEM. I shall request the Centre for Counter-Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur to follow up on this proposal.

Thank you.