

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE IKIM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
"THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC STATES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD"  
AT BEST WESTERN PREMIER SERI PACIFIC HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR  
17 JULY 2007**

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

Y.BHG. TAN SRI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID  
CHAIRMAN, INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING MALAYSIA (IKIM)

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DIRECTOR GENERAL, IKIM

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. ALHAMDULILLAH, ALL PRAISE AND GLORY ARE FOR ALLAH S.W.T., FOR IT IS WITH HIS BLESSINGS AND GUIDANCE THAT WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY.

2. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING MALAYSIA (IKIM) FOR ITS EFFORTS IN ORGANISING THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC STATES IN A GLOBALISED WORLD".

3. WE ARE ALL LIVING TODAY IN A WORLD WHICH IS SUBJECT TO A COMPLEX PROCESS. THIS COMPLEX PROCESS – MARKED BY RAPID ADVANCES IN TRADE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND TRANSPORTATION – IS GENERALLY REFERRED TO BY THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING TERM, "GLOBALISATION".

4. TODAY, THE CRESTING WAVES OF GLOBALISATION ARE CRASHING ON THE SHORES OF EVERY NATION, AFFECTING THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

5. ON ONE HAND, THE EXPANSION OF GLOBAL TRADE HAS BROUGHT WITH IT GROWING PROSPERITY AND WEALTH. THE QUALITY OF LIFE HAS IMPROVED FOR MANY PEOPLE; AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY HAS MADE LIFE MORE CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE IN MANY SPHERES.

6. NONETHELESS, IT IS ALSO INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT GLOBALISATION IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD. GLOBALISATION IS INCREASINGLY BEING BLAMED FOR A HOST OF GLOBAL ILLS, INCLUDING THE LOSS OF JOBS AND UNFAIR TERMS OF TRADE. THIS UNHAPPINESS HAS BEEN MANIFESTED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS, INCLUDING THE UPROAR IN AMERICA OVER THE LOSS OF JOBS, ANTI-GLOBALISATION PROTESTS IN SEATTLE AND SYDNEY, AND THE STALLING OF THE DOHA ROUND OF W.T.O. NEGOTIATIONS.

7. AND WHILE GLOBALISATION HAS LED TO MANY POSITIVE OUTCOMES, IT HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCELERATING SPREAD OF MUCH OF THE WORLD'S ILLS. FOR EXAMPLE, RAPID ADVANCES IN GLOBAL TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS HAVE ALSO FACILITATED THE SPREAD OF DISEASE AND EPIDEMICS AROUND THE WORLD. AND FOR MANY NATIONS, THE ONSLAUGHT OF WESTERN CULTURAL ELEMENTS HAS LED TO CONCERNS OVER EXCESSIVE CULTURAL HOMOGENISATION THAT THREATENS TO SUBMERGE LOCAL CUSTOMS AND NORMS. CLEARLY, THERE IS MUCH THAT STILL NEEDS FIXING, AS WE CONTINUE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON NATIONS AND CULTURES.

8. NEVERTHELESS, WE NEED TO REALISE THAT THE PHENOMENON OF GLOBALISATION IS HERE TO STAY. SIMPLY OPPOSING GLOBALISATION – ADOPTING THE ATTITUDE OF WITHDRAWAL, OR TAKING THE PATH OF OBSCURANTISM – IS CLEARLY NOT A WISE OPTION. IN FACT, IT IS NOT AN OPTION AT ALL.

9. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS CLEAR THAT ISLAMIC STATES MUST BE READY TO ENGAGE WITH THE WIDER WORLD. WE MUST BE READY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES THAT A GLOBALISING WORLD OFFERS US. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST ALSO BE PREPARED TO TACKLE THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT GLOBALISATION WILL PUT IN OUR PATH.

10. UNFORTUNATELY, THE REALITY TODAY IS THAT ISLAMIC STATES ARE WOEFULLY UNPREPARED TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION. WHILE MANY NATIONS TODAY ARE FINDING NEW WAYS TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE, MANY ISLAMIC STATES TODAY ARE STILL GRAPPLING WITH BASIC DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES.

11. ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN ISLAMIC STATES LIVES ON LESS THAN TWO U.S. DOLLARS PER DAY. AROUND THE WORLD, MUSLIMS ARE STILL PLAGUED BY POVERTY, ILLITERACY, MALNUTRITION AND DISEASE.

12. JUST AS WORRYING IS THE FACT THAT ISLAMIC STATES DO NOT INVEST ENOUGH IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS, WHICH ARE VITAL FOR A WORLD THAT IS INCREASINGLY DRIVEN BY KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION. IN THE YEARS 2002 TO 2004, ONLY 3.7 PERCENT OF G.D.P. WAS DEVOTED BY O.I.C. COUNTRIES TO EDUCATION. THIS IS IN STARK CONTRAST TO O.E.C.D. COUNTRIES, WHICH INVEST AN AVERAGE OF 5 PERCENT OF THEIR G.D.P. ON EDUCATION.

13. THIS GAP IN EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT EVENTUALLY LEADS TO A GAP IN EDUCATIONAL AND SKILLS ATTAINMENT. FOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES, LOW LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS THEN LEAD ON TO LOWER PRODUCTIVITY, AND HENCE LOWER INCOMES.

14. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT SOME MUSLIM COUNTRIES TODAY ARE IN A STATE OF CONFUSION, AND EVEN DESPERATION. IN FACT, FOR SOME MUSLIMS, THEY HAVE EVEN BEGUN TO SEE GLOBALISATION AS A CONSPIRACY TO UNDERMINE ISLAM. THIS LEADS MANY OF THEM TO ESPOUSE RADICAL VIEWS, AND EVEN COMMIT EXTREMIST ACTS. FOR MANY OTHER MUSLIMS, THEY REMAIN RESIGNED TO THEIR SORRY FATE; DEPRIVED AND DEJECTED.

15. IT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY. FOR MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS, MUSLIM CIVILISATION WAS THE ZENITH OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT. MUSLIMS WERE

THE LEADING PHILOSOPHERS, SCIENTISTS, AND INNOVATORS OF THEIR ERA.

16. EARLIER, I MENTIONED ABOUT HOW THE INTERNET AND AIR TRAVEL LED TO THE RISE OF GLOBALISATION. WE OFTEN FORGET THAT MUSLIMS, THROUGH THE SPREAD OF EMPIRE, GAVE BIRTH TO A MUSLIM WAVE OF GLOBALISATION, MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. IN THOSE DAYS, MUSLIM STATES WERE SHINING EXAMPLES OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS, SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

17. THROUGH THE SPREAD OF EMPIRE, MUSLIMS BROUGHT UNTO THEMSELVES GREAT WEALTH AND PROSPERITY. THE NAMES OF DAMASCUS, BAGHDAD, CORDOBA, AND ISTANBUL WERE ETCHED IN HUMAN HISTORY AS GREAT CENTRES OF EMPIRE AND WEALTH. MUSLIM TRADERS BECAME MASTERS OF GLOBAL TRADE, AND MUSLIM SHIPPING ROUTES DREW THE WORLD TOGETHER IN A WAY THAT WAS UNPRECEDENTED AT THAT TIME.

18. ISLAM ALSO GAVE BIRTH TO THE LEADING SCIENTISTS AND INNOVATORS OF THEIR TIME. MUSLIM CIVILISATION CAN PROUDLY NAME DOZENS OF THINKERS AND DISCOVERERS AMONG ITS FAMOUS SONS AND DAUGHTERS, INCLUDING AL GHAZALI, IBN SINA, ABU MUSA AL KHAWARIZMI, OMAR KHAYYAM, AL BIRUNI, AL FARABI, AND AL KINDI.

19. ISLAM WAS ALSO NOTABLE FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROPAGATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, WHICH WAS UNIQUE AMONG THE CONQUERING NATIONS OF ITS TIME. EVEN AS MUSLIM EMPIRE SPREAD FAR AND WIDE, THE RIGHTS OF NON-MUSLIMS WERE PROTECTED, AND THE RIGHT TO PROFESS THEIR OWN RELIGIONS WAS HONOURED. THE NAMES OF UMAR AL-KHATTAB AND SALADIN REVERBERATE THROUGH HISTORY, AS STERLING EXAMPLES OF MUSLIM LEADERS WHO CARRIED THEMSELVES WITH HONOUR, DIGNITY, AND AN ABIDING SENSE OF JUSTICE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

20. AS MUSLIMS, WE NEED TO RECLAIM THIS GOLDEN LEGACY THAT WE HAVE SADLY LOST TO THE AGES. WE CANNOT REMAIN MERE SPECTATORS IN A WORLD THAT IS RAPIDLY MOVING AHEAD; WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES TO ENHANCING OUR COMPETITIVENESS IN ORDER TO PLAY A CONTRIBUTING ROLE TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN CIVILISATION, AS WAS THE LEGACY OF ISLAMIC STATES IN THE PAST.

21. I BELIEVE THAT OUR WAY FORWARD – IF ISLAMIC STATES ARE TO SEEK A WIDER AND MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN A GLOBALISING WORLD – NEEDS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE FOUR IMPORTANT IMPERATIVES.

22. FIRSTLY, WE MUST RENEW THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AMONG MUSLIMS. TODAY, ISLAM IS A GLOBAL FAITH THAT BINDS ARABS, PERSIANS, TURKS, INDIANS, AFRICANS, EUROPEANS, AND MALAYS TOGETHER IN A COMMON BOND; A BOND THAT WAS FOUNDED ON TAWHID AND SUBMISSION TO ALLAH S.W.T.

23. AND YET WE FIND OURSELVES PITTED AGAINST EACH OTHER: SUNNIS AGAINST SHIAS. LIBERALS AGAINST FUNDAMENTALISTS. AND MOST TRAGICALLY: EVEN PALESTINIANS AGAINST PALESTINIANS. CONFLICT BEGETS CONFLICT: AN UNENDING VIOLENT SPIRAL THAT CONTINUES TO CHOKE OUR ABILITY TO PROGRESS AND ADVANCE.

24. MOVING FORWARD, WE NEED TO RENEW OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM. WE MUST EMPHASISE OUR COMMON HERITAGE, AND PUT ASIDE ANY SECTARIAN DIFFERENCES WHICH CAN LEAD TO DIVISION AND CONFLICT.

25. ULTIMATELY, WE MUST BEGIN TO MOVE BEYOND POLITICS AND CONFLICT, AND FOCUS ON THE ISSUES THAT TRULY CONCERN US AS AN UMMAH: TACKLING POVERTY, ELIMINATING ILLITERACY, COMBATING IGNORANCE, AND RAISING THE QUALITY OF LIFE. THIS IS THE IMMEDIATE CONCERN FOR US ALL, AS MUSLIMS.

26. SECONDLY, WE MUST BEGIN TO REVIVE THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF MUSLIM NATIONS. WHEN MALAYSIA TOOK OVER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE O.I.C., ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT WE HAVE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE DURING OUR TENURE IS TO EXPAND AND DEEPEN THE ECONOMIC LINKAGES BETWEEN MUSLIM COUNTRIES; WHAT I CALL PUTTING AN ECONOMIC FACE TO THE O.I.C.

27. AS IT STANDS, MUSLIM SHARE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IS POOR. IN 2005, THE O.I.C.'S COLLECTIVE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (G.D.P) WAS LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL WORLD FIGURE, AND INTRA-TRADE VOLUME (AT ABOUT 800 BILLION U.S. DOLLARS) WAS ONLY ABOUT 6 TO 7 PERCENT OF TOTAL GLOBAL TRADE.

28. WORSE STILL, THE O.I.C HAS RECORDED A DECLINING SHARE OF TRADE WITHIN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FROM A TRADE SHARE OF 47.5 PERCENT RECORDED IN 1980, THE PERCENTAGE HAS FALLEN DRASTICALLY TO ONLY 22.1 PERCENT IN 2001. CLEARLY, THE MUSLIM UMMAH NEEDS TO ENGINEER A MASSIVE TURNAROUND, IF WE ARE TO RECOVER OUR GROUND IN THE ECONOMIC ARENA.

29. I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE ALREADY ON OUR WAY TOWARDS PROMOTING THE REVIVAL OF THE GLOBAL MUSLIM ECONOMY. IN 2005, THE WORLD ISLAMIC ECONOMIC FORUM WAS LAUNCHED UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE O.I.C. WE HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC LINKS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITHIN THE MUSLIM UMMAH, PARTICULARLY AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AS WELL AS YOUNG LEADERS.

30. I ALSO SPEARHEADED A CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME WITHIN THE O.I.C., TO BUILD CAPABILITIES IN COMMERCIALY-DRIVEN AND INCOME-GENERATING PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LOWER-INCOME COUNTRIES.

31. THESE INITIATIVES ARE AMONG THE MANY EFFORTS THAT THE O.I.C. WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERTAKE TO PROMOTE FURTHER TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG THE MUSLIM UMMAH, SO THAT WE MAY FURTHER IMPROVE OUR ECONOMIC CONDITION.

32. THIRDLY, WE MUST INVEST IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS. THE RISE OF EVERY GREAT NATION IS PRECEDED BY THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE. INDEED, RASULULLAH S.A.W. WAS PRESCIENT WHEN HE CALLED ON MUSLIMS TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE ALL THE WAY TO CHINA, 1,400 YEARS BEFORE CHINA'S BURGEONING RISE TODAY.

33. WE NEED TO BUILD A KNOWLEDGEABLE SOCIETY- AN "ULUL AL BAB" COMMUNITY – IN WHICH REAL AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE IS THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE OF ALL HUMAN ACTIVITY.

34. AS FAR AS THE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS CONCERNED, IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THE MUSLIM WORLD IS IN NEED OF HIGH QUALITY UNIVERSITIES, HIGH QUALITY LIBRARIES, HIGH QUALITY RESOURCE CENTRES, AND HIGH QUALITY LABORATORIES.

35. WE MUST BE WILLING TO INVEST TOWARDS EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GREAT SCHOLARS – THE ULAMA' THAT WILL LIGHT OUR WAY – IN EVERY SPECTRUM OF THE SCIENCES. OF THE GREAT SCHOLARS THAT WE ALREADY HAVE TODAY, WE MUST HONOUR THEM AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS. WE MUST BUILD A GENERATION OF MUSLIMS THAT RECOGNISES AND HONOURS KNOWLEDGE. THIS IS THE WAY OF SUCCESS.

36. FOURTHLY, WE MUST ESTABLISH SOCIAL JUSTICE, BASED ON TIMELESS ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES. WE MUST LIBERATE GOOD, HUMAN CAPABILITIES SO THAT EVERY MUSLIM AND INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN CAN POSITIVELY PARTICIPATE IN OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE.

37. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE GOVERNED POSSESS THE RIGHT TO BE GOVERNED AS FREE MEN, AS HUMAN BEINGS GOVERNED BY CONSENT. THIS IS TRUE, NOT ONLY THROUGH THE PRISM OF WESTERN FRAMEWORKS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS ALSO TRUE FROM THE TAWHIDIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE.

38. SOCIAL JUSTICE ALSO DEMANDS THAT WE COMBAT THE SCOURGE OF CORRUPTION. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE GENUINE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CORRUPT GOVERNANCE. CORRUPTION IS A DISEASE: A CANCER THAT EATS AWAY AT THE FABRIC OF HUMAN CIVILISATION, LEAVING CHAOS AND ANARCHY IN ITS WAKE.

39. WE WOULD DO WELL TO HEED TO WORDS OF THE GREAT AL GHAZALI, WHO REMARKED IN HIS "NASIHATUL MULUK":

"KNOW BEYOND ALL DOUBT THAT WHERE GOVERNMENTAL INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION ARE PRESENT, THE PEOPLE HAVE NO FOOTHOLD; THE CITIES AND LOCALITIES GO TO RUIN; THE INHABITANTS FLEE AND EMIGRATE TO OTHER COUNTRIES; THE CULTIVATED LANDS ARE ABANDONED; THE STATE FALLS INTO DECAY; THE REVENUE DIMINISHES; THE TREASURY BECOMES EMPTY; AND HAPPINESS FADES AMONG PEOPLE. THE SUBJECTS DO NOT LOVE THE UNJUST LEADERS, BUT ALWAYS PRAY THAT EVIL MAY BEFALL HIM."

40. AT THIS POINT, IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THESE 4 IMPERATIVES MUST BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN A COHESIVE FRAMEWORK OF ISLAM, WHICH PROMOTES A PROPER APPRECIATION OF ISLAM AS A FORCE FOR PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS APPROACH MAY BE FOUND IN THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM HADHARI, WHICH I HAD INTRODUCED IN MALAYSIA AND PROMOTED GLOBALLY.

41. BY ADOPTING THE MANHAJ – OR APPROACH – OF ISLAM HADHARI, I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN HELP TO RENEW THE SPIRIT AND VIGOUR OF ISLAMIC STATES, PRODUCING A MUSLIM UMMAH THAT IS AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD, YET FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE AQIDAH AND THE INJUNCTIONS OF ISLAM. ONLY THEN CAN ISLAMIC STATES BEGIN TO RECLAIM THEIR LEGACY AS ACTIVE PLAYERS IN THE GLOBAL ARENA.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

42. HOW ARE WE GOING TO ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT THAT THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES – SO BLESSED WITH NATURAL RESOURCES – TODAY REMAIN LARGELY POOR AND BACKWARD? AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO UNDERSTAND THE FACT THAT 1.6 BILLION MUSLIMS – WHICH ACCOUNT FOR 20 PER CENT OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION – TODAY HAVE FAILED TO DEVELOP INTO A PROPORTIONATELY PRODUCTIVE FORCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY?

43. CLEARLY, THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE FOR PRESENT DAY MUSLIMS IS TREMENDOUS. HOWEVER, PLAYING THE ROLE OF A GLOBAL PLAYER IS NOT SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW TO MUSLIMS. WE HAVE PLAYED THAT VERY ROLE, CENTURIES AGO. AND I BELIEVE WE HAVE IT WITHIN OURSELVES TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN A GLOBALISED WORLD ONCE MORE.

44. ON THAT NOTE, WITH THE RECITATION OF BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM, IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE OPEN THE IKIM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC STATES IN A GLOBALISED WORLD.”

THANK YOU.