

**SPEECH BY**  
**YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI**  
**"THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD: DEFUSING THE DEFINING**  
**TENSION OF OUR TIMES"**  
**AT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, LONDON**  
**23 JANUARY 2007**

-----

1. FEW WILL DISPUTE THE FACT THAT THE DEFINING TENSION TODAY IS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD. SURE, THERE ARE OTHER TENSIONS AS WELL – JAPAN AND CHINA; JAPAN AND THE TWO KOREAS; RUSSIA AND UKRAINE; INDIA AND PAKISTAN; THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA AS WELL AS VENEZUELA; AND THE MANY CONFLICTS IN AFRICA.

2. THERE ARE TENSIONS WITHIN NATIONS AS WELL, IN THE WEST AND ELSEWHERE – HERE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM; SOMALIA; SRI LANKA; CHINA; RUSSIA; MYANMAR; THAILAND; AND THE PHILIPPINES.

3. BUT NONE OF THESE TENSIONS ARE AS PROFOUND OR AS FAR-REACHING IN THEIR GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES AS THE TENSION BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD TODAY.

4. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT THE TENSION BETWEEN WESTERN COUNTRIES AND MUSLIM NATIONS WAS THE DOMINANT TENSION. WHEN MUSLIM ARABS EXTENDED THEIR SWAY INTO EUROPE IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURY, DURING THE CRUSADES OF THE ELEVENTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURY, AND WHEN THE OTTOMANS OCCUPIED PARTS OF EASTERN EUROPE IN THE FOURTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, THEY EMERGED AS THE DEFINING TENSIONS OF THEIR ERA.

5. NEVER BEFORE HOWEVER, HAS THE TENSION BEEN AS PERVASIVE OR AS EXTENSIVE. WHEREAS ONCE THEIR AWARENESS AS "THE WEST" AND "THE MUSLIM WORLD" WAS ILL-DEFINED, THE TWO GROUPS ARE MORE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR IDENTITIES NOW. THE SHRINKING OF THE PLANET AND THE UBIQUITOUS PRESENCE OF MODERN MEDIA HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS.

6. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT ARE THE OTHER FACTORS. IT SO HAPPENS THAT AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY THE AREAS OF FRICTION BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD HAVE GROWN AND HAVE BECOME DOMINANT. WE COALESCE AND COLLIDE ON MANY FRONTS. NOT ALL OF US, NOR TO THE SAME DEGREE, BUT SUFFICIENT TO REGISTER CLEAR FAULT-LINES.

7. BOTH WESTERN AND MUSLIM NATIONS DENOUNCE THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, BUT WE SOMETIMES HAVE DIFFERENT TAKES ON IT. WE BOTH CONDEMN TERRORISM, BUT MANY OF US DISAGREE ON ITS DEFINITION, ASSOCIATION AND APPLICATION.

8. OUR VIEWS AND SENTIMENTS COLLIDE MOST PROFOUNDLY OVER THE OCCUPATION BY NON-MUSLIM FORCES OF THE MUSLIM DOMAINS OF PALESTINE, IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN. MANY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD DIFFER TOO WITH THE WAY THE WEST, ESPECIALLY THE UNITED STATES, PERCEIVES AND RESPONDS TO THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES OF IRAN AND SYRIA. THE POUNDING OF LEBANON BY

ISRAEL LATE LAST YEAR MET WITH LITTLE CONDEMNATION IN THE WEST. IN THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD ITS GROSS AND INHUMAN EXCESSES EVOKED OUTRAGE.

9. FEW IN THE MUSLIM WORLD WILL DISAGREE WITH THE WEST ON THE VIRTUES OF DEMOCRACY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE THIRD LARGEST DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD HAPPENS TO BE A MUSLIM COUNTRY. BUT MOST MUSLIMS WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY IS BEING PROMOTED BY SOME COUNTRIES OF THE WEST. THEY ESPECIALLY DISAGREE WHEN WESTERN COUNTRIES PROMOTE DEMOCRACY, THEN DENY AND UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE.

10. THE TENSION BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD IS CONSTANTLY REPLENISHED AND SEARED INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS BY THE RECURRING IMAGES OF VIOLENCE AND DESTRUCTION. OCCASIONALLY THE ATTACKS OCCUR IN WESTERN COUNTRIES OR ARE DIRECTED AT WESTERN TARGETS. MUCH MORE OFTEN THEY OCCUR IN THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD. IN IRAQ IT IS A DAILY HORROR. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS, A TOTAL OF 70,810 CIVILIANS WERE EITHER KILLED OR WOUNDED IN IRAQ LAST YEAR. CAN YOU ENVISION 70,000 CIVILIANS BEING KILLED OR WOUNDED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – OR THE UNITED STATES – IN A YEAR ?

11. THIS GREAT TENSION BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD HAS SOMETIMES BEEN DESCRIBED TO AS A “CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS”. IT IS INDEED TEMPTING TO DO SO. BOTH CONSIDER THEMSELVES AS CIVILISATIONS. ONE IS ESSENTIALLY EUROPEAN OR OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN, THE OTHER ARAB OR ASIAN. BOTH HAVE A HISTORY OF CONFLICT WITH ONE ANOTHER.

12. THIS HISTORY IS BEING REPEATED NOW.

13. BUT TO CAST THE PRESENT TENSIONS AS A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS WOULD BE TO DISTORT THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE CONFRONTATION COMPLETELY. THERE IS NOTHING VIOLENTLY INCOMPATIBLE IN THE TWO CIVILISATIONS THAT MAKE CONFLICT INEVITABLE OR “NATURAL”. INDEED, THERE IS SO MUCH COMMON GROUND IN THE RELIGION, VALUES AND CULTURES OF THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD.

14. MUSLIMS IN FACT SHARE THE SAME PROPHETS THAT JEWS AND CHRISTIANS DO. WE SHARE THE SAME BASIC VALUES – RESPECT FOR LIFE, MORALITY, JUSTICE, FREEDOM, PEACE AND SECURITY, AMONG OTHERS. WE SUBSCRIBE TO THE SAME PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW THAT ARE ENSHRINED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. MUSLIM NATIONS WANT TO PROTECT THEIR SOVEREIGNTY, THEIR LAND, THEIR RESOURCES AND THEIR PEOPLE AS MUCH AS THOSE IN THE WEST DO. AND WHILE WE ARE DIVIDED ON MANY FRONTS, THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD FIND COMMON CAUSE ON SO MANY OTHER ISSUES. WE STAND TOGETHER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND IN THE STRUGGLE TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN CONDITION ACROSS THE GLOBE.

15. I THEREFORE CANNOT CONCUR WITH THE VIEW THAT OURS IS A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS. I WOULD LIKE TO ARGUE THAT WHAT WE ARE BURDENED WITH IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF OUR INABILITY TO CONSTRUCT A GLOBAL ORDER THAT CAN MAINTAIN THE PEACE, RESTRAIN THE STRONG AND PROTECT THE WEAK. IN SUCH A GLOBAL ORDER THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR DIFFERENCES TO OCCASIONALLY

DEGENERATE INTO CONFLICT. IT TEMPTS THE STRONG TO RESORT TO COERCIVE MEASURES, INCLUDING THE USE OF FORCE, TO IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON THE WEAK WHEN CONVENIENT OR NECESSARY. THE WEAK RESORT TO FORCE WHEN SO INCLINED OR WHEN NECESSARY, WITH THE WEAPONS AND TACTICS OF THE WEAK. IN EXTREME CASES NATIONS INVADE AND ATTACK EACH OTHER, SEIZE TERRITORY AND RESOURCES, AND SUBJUGATE OR EVICT THE LOCAL POPULATION.

16. INDEED, ALL THE GREAT CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS WELL AS THE PRESENT ARE THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS SITUATION. THE CONFLICTING PARTIES MAY HAVE A DISTINCT NATIONAL, CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS CHARACTER. THEY MAY DECLARE THAT THEY FIGHT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SPREAD CIVILISATION OR THE WORD OF GOD. THEY MAY MOBILISE THEMSELVES ALONG IDEOLOGICAL OR RELIGIOUS LINES. BUT AT HEART THE CONFLICTS ARE DRIVEN BY THE IMPULSE FOR POWER, TERRITORY AND RESOURCES, AND BY RESISTANCE TO THIS. THERE IS INDEED A CLASH OF FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS.

17. THINK OF THE CONFLICTS OF YESTERYEAR IN EUROPE, PURPORTEDLY BETWEEN PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC. THEY WERE ACTUALLY PERPETRATED BY ROYAL FAMILIES FOR FAMILIAL INTERESTS, OR BY SECTARIAN GROUPS FOR THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. EVEN THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM WERE ESSENTIALLY MATTERS OF CONQUEST, LAND AND LARGESSE. EUROPE'S COLONISATION OF THE REST OF THE WORLD, SOME OF IT DONE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION AND SOME IN THE NAME OF CIVILISATION, WAS REALLY FOR CONTROL OVER TERRITORY, RESOURCES AND TRADE.

18. EVEN THE SLAUGHTER OF BOSNIAN MUSLIMS BY CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX SERBS IN MORE RECENT TIMES WAS NOT A RELIGIOUS OR CIVILISATIONAL MATTER. THE BOSNIAN MUSLIMS DID NOT THREATEN TO IMPOSE ISLAMIC LAW, AND THE ORTHODOX SERBS WERE NOT ACTING IN PURSUIT OF CHRISTIAN VALUES. IT WAS A CONFLICT BORN OUT OF THE DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE AND THE THIRST FOR POWER.

19. LET ME MOVE ON TO THE DEFINING TENSION OF OUR TIMES, THE CLASH BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD. MANY IN THE WEST WOULD IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL POINT AS THE AL-QAEDA'S TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 2001. IT PROMPTED THE UNITED STATES TO EMBARK ON A COURSE THAT TOOK IT FROM A "WAR" AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM TO THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN. THEN CAME THE INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF IRAQ, WITH HELP OF MILITARY FORCES LARGELY FROM THE WEST. THIS IN TURN LED TO A SHARPENING OF THE CONFLICT WITH IRAN AND SYRIA OVER SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE IN IRAQ. THE UNITED STATES ALSO LAUNCHED WHAT IT CALLED THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE AND THE PROJECT ON MIDDLE EAST DEMOCRACY. BOTH WERE AIMED AT PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION.

20. THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERROR WON THE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE MUSLIM WORLD. THE OTHER ACTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, ATTRACTED LITTLE SUPPORT. INSTEAD THEY WIDENED THE RIFT BETWEEN MANY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST.

21. IF FOR MANY IN THE WEST THE DEFINING MOMENT IN THE CLASH BETWEEN THE WEST AND MUSLIM WORLD WAS THE AL-QAEDA ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD THE CRITICAL POINT OCCURRED MUCH EARLIER. IT

OCCURRED WHEN ISRAEL WAS CREATED OUT OF ARAB LAND WITHOUT THEIR ACQUIESCENCE, WHEN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIANS WERE DISPLACED FROM THEIR HOMELAND. MOST IN THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD EVENTUALLY ACCEPTED THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL. BUT THE ENSUING CONFLICT, IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST ARE PERCEIVED TO BE PARTIAL TO ISRAEL, REMAINS THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL FACTOR DIVIDING THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE WEST.

22. THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD ARE FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY THE EXISTENCE OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR EXTREMISTS AND MILITANTS ON BOTH SIDES. BOTH SIDES HAVE THEIR QUOTA OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR FUNDAMENTALISTS, EVANGELISTS AND BIGOTS. THEY SHARE A SIMILAR PROPENSITY OF RESORTING TO MILITARY FORCE AND VIOLENCE AS THE SOLUTION TO PERCEIVED PROBLEMS. THEY POSSESS A PROCLIVITY TO CAST THEIR OWN CAUSE AS JUST, AND TO DEMONISE THE OTHER.

23. THAT OUR DIFFERENCES ARE NOT OVER CULTURE OR CIVILISATION ARE ALSO BORNE OUT BY THE FACT THAT NEITHER SIDE IS MONOLITHIC AND UNITED ON ALL ISSUES. SOME ARAB STATES ASSISTED THE WESTERN-DOMINATED COALITION WHICH INVADED IRAQ. SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PROTESTED AGAINST THE SAME INVASION.

24. THE PICTURE BECOMES EVEN CLEARER AT THE LEVEL OF PEOPLE AS DISTINCT FROM GOVERNMENTS. PEOPLE ARE FREER TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES THAN GOVERNMENTS WHO MUST BE MINDFUL OF THE DICTATES OF REALPOLITIK. AS MANY RESPECTED POLLS OF GLOBAL OPINION HAVE SHOWN, OFTEN THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE FROM BOTH THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD SHARE THE SAME VIEW REGARDING LEADERS AND THEIR POLICIES. CULTURE OR CIVILISATION DOES NOT SEEM TO INFLUENCE THEIR VIEW OF WHO ARE THE VILLAINS, AND WHO THE HEROES.

25. THUS AS I SURVEY THE ISSUES OVER WHICH THE TWO SIDES CLASH, I CANNOT BUT CONCLUDE THAT OURS IS NOT A CONFRONTATION OF CULTURES, RELIGIONS OR CIVILISATIONS. THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR, HOWEVER MUCH ELEMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DIVIDE WOULD LIKE US TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS. WHAT PITS US AGAINST EACH OTHER IS THE PURSUIT AND AGGRANDISEMENT OF POWER, AND OPPOSITION TO IT; THE DESIRE TO DOMINATE AND IMPOSE ONE'S WILL, AND RESISTANCE TO IT; THE USURPATION OF LAND AND RESOURCES, AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IT; AND THE SLAUGHTER OF THE LIVES OF INNOCENT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, AND OUR OUTRAGE AT THIS.

26. THE QUESTION IS WHAT CAN WE DO, TOGETHER OR SEVERALLY, TO MODERATE THE TENSIONS AND CLOSE THE DIVIDE? THE ANSWER IS QUITE OBVIOUS. WE MUST ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT MOST ALIENATE AND ANTAGONISE US. WE CANNOT AVOID GIVING THE GREATEST PRIORITY TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE OF PALESTINE. IT IS, AS I SAID, THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL FACTOR DIVIDING US. IF WE ARE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE JUSTLY AND EQUITABLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.N. RESOLUTIONS AND RELEVANT DECISIONS, MUCH OF THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL DISAPPEAR.

27. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ISSUE OF PALESTINE CAN BE RESOLVED EXPEDITIOUSLY IF ONLY WE ARE PREPARED TO ACT AS GENUINE AND HONEST BROKERS IN THE MEDIATION OF THE CONFLICT. WE MUST BE ABLE TO ACT IMPARTIALLY AND WITH EQUAL FIRMNESS ON THE CONTENDING SIDES. WE MUST MUSTER THE POLITICAL WILL AND MOBILISE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO ENFORCE THE 1967 BORDER EQUALLY ON BOTH PARTIES. WHEN WE HAVE SECURED WITHDRAWAL AND FULL ADHERENCE TO THE 1967 BORDER, IT WILL BE EASIER TO FOLLOW UP ON THE OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE U.N. RESOLUTION.

28. IRAQ IS NOW THE OTHER GREAT IRRITANT AND OBSTACLE TO BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD. INDEED, WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WILL BE MORE POPULAR, EVEN WITH THEIR OWN PEOPLE, IF THEY CAN REVISE THEIR POLICIES AND REHABILITATE THE SITUATION IN IRAQ. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE WILL PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ ONCE PEACE HAS BEEN RESTORED.

29. THE THIRD IMPORTANT ISSUE THAT WE SHOULD TACKLE IS TERRORISM. I AM MORE OPTIMISTIC OF COMMON PURPOSE AND CONCERTED EFFORT ON THIS FRONT. TERRORISM IS PERHAPS EVEN MORE A THREAT TO SOME MUSLIM COUNTRIES THAN IT IS TO WESTERN COUNTRIES OR INTERESTS. WHERE TERRORISM IS ESSENTIALLY DRIVEN BY DOMESTIC FACTORS AND HAS A DOMESTIC AGENDA, IT HAS LITTLE IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS. BUT WHERE IT IS LINKED TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE AL-QAEDA, THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD MUST WORK TOGETHER TO COUNTER THE THREAT. WE ARE IN FACT ALREADY DOING THIS TO A LARGE EXTENT.

30. THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM IS TRULY GLOBAL. IT TRANSCENDS THE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE WEST AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES. WHERE IT IS FOUND WANTING, IT IS NOT FOR A LACK OF WILL BUT DUE MOSTLY TO LIMITED CAPACITY AND RESOURCES.

31. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MILITANCY AND TERRORISM WILL BE MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL IF WE ARE ABLE TO MAKE EFFECTIVE PROGRESS WITH REGARD TO THE ISSUES OF PALESTINE AND IRAQ. MUCH OF THE RESISTANCE AND MILITANCY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AS WELL AS TERRORISM, WILL BEGIN TO SUBSIDE. HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH WILL DISBAND THEIR MILITANT WINGS WHEN PALESTINE IS LIBERATED. PALESTINIANS CAN THEN LEAD A DIGNIFIED LIFE IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH CAN CONTINUE TO EXIST AS LEGITIMATE AND PEACEFUL POLITICAL PARTIES.

32. HOSTILITIES BETWEEN SOME COUNTRIES IN THE WEST AND IRAN AND SYRIA SHOULD ALSO DECLINE WHEN THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS RESOLVED AND THE SITUATION IN IRAQ RETURNS TO NORMAL. NEITHER TEHRAN NOR DAMASCUS WILL BE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH, OR SUPPORTING SECTARIAN RESISTANCE AND MILITANCY IN IRAQ AS ALLEGED. THE ONLY ISSUE THAT SHOULD REMAIN TO BE PEACEFULLY RESOLVED IS THE NUCLEAR ISSUE INVOLVING IRAN.

33. A CERTAIN LEVEL OF TERRORISM WILL CONCEIVABLY PERSIST FOR SOME WHILE, BECAUSE THE TERRORISTS OF TODAY ARE THE PRODUCTS OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE. BUT THEY WILL BE ROBBED OF A CAUSE. SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR THEM WILL DECLINE. TERRORISM THAT IS DRIVEN BY DOMESTIC

CONDITIONS AND THAT PURSUES A DOMESTIC SECTARIAN AGENDA WILL REMAIN, BUT IT WILL BE RID OF ANY ANTI-WESTERN IMPULSE. THERE WILL BE NO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.

34. THE FOURTH AREA WHERE WE SHOULD BE DEVOTING OUR ENERGIES IS REDUCING THE INFLUENCE OF THE FORCES OF INTOLERANCE, EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY IN OUR RESPECTIVE BODY POLITICS AND SOCIETIES. WE USUALLY RECOGNISE VOICES OF EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY ONLY ON THE OTHER SIDE. EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY IN OUR OWN BODY POLITICS AND SOCIETIES ARE OFTEN NOT REGARDED AS SUCH. INSTEAD THEY ARE VIEWED AS RESPECTABLE AND PATRIOTIC VOICES THAT HAVE THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AT HEART. THEY BECOME INTEGRAL AND IMPORTANT PARTS OF OUR POLITICAL CULTURE.

35. THESE FORCES CAN IN FACT CAUSE GREAT HARM TO OUR INTERESTS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. THEY URGE ADVERSARIAL RATHER THAN COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THEY ARE QUICK TO COUNSEL THE USE OF COERCIVE POLICIES WITHOUT ADEQUATELY EXHAUSTING OTHER OPTIONS. MORE DANGEROUSLY, THEY ARE QUICK TO COUNSEL WAR AND THE USE OF FORCE.

36. THE INFLUENCE OF THE FORCES OF EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY CAN BE EVEN MORE PERVASIVE IN SOME MUSLIM SOCIETIES. SOME OF THEM PREACH A SEVERE AND INTOLERANT BRAND OF ISLAM THAT REJECTS THE PURSUIT OF MATERIAL WEALTH. THEY KEEP MUSLIMS IN A STATE OF UNDER-DEVELOPMENT AND BACKWARDNESS. THEY PREACH INTOLERANCE OF OTHER FAITHS. THEY FORBID FRATERNISATION WITH NON-MUSLIMS. THEY DENY WOMEN A PLACE OF DIGNITY IN SOCIETY. A FEW OF THEM DISTORT THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM AND THE MEANING OF JIHAD. THEY INCITE VIOLENT ATTACKS AGAINST NOT ONLY FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE HARMED MUSLIMS, BUT ALSO INNOCENT CIVILIANS AS WELL.

37. IT IS INCUMBENT UPON US ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DIVIDE TO REIN IN THE EXTREMISTS AND MODERATE THEIR INFLUENCE UPON POLICY AND SOCIETY. THIS WILL HELP US BUILD A MORE HARMONIOUS AND PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT IN OUR OWN COUNTRIES AND A MORE HARMONIOUS AND PEACEFUL COMMUNITY INTERNATIONALLY.

38. IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND, AND TO FOSTER THE GREATER DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIMS AND MALAYSIANS, THAT I HAVE INTRODUCED WHAT I CALL ISLAM HADHARI, OR CIVILISATIONAL ISLAM TO MY FELLOW MALAYSIANS. ISLAM HADHARI DEMONSTRATES THE COMPATIBILITY OF THE NOBLE VALUES AND INJUNCTIONS OF ISLAM WITH THE DEMANDS OF HEALTHY MODERNITY.

39. IT ESTABLISHES A BALANCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL PURSUITS. IT AFFIRMS FAITH IN GOD. AT THE SAME TIME IT EMPHASISES THE MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE VIGOROUS PURSUIT OF DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH. IT ENVISIONS A PEOPLE WHO ARE FREE AND INDEPENDENT, AND WHO VALUE MORAL INTEGRITY. IT CALLS UPON GOVERNMENT TO BE JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY, AND TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL INCLUDING WOMEN. IT ALSO CALLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS.

40. I AM CONFIDENT THAT MALAYSIA, WHICH IS ALREADY NOTED FOR ITS TOLERANCE, MODERATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMMITMENT TO PEACE, CAN BE A POSITIVE EXAMPLE FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD.

41. IN THE EXTERNAL SPHERE AS WELL, I HAVE SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH MALAYSIA AS A CONSTRUCTIVE FORCE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT. AS THE CHAIR OF THE 57-NATION ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, MALAYSIA HAS TAKEN THE LEAD TO TRANSFORM THAT BODY. WE WANT TO CHANGE IT FROM A FORUM THAT SPENT MUCH OF ITS TIME ON POLITICAL ISSUES AND RHETORIC, TO BECOME AN INSTITUTION THAT ENGAGES IN CONCRETE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

42. MALAYSIA HAS ALSO INITIATED JOINT PROJECTS WITH A NUMBER OF MUSLIM AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN AREAS WHERE WE CAN BE OF BENEFIT TO THEM, SUCH AS IN THE OIL PALM INDUSTRY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE MORE FORTUNATE MUSLIM COUNTRIES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST THOSE LESS FORTUNATE.

43. I WOULD LIKE TO END BY THANKING THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS ON ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES. THOUGH THE PRESENT IS RATHER DEPRESSING AND GLOOMY, I LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE WITH GREAT HOPE AND CONFIDENCE. THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD ARE BOTH GREAT CIVILISATIONS. GREAT CIVILISATIONS CAN LEARN TO LIVE WITH ONE ANOTHER, SO THAT THEY MAY FLOURISH TOGETHER.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.