

**By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR**  
**Venue : KUALA LUMPUR**  
**Date : 10-11 FEBRUARY 2006**  
**Title : CLOSING REMARKS AT THE CONFERENCE "WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM? WHO SPEAKS FOR THE WEST?"**

The Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Haji Tun Abdul Razak,  
Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia

H.E. Mohammad Khatami  
Former Presiden of Iran

His Eminence Raisul Ulama  
Mustafa Ceric  
Grand Mufti of Bosnia Herzegovina

H.E. Dr. Mustapha Tlili  
Founder-Director, Dialogues: Islamic World-U.S.-The West,  
New York University

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Afternoon.

Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah Almighty, by whose grace and blessings we have now come to the end of our discourse on the subject Who Speaks for Islam, Who Speaks for the West. May peace be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad, his family, his pious and true followers.

2. I am delighted that IDFR had been involved in hosting this Conference which I hope was able, in the last 2 days, to discuss in a very candid and frank manner a subject of such importance by creating understanding and respect amongst the Muslims and the West. Our sincere intention, is to identify the common factors that could bind us together even though we acknowledge there are differences.

3. The objective of gathering scholars, thinkers and practitioners is undoubtedly for the sole purpose of creating an atmosphere of understanding and respect as well as goodwill among us which would be able to cement mutual tolerance and harmony amongst us. This then would become the bridge as referred to by the Prime Minister yesterday in his opening address in which all of us are to assume the role of bridge builders that could establish trust and confidence within our respective communities.

4. This second track activity can also be considered as one of the cornerstones of confidence building measures. What we must avoid at all costs is the clash of cultures or civilizations. This could be done through freedom of choice and democratic practices without the strong imposing their power on the weak.

5. Our struggle for understanding, trust, respect and goodwill is a joint one. I strongly believe it has to be premised on knowledge as this is a struggle of the minds of men and women to overcome ignorance and prejudices.

6. I do hope we will be able to learn and apply the experiences and lessons of the past in deciding what is right and wrong for the attainment of justice and freedom.

7. I am confident that the 2 days of discussions had produced constructive and beneficial results. What is clear in my mind is that we need to consciously overcome the current climate and environment of distrust and prejudices. No doubt you could play the role of facilitators and moderators to dispel and to correct any imagery of Islam as the enemy or is the threat that need to be dealt with aggressively or that Islam is inconsistent with democratic practices.

8. We must address the real problem faced by the global society by propagating justice, equity and fairness amongst men. Our real enemy is hunger, poverty, illiteracy and disease.

9. I am glad to note that the Prime Minister's address yesterday had formed a basis for active and fruitful discussion among the participants. I believe that the views contributed by His Excellency Mr. Mohamad Khatami, former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the dinner address had also further enriched our discourses.

10. In debating the issues brought forth, we have strived to understand each other from our differing perspectives. It is imperative for us to work out executable ways to spread this mutual understanding and create better public awareness. Without action on our part, our intention to bridge this divide is not attainable. We must work to find common grounds of tolerance and acceptance for both the Muslims and the West as this will minimize the possibilities of open physical conflicts that arise from insecurity and ignorance.

11. However, the irony of the misconception of Islam by non-Muslims has also resulted in a stronger interest to know more about Islam. This is indeed an opportunity for us to present Islam in its true form. Conferences such this would be an excellent way in achieving that goal. Muslims must turn to the true teachings of Islam enshrined in the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet SAW, which does not advocate violence, discrimination and moral degradation but instead champion the cause of justice and equality to its highest degree.

12. We must endeavor to foster greater understanding and tolerance, giving focus and attention on the noble universal values and ideals of Islam as expounded by the approach of Islam Hadhari. These values and ideals if instilled with understanding and responsibility will create a peaceful and harmonious society filled with moral principles essential to the balanced development of civilization especially in the existing world brimming with cross cultural misunderstandings and conflicts.

13. We are indeed honoured to have the presence of the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak, to share with us his thoughts on some of the current issues that have been discussed throughout the two days of the conference. His presence this afternoon shows his keen interest on the subject.

14. In conclusion, I wish to express my utmost gratitude to our co-organisers and sponsors of this Conference and to all of the participants, for sharing their thoughts and views. Initiatives such as this deserve praise as it seeks to address issues which affect us all.

15. On that note, I now have the honour to call upon the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak to deliver the closing address.