



28th

ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE

2-4 JUNE 2014, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by

The Hon. Dato' Seri MOHD NAJIB Tun Abdul Razak
Prime Minister of Malaysia

SPONSORS



Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Good Evening and Salam 1 Malaysia.

MS Clara Joewono,

Vice Chair Board of Directors Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Tan Sri Dato' Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan

Chairman, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa

Chief Executive, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good evening. I have the honour to represent the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Razak, to deliver this Keynote Address, and to officiate the opening of the 28th Asia-Pacific Roundtable. **The Honourable Prime Minister sends his warmest greetings and expresses his regret that he is unable to join you at this year's Roundtable as he is away from the capital on official duties.**

Distinguished Participants,

2. I would like to **congratulate ASEAN-ISIS and ISIS Malaysia for the success of the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, which is now in its 28th year.** I am also delighted to note that a recent survey conducted by the **University of Pennsylvania has ranked the Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR) as among the top twenty think-tank conferences in the world.** This is a commendable achievement and speaks volumes about the traction that the Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR) has gained within policy and academic circles. I am confident that the APR will remain an important feature in the calendar for many years to come, contributing significantly to the discourse on regional and global foreign policy, security and strategic issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Today, the role of norms, rules and institutions has become increasingly important in shaping the world in which we live. They provide the necessary balance between moral force and values on the one hand, and brute force and military might on the other, in the conduct of relations and settlement of disputes.

4. Imagine a world where institutions, rules and norms are ignored, forgotten or cast aside; in which countries with large economies and strong armies dominate, forcing the rest to accept the outcome. This would be a world where, in the words of the Greek historian Thucydides **████████████████████** **'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'.**

5. Fortunately we don't live in such a world. Our world is one in which institutions, rules and norms are generally developed, nurtured and respected. The 21st century offers hope for stability, peace and prosperity for all. In an interdependent world where the asymmetry of power is less pronounced, big and small countries can compete peacefully in the marketplace of ideas, innovation and trade. This is a world where a nation of some 30 million people, like Malaysia, **can be ranked among the top twenty-five trading nations in the world, number six in terms of ease of doing business and number 12 in terms of attracting investments**. And Malaysia's success can be replicated by any country that has the right approach and appropriate policies.

6. The observance of rules and norms and commitment to institutions do not necessarily negate the concerns that states have about their defence and security. The fact that Asia overtook Europe in arms spending for the first time in history in 2012, and has maintained its upward trajectory since, suggests that military might remains an important factor in regional and global affairs.

7. The legitimate right of a state to its defence and security has to be recognised. However, it is important for the increases in defence spending and arms build-up in Asia to be embedded within a cooperative and peaceful framework that provides adequate assurances and does not threaten the security of others.

8. Malaysia and its ASEAN partners have placed much emphasis on building institutions, rules and norms especially in the current on-going efforts to realise the ASEAN Community. Institutions and rules are the driving force of our efforts to promote greater interdependence and broader and deeper cooperation between and among the nations of this region. It should be recognised that while much has been accomplished, there is still a lot to be done.

9. But I remain confident that we will realise the ASEAN Community. Because South East Asian nations not only want to be independent, strong and economically vibrant. They also want peace, prosperity and predictability. They want to be respected as friends and partners. They wish to strive for better lives, honour and dignity for their people.

10. Our aim is to have a region where nations respect each other while observing rules and norms, and where honour and dignity are manifested by peaceful intention, visionary policies and good leadership. We aspire to a region where the strongest guarantees of peace and prosperity lie in nations working together – not against each other. Institutions and processes such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ADMM, the ADMM Plus and the East Asia Summit (EAS) embody our aspirations for, and efforts to build, a stable and peaceful Asia, the Pacific and beyond.

Distinguished Participants,

11. **On 1 January 2015, Malaysia will once again undertake the historic responsibility of chairing ASEAN.** This honour comes at an important juncture in the organisation's history, with the beckoning of the ASEAN Community. The year 2015 will also mark the 10th anniversary of the East Asia Summit, which had its historical beginnings here in Kuala Lumpur.

12. When ASEAN leaders met in Bali in 2003 and concluded the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, they drew on a vision of a united, prosperous and progressive community. We are mindful that there is still a lot of work to be completed. The construction of a community will be an evolving project that will be continued by generations to come. Malaysia will seek to lay as well as strengthen the necessary foundations during its chairmanship in 2015.

13. All the efforts exerted by ASEAN and the long-standing support of our dialogue partners and friends will be an exercise in futility if the foundations of the community are constantly placed under stress. Economic cooperation is an important component of the ASEAN community-building effort and has usually received the bulk of attention, particularly from the media. But it is also important for us to make greater progress in the political-security and socio-cultural pillars of the ASEAN Community. The three pillars of the ASEAN Community are mutually supportive of each other. Moving forward in one can only be sustainably achieved through adequate progress being made in respect of the others.

14. The efforts to build the ASEAN political-security community has to be intensified through the continued promotion of confidence and trust among member states. In this regard, **I would like to express Malaysia's strong commitment towards the recent Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Defence Cooperation towards a Peaceful and Prosperous ASEAN Community.**

15. This is a significant step forward in strengthening the political-security pillar of the ASEAN Community. Peace, security and stability in this region has been one of the key prerequisites for rapid economic development among ASEAN member states. It is only with the assurance of peace that it would be possible for this region to attract investments, encourage innovation and create jobs for its peoples. And for peace and stability to prevail, ASEAN would also require the cooperation of others, in particular its strategic and dialogue partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. One issue that would feature in any discussion on regional security is the South China Sea. At the recently concluded ASEAN Summit in Naw Pyi Taw, the ASEAN

Foreign Ministers issued a statement on the Current Developments in the South China Sea. This statement is a reminder and a call to ASEAN, as much as it is for other engaged parties, on the urgent need to address the issues related to the South China Sea in a measured and calm manner.

17. The rule of law must reign supreme. We must hold steadfast to the principles of non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. There should not be any action taken to further aggravate the situation and increase tensions. The on-going activities relating to the full and effective implementation of the Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the on-going negotiation on / for the establishment of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) are steps in the right direction. These talks need to be concluded in the very near future. I am concerned and deeply worried that measures taken by the engaged parties to affirm their declared rights, no matter how incremental and small they may be, will only serve to complicate matters and would not be in anyone's interest in the long run.

18. I am confident that the bonds of friendship that binds us are stronger and more durable than the differences that divide us. We should not stray away from the proven path of dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. I remain hopeful that good sense will prevail.

Distinguished guests,

19. In the early hours of 8 March 2014, Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 disappeared from the radar screens of Kuala Lumpur Air Traffic Control. Since then, our thoughts and prayers have been with the families and friends of the crew and passengers of the aircraft. I share their anguish and pain.

20. The disappearance of MH370 has led to the most extensive search operation in aviation history, involving 26 countries. All of them responded swiftly and without hesitation to Malaysia's request for assistance, for which we are deeply grateful.

21. The breadth and depth of cooperation in the search has been as unprecedented as the disappearance of the aircraft itself. The region's military forces and law enforcement agencies have exchanged huge amounts of data and information to facilitate the search, even to the extent of releasing sensitive raw data from military radars, thereby putting the search effort above national security priorities.

22. Never before have we witnessed such intense cooperation between so many countries in this region. Although MH370 has not yet been found – **and I am confident that we will eventually find it – our joint and coordinated efforts have already shown the value of harnessing the collective strengths of countries in times of need.** Such a

spirit of cooperation would be equally beneficial to our collective response to other forms of disaster in the future.

23. The habit of cooperation needs to be maintained and enhanced across a whole range of issues, not just for the purposes of search and rescue. Our common security depends on our ability to work together as closely as we can. The foundation is already laid. It can be further strengthened through the building of institutions, rules and norms within the accepted regional architecture.

Ladies and gentlemen,

24. Countering the threat of terrorism, for example, requires a great deal of intelligence-sharing and coordination among our security agencies. Almost three weeks ago, **the Royal Malaysian Police detained a foreign national believed to be involved in planning terrorist attacks on foreign consulates in India, including the US Consulate General in Chennai.**

25. Information from the Malaysian Special Branch enabled the Indian authorities to detain three suspects believed to be members of the same terrorist network in late April. It was only through the strong and sustained cooperation between the security agencies in Malaysia and India that we managed to foil a series of potentially disastrous terrorist attacks. This incident, once again, highlights the importance of international co-operation.

Distinguished Participants,

26. For the sake of our security, we should stay vigilant against any and all threats. Malaysia has always held firm in its belief of a nuclear-free world. As we continue to work towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons, **we call upon the nuclear weapons states to accede to the protocol of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.**

27. Malaysia is doing its part to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through its endorsement of the Proliferation Security Initiative. Malaysia will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with like-minded countries to build a world where our children will not have to live under the dark cloud of the threat of such weapons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

28. I strongly believe that Asia has a bright future and can indeed live up to its full potential. But, at the same time, we must continue to earnestly address and resolve issues that may stand in the way of a vibrant, prosperous and peaceful Asia. This conference should be able to contribute important ideas towards meeting that objective.

29. I am heartened that goodwill remains strong throughout the region. With our collective effort and resources, we can overcome the most difficult and intractable of issues. The region will continue to prosper and progress as long as we remain committed to nurturing and strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the countries and peoples of the region by observing the rules and norms and institutions that we have developed and built together.

30. Allow me to offer my heartiest congratulations to ASEAN-ISIS and especially ISIS Malaysia for convening the 28th APR. I trust that you will have a lively and productive discussion in the days ahead. **I am pleased to declare open the 28th Asia-Pacific Roundtable.**

Thank you.