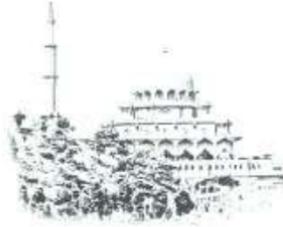


Foreword



THE VOLUME before us consists of a collection of speeches Malaysia Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made on *Islam Hadhari* (Civilisational Islam) on various occasions both in Malaysia and abroad. Of the total of 12 speeches, four were delivered in Malaysia, two in Saudi Arabia, and the other six in Britain, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Australia and Germany – all within a period of 15 months. *Islam Hadhari* was publicised for the first time in the 2004 Manifesto of the National Front (Barisan Nasional) Government for the tenth general election held in March 2004. Abdullah won a landslide victory in that election and became the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia with the biggest mandate ever obtained as a Malaysian Leader. Abdullah articulated his ideas on the subject initially in his speech on “*Islam Hadhari* and the Malay Agenda,” at

the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) General Assembly on September 23, 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. In that speech, which is the most detailed chapter in this book (pp. 1-29), the Prime Minister spoke at length on the Malay predicament, issues of poverty and disequilibrium in the distribution of wealth and opportunities among the ethnic groups of Malaysia. He called for a change of mindset among Malays, asking them to attempt that change within the framework of *Islam Hadhari*. Since its approval by UMNO and the Barisan, *Islam Hadhari* became a policy programme of Abdullah's administration that seeks to integrate Islamic principles on governance and people's welfare in a multireligious society as I elaborate below.

About a week after UMNO General Assembly, Abdullah delivered his second most comprehensive address at the Oxford center for Islamic Studies in the United Kingdom entitled "Islam, Malaysia and the Wider World" (pp.31-51), where he underscored, among other issues, the urgency of international conflict resolution among Muslim nations. In his capacity as the standing chairman of both of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and that of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Prime Minister proposed Malaysia as a centre of conflict resolution. It was a rare combination and a unique show of trust in Malaysia for it to be chosen simultaneously as the chair of both the OIC and NAM.

The foregoing two speeches mark the genesis of *Islam Hadhari*, articulating its principles and objectives, and provide a comprehensive coverage of issues facing Malaysia and the Muslim nations. Abdullah also offers his insight for a constructive engagement and dialogue between the Islamic

nations and the west under the auspices of the United Nations. This was necessary in view especially of the turbulent course of events in recent years that clouded the climate of understanding between the Western and Islamic nations.

Throughout the book, Abdullah speaks on issues of poverty, disease, illiteracy and capacity building in necessary human and financial resources in the OIC countries. These are also the themes particularly of the two chapters of this book respectively entitled “The Challenges Confronting Muslim Nations” (pp. 65-75) and “The Capacity-Building Programme for OIC Countries” (pp. 95-104) where he rightly calls the campaign against poverty and disease a veritable *jihad* for contemporary Muslims. In yet another chapter entitled “Self-Reliance in Vaccine Production in the Islamic World” (pp. 129-133), the Prime Minister gives a graphic account of the scale of infant mortality in vast numbers due to measles, malaria, respiratory infections, etc., and emphasizes the vital role of science and cooperation in vaccine production among the OIC countries.

Abdullah repeatedly conveys the message that good governance and accountability constitute at one the most pressing and the most challenging tasks facing the Muslim nations, and that progress on this front can contribute significantly to the reduction of poverty and violence on the global scale. Good governance is a recurrent theme in this book, which also devotes two separate chapters to this subject entitled “*Islam Hadhari* and Good Governance” (pp. 105-115) and “Ethics and Integrity” (pp. 135-145) respectively. The Prime Minister informs his audiences abroad of the launch by his administration of an extensive anti-corruption campaign in

Malaysia. He denounces terrorism in all forms and calls on the international community, the media and NGOs to cooperate on the pressing issues of world peace, security and violence especially in Palestine and Iraq.

Abdullah speaks with a clear voice imbued with optimism, commitment and sincerity in his appeal for a common future and predicament of the human race. Almost throughout this book, he takes for his audience not only the Malaysians, nor even Muslims, but people of all faiths and races across national and geographical divides. In almost every campaign that he proposes for the OIC countries, he pledges the cooperation and commitment of his own country and administration to stand ready for service to the *ummah* and play an active role therein.

In his discourse on *Islam Hadhari*, Abdullah shows that it is entrenched in mainstream Islamic principles and doctrines. He cites passages from the Quran and *hadith* as well as referring to a large number of principles including *fardu 'ain* (personal obligation), *fardu kifayah* (collective obligation), *ijtihad* (original thinking and interpretation), *maqasid al-shariah* (goals and objectives of *Shariah*), *tajdid* (renewal), *islah* (reform), *amanah* (trust), *'adl* (justice) and *itqan* (excellence in the workplace). His calls for cooperation in the quest for peace and development are buttressed by the Islamic principles of *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *taawun* (cooperation) and unity within the *ummah*, that is, the faithful community in Islam. Abdullah urges Muslims to wage a resolute campaign against corruption by recourse to *muhatabah* (accountability and self-interrogation) and campaign against the agents of corruption (*mufsidoon*).

Yet on more than one occasion Abdullah calls for the advancement of a more open Islamic discourse within the *ummah* to engage in self-criticism and renewal. In his speech in Oxford entitled “Islam, Malaysia and the Wider World” (pp. 31-51), he stated specifically that “Malaysia will invite Muslim Scholars from all over the world to initiate the process of intellectual reform and renewal.” He added, however, that this will not be easy to achieve and one may well expect initial opposition along the way.

The Prime Minister delivers his message elegantly while focusing on substance, indeed on the most challenging issues of our age, and everywhere he conveys a sense of togetherness with his audience such that aspires engagement and positive sentiment. The reader will note his skill and statesmanship in delivering a heavy message with a light touch thanks to his clarity, humility and conviction.

This book will serve to provide an authoritative source on *Islam Hadhari* and Abdullah’s ideas on the subject. Without a handy collection of statement as we now have on this volume, ambiguity and confusion in the understanding of *Islam Hadhari* could be expected to persist. It is equally important to have a full collection of all the original statements of the Prime Minister now available in the English language for the benefit of international reads of *Islam Hadhari*. A convenient translation of this volume in Malay and Arabic languages would be advisable.

I would like to recount at this juncture something my own experience relating to *Islam Hadhari*. I was a panellist in early November 2005 at an international conference in Bahrain on “Muslim Democrats and Islamic Governance,” organised by

the Arab chapter of the World Economic Forum. This was a gathering of corporate leaders in the Arab World and I was briefed by the organizers that they were somewhat apprehensive of the idea of Islamic state and its possible effects on their businesses. In my address I said to my large audience that I will not speak about the Islamic state to them but will instead talk about Islamic values in governance, and I said that this was the approach Malaysia's Prime Minister had taken in his articulation of *Islam Hadhari*. It was time for us perhaps to focus on meaning and substance rather than names and labels and approach Islamic governance through the values for which it stands – which is what really matters in any case. I then explained *Islam Hadhari* in some detail and I am pleased to say that the response I had was reassuring. Many participants in that conference asked me personally to send them more information on *Islam Hadhari*. A book such as this would have been an ideal response to that request than the miscellaneous writings I was able to send to them.

My initial response, after reading the full text, was a sense of quiet optimism over what I thought would make a welcome difference. My longstanding involvement in the study of Islam has made me sharply aware of the gap that had developed, in the aftermath of colonialism, between Islamic teachings and the prevailing pattern of governance. Under the spell of Western constitutional ideas and principles, Muslim government leaders spoke of Islamic values but often found themselves overwhelmed by a different legacy. During the decades of Islamic revivalism in the latter part of the 20th century, the rhetoric of change developed to an advanced level without any breakthrough in the familiar pattern of governance. In *Islam Hadhari* I

saw a different message, one of a carefully blended composition of principles of practical relevance by a Muslim leader, with a voice of his own, that commits his government to integration of Islamic welfare ideas into a policy programme.

I have also been aware that the much-talked-about Islamic state has in the past been almost totally dominated by a dogmatic mentality and an attachment to Islam that hardly extended to addressing the welfare needs of the people. By contrast, *Islam Hadhari* is distinguished by offering “A Model Approach for Development and Progress.” It is an action-oriented programme of impeccable grounding in mainstream Islamic principles. The fact that a Malaysian leader offers it also gives credibility and substance to Malaysia’s profile as a showcase and a moderate influence among the world Muslims. Yet there are challenges within the *ummah* such that one can hardly take for granted that *Islam Hadhari* would be well-received at face value by Malaysia’s neighbours or the Arab world. People are obviously hesitant until they are persuaded by tangible results of a new idea and programme.

The Prime Minister sets for himself a challenging agenda of momentous significance and has naturally raised expectations among the Muslims and non-Muslims of Malaysia and the outside world for tangible results. The prospect of constructing a “just and trustworthy government,” only one of the ten principles of *Islam Hadhari*, is by itself a momentous challenge. Abdullah needs a receptive public to help him in his noble task of stewardship to Malaysia that would also elevate Malaysia’s profile as an example of good governance. Malaysia’s success in this initiative would mark an historic

contribution it would have made to Islam and its place in the conduct of modern government.

It is difficult to find faults with this book, but if one such can be noted, it is a measure of inevitable repetition that occurs as a result of introducing *Islam Hadhari* to different and unrelated audiences. Thus the ten principles of *Islam Hadhari* are cited on more than one occasion in the book. That nevertheless does not detract from the substance and quality of this thought-provoking volume which merits to be read as widely as possible.

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February 2006