



**TEKS UCAPAN  
YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM  
PERDANA MENTERI**

**SEMPENA**

**MAJLIS PENUTUP 'PERSIDANGAN ANTARABANGSA  
ABDULHAMID ABUSULAYMAN: SUMBANGAN  
INTELEKTUAL DAN REFORMASI PENDIDIKAN'**

**22 FEBRUARI 2023**

**AUDITORIUM UTAMA,  
UNIVERSITI ISLAM ANTARABANGSA MALAYSIA**

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Taala Wabarakatuh* dan  
Salam Sejahtera.

*Alhamdulillah, Nahmaduhu Wa Nusalli Ala Rasoolilah Kareem.*

**Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak,**

Rektor Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM);

**Dr Hisham Altalib,**

Presiden *International Institute of Islamic Thought* (IIIT) UIAM;

**Muna AbuSulayman;** dan

Saudara-saudara yang dimuliakan.

1. *Alhamdulillah, dalam masa yang singkat, saya kembali lagi ke Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) ini.*
2. I have returned compelled by Dr Hisham Altalib, my colleague. Today, I have to focus only on the Budget for this Friday and normally all sane and wise Finance Minister will not leave office one or two days before they present the Budget, but with colleagues like Dr Hisham Altalib and the brothers or Muna AbuSulayman, they do not give me a choice.
3. Abdulhamid of course, is a dear brother. His contribution to this university is immense. It is proof by his lovely wife, daughters and friends that he is very focused to university, he is married to the university, obsessed about its development.
4. He gave me very little choice but to say yes to most requests, which was difficult for me as the Finance Minister because I usually said no. Nevertheless, our conversations were beneficial because it is not a question of development and concept development. Our goal is for this university to be recognized as a Center of Excellence, fully grasping the notion of university development. We brought in Farid Mustafa as an architect, some very renowned scholars,

various exchanges and Abdulhamid was instrumental in all this. Because of his character, a tough Saudi and Makki, he would be able to then partly persuade or partly compare and I of course am very proud of the achievements.

5. Tan Sri Dzulkifli is aware of my personal feelings. To make sure that the University returns, we must take further action. I am aware that in recent decades, there has been less attention paid to the university's development and maintenance issues. We need to do more, and I plan to talk with the Minister of Higher Education about this. Yes, a university isn't just a university; rather, as Dr. Hisham Altalib stated, a university is a center of excellence for imparting the Addabani Rabbi Fa-ahsana Ta'dibi. There are certain adjustments made by Abdulhamid that, in my opinion, will be extremely beneficial for many years to come.
  
6. He tends to challenge us in some of this traditional mode of thinking. We are all Muslims. At the time, we had a strong commitment to Dakwah and the call of Islam. We also had to face the problem of internal dynamics and contradictions within muslim societies. I recall each challenge from the beginning: the difficulty in comprehending Islam and the propensity to adhere to what he called the fiqh mentality, which determines and propagates Islam in a purely legalistic

manner. Undoubtedly, it is significant, but not in the sense of fostering comprehension to promote constructive discussion and debate.

7. In my speech a few weeks ago, I did make reference to the second important point, which is our comprehension of Sultan Salahuddin Al Ayyubi's experiences and difficulties. He is often regarded as a magnificent warrior and leader who succeeded in seizing control of Baitul Maqdis. Abdulhamid, however, expressed doubts about the idea. According to him, if you don't comprehend the first ten years of Salahuddin's reign, the years of consolidation, dakwah, and education, you can't achieve success or conquer.
  
8. We are making most centres of education and education centres as Centres of Excellence. Through this, you create that momentum to give that sense of confidence, to be able to fortify the centres in the realm of kingdom and authority of Salahuddin, and then move forward. In ten years, he was able to engage with Muslims, Christian kingdoms around that region, to be able to focus on domestic issues, education and understanding, and the religious zeal to struggle for Islam.

9. This has been largely ignored. That is why I think in our discourse now, talking about change and struggle, we tend to ignore the importance of education, the understanding and creative thinking. In the process, we focus purely on the legalistic issues, on what we term as the higher ideals and in the process, of course, failed in many of our attempts to affect change in some societies.
  
10. Now let me conclude. Abdulhamid is of course, known to be a man who is impatient, who actually wants to change, who constantly questions some of the more widely accepted Nord norms. That is why I popularized this '*asmatul aqal*', because there is a crisis of the muslim mind and quite persistent to read together with Sheikh Baha Jabir al-Alwani's '*Islah al Fiqr*', a series of provocative ideas, challenging us to think and reflect and be more creative.
  
11. I am pleased to know that our colleagues in the spring team and university have been quite productive in their work publishing new literature, some of exceptional quality and this is Dr Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali's latest publication, "Bias in Popular Culture". Dr Anas is here, please stand out and make yourself known.

12. It goes without saying that we have read extensively on orientalism, which is regarded as a tour de force in the field. One well-known scholar of Jewish descent, Martin Kramer, felt that this was a devastating blow to academic scholarship in the West and that adverse science orientalism was more powerful in academia than the Iranian Revolution because it really challenged some of the conventional wisdom regarding prejudice, hatred toward the other, and anything that was not Western or Liberal West. This included not only Islam and the Arabs but also Chinese, Indians, Latin Americans, and Africans.
  
13. José Rizal, a renowned writer who I believe was a precursor of the ancient Renaissance, began writing about the indolence of the Filipino people here in this region in 1890. According to the Spanish colonial mindset, traditional or Malay societies are inherently lazy and have no interest in trade or economic advancement, which explains the laziness of the Filipino people.
  
14. The myth of the lady native was then published by Syed Hussein Al-Attas, who created this amazing work. I bring up these books because it is really enriching to have Abdulhamid, his colleagues, and the Dubai team here. We are still debating and arguing. Almarhum Dr. Isma'il Raji al-

Faruqi, I recall that we met shortly before the next piety conference in Reston, Virginia, and that was when I was already a junior minister.

15. Given my knowledge of him and his tendency to be harsh and unforgiving toward his students, I felt compelled to attempt to take copious notes and comprehend the book's arguments. Coincidentally, I had the opportunity to meet him on the first morning in Washington, DC, before you could ask me what I thought of Ernest Gellner's portrayal of Ibn Khaldun. I cannot, as a reputable politician, avoid the topic because it is so narrowly focused. Thus, that is customary. It is a blessing that we have that. Unfortunately, from what I gather, I had to struggle because they left my house at around 11.15 p.m., and I had to try to struggle with the book, which made them very tired. Wan Azizah said, you have to work tomorrow. I therefore struggled through the book in the two hours that I had, not quite finishing it, but I did get to read the first draft of the book.
16. To my mind, one of the most fascinating and thorough studies on Islamophobia and, beyond that, biased popular culture, where he masterfully articulated a challenge regarding today's youth. I had hoped we could have taken more time to read the book carefully and write a thoughtful



critique. However, as this will be my only opportunity for the next week or two, I felt it was important to highlight this excellent book. Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, thank you, and congratulations.

Terima Kasih.

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.