

DERADICALIZATION = SECULARIZATION

News:

The International Conference on Deradicalization and Countering Violent Extremism (IDC) 2016 was recently held in Kuala Lumpur. The conference was attended by all ASEAN ministers and nine ministers from strategic partner states namely the United States, France, Australia, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Japan, China and Italy. The conference saw representatives from each country presenting measures that have been and are being taken by them in their fight against terrorism within their respective countries. In order to handle radical religious groups and terrorists, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, at the opening of the conference explained that Malaysia had enacted the Security Offences (Special Measures) (SOSMA) law in 2012 to protect the safety of citizens from terrorist activities. In addition, the government had also introduced legislation for the National Security Council (NSC) which had recently been approved at the House of Representatives aimed at curbing activities that could threaten national security. And recently, the Malaysian government are carrying out efforts to make Malaysia the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communications Centre (RDC3) which will receive a RM200 million budget from the Malaysian government and using models which had been adopted by the United States and the UAE.

Comment:

The term 'radical' is not a term that is foreign in that it has been used to give a negative connotation to individuals or groups who held on to a certain view point of life. This has been used extensively by the West to brand various Muslim individuals and groups. However, the term is a relatively new term now highlighted by the Malaysian government. The word 'radical' is a word related to or affecting the fundamental nature of something (far-reaching or thorough). Based on this definition, 'radical' in its original sense is a word that is 'neutral', that is, it is not inclined to something that is positive or negative. Hence, whether the word connotes something positive or negative will depend on how it is coupled. For example, if a Muslim is known to be 'a radical Muslim', this means that the person is a Muslim who truly believes in Islam correctly and thoroughly and indeed this should be the attitude of a true Muslim. In other words, if a Muslim only partially implements Islam or views that the solutions of Islam is not exhaustive, this means that he is not 'radical'. However, the term has been successfully 'deflected' by the West and the enemies of Islam to give a connotation synonymous with extremism and terrorism. This propaganda has been effective when directed towards any individual or groups that are not in line with the ideology and interests of the West. The term 'radical Islam' is then used systematically against those who oppose Western ideologies and systems (capitalism, secularism and democracy) and works towards replacing them with Islam.

Angel Rabasa, one of the staff of the Rand Corporation had said in a Symposium at the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in Tokyo (2008) that a moderate Muslim is a Muslim who accepts pluralism, feminism, gender equality, democratic process and humanitarian and civil society. Andrew McCarthy in the National Review Online on August 24, 2010 clearly states that anyone who defends the Shari'a cannot be regarded as a moderate. Consequently, the term 'radical Islam' is popularized in a very negative context which then led to the proliferation of the term 'moderate Islam'. With this term, a western brand of Islam is created. Its connotation is contrary to 'radical Islam' in that this term is applied to those who are willing, in their capacity as Muslims, to accept the Western way of life. Indeed, this is the intention of the non-believers. They will not be pleased as long as we do not follow their way of life. The western way of life is a secular way of life where the Deen is separated from daily life. The Deen, in the secular framework, should not interfere in the affairs of life in the sense that the laws of Allah cannot be used to manage daily life. Within the secular scheme, Islam is a personal affair. Islam does not play a role in the management of society and the state. Hence, any Muslim who wants to implement the Islamic law in its totality (establish Islam in his personal life and establish Islam as a state ideology under the Khilafah), will be casted as an 'extremist' and 'radical'. The former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had mentioned that Islam is an evil ideology (BBC News, July 16, 2005) because; (1) it aspires to eliminate Israel; (2) it aspires to make the Islamic Shari'a as the source of law; (3) it aspires to establish the Khilafah; (4) it is contrary to liberal values. Without doubt, under this context, Muslims who continue to adhere to Islam will be deemed a 'radical', if not a 'terrorist' and those who follow the values and ideas of the West will be deemed a 'moderate'.

In reality, the deradicalization project is introduced to tame those who aspire to implement Islam in its totality. Terms such as "Islamic State", "Caliphate", "jihad" and more will be described with in very negative connotation and their meanings will be heavily distorted. Similarly, symbols and rituals of Islam such as the flag of the Prophet (al-Liwaa') and the banner of the Prophet (al-Rayah) will be linked directly to terrorism and radicalism. Deradicalization will also aspire to push Muslim or Islamic movements to continue to work within the democratic framework, obey the laws of man and deny Allah's Law, obey the colonial constitution and place the constitution higher than the Quran, further split Muslims with nationalistic tendencies and not struggle for the Khilafah (Caliphate). This is what the West wants, and this will be among the main efforts of the deradicalization project – to push Muslims away from Islam and secularize the Muslim Ummah. Muslims should realize that the deradicalization agenda is to keep them away from the true teachings of Islam and dishearten the carriers of Da'wah from upholding this complete way of life. It is infinitely better for us to be 'radical Muslim' who prays and works for the implementation of Islam in its totality than to become a 'moderate Muslims' who prays but follows the whims and desires of the West.

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