SEMENYIH: Malaysia and Britain are on the same page with regard to moderation being a key element in eradicating extremism and achieving global security.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak pointed out that it was important to tackle terrorism in the minds of the people first.

“I’m against the use of the word ‘war’ against terrorism because war is just using military might, and we can’t put down extremism, fanatism and terrorism just by using military might,” he said when delivering his Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) Foundation special address at the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, here, yesterday.

Najib spoke in the presence of his British counterpart, David Cameron, who is on a two-day visit to Malaysia.

The Malaysian leader took the opportunity to drive home the point that Islam was inherently and fundamentally a moderate religion which rejected extremism and respected other faiths.

Najib noted that despite being at the fringes, extremists were the ones who were making the loudest voice and tried to occupy centre stage.

“If we the moderates don’t speak up and articulate our views, then people on the fringes and extremists will occupy centre stage. This is where we’ll lose out.

“And that’s why we’ve called for the GMM so that moderates across all faiths will speak up, articulate and drown out the voice of the extremists,” he said.

Meanwhile, Cameron said he was keen to share the GMM platform with Najib since the latter’s visit to London last year where he delivered a speech on this matter at Oxford University.

He pointed out that democracy and moderation went hand in hand, and Malaysia had proven this to be true.

Cameron said democratic foundation was the greatest threat to extremism, and also a vital foundation for moderation.

While stressing that terrorism was not linked exclusively to any one religion or ethnic group, the British leader said Islam and Islamic extremism were not the same.

“They are completely different and we need to be clear on this point. Islam is a religion of peace observed by over one billion people. Islamist extremism is a political ideology.

“It’s vital to make this distinction between religion and extremist political ideology because time and again community has equated these two,” he said.

Cameron observed that there was a need for the world to be clear that the real divide was between political moderates and political extremists.

“Let’s be clear about the reality of the threats we face from Islamist extremists. Terrorist attacks do not represent Islam, and any misrepresentation is a source of great anguish to the vast majority of Muslims,” he added.

-Bernama
PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak with his British Prime Minister David Cameron (left) during a lecture programme of the Global Movement Moderates Foundation at the Nottingham University, Malaysia campus in Semenyin yesterday.

PHOTO: BERNAMA