

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia

April 27, 2014

The Honorable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia and The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America held a bilateral meeting on 27 April 2014 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The two leaders reflected on the historic nature of President Obama's State Visit to Malaysia, the first Presidential visit in 48 years, and the resilience of bilateral relations between Malaysia and the United States. Both leaders reaffirmed their mutual commitment to further enhance Malaysia-U.S. engagement on issues of bilateral, regional and international importance.

Reflecting on the search for missing flight MH370 which carried passengers and crew from 14 nations, including Malaysia and the United States, the Prime Minister expressed Malaysia's gratitude to President Obama for the United States' unwavering support. Malaysia is heartened by the presence of the United States from day one in the ongoing operations to locate flight MH370. The support received exemplifies the strong ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Recognizing the growing cooperation between the two countries in a wide range of areas, Prime Minister Najib and President Obama decided to elevate the Malaysia-U.S. relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership with the aim of advancing the two countries' common interests and the shared values of the people of the United States and Malaysia. Under the Comprehensive Partnership, both countries commit to further strengthening dialogue mechanisms in key areas including political and diplomatic cooperation, trade and investment, education and people-to-people ties, security and defense cooperation, as well as collaboration on the environment, science and technology, and energy.

Political and Diplomatic Cooperation

The Prime Minister and the President welcomed the increasing high-level interaction between the two countries in recent years, including the numerous Cabinet-level exchanges of visits, and encouraged continued dialogue at various levels. Both sides also committed to reinvigorate the Malaysia-U.S. Senior Officials Dialogue as a key forum to pursue the implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership through regular consultations.

The Prime Minister appreciated the United States' presence in Asia which contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. President Obama reiterated the United States' strong support for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the importance of East Asian regional institutions. President Obama also welcomed Malaysia's upcoming chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015 and expressed confidence that under Malaysia's stewardship, ASEAN would further its regional ambition of economic integration.

The Prime Minister and the President acknowledged the importance of peace and stability for the security and economic prosperity of nations. The leaders exchanged views on recent developments in the South China Sea and affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, including

critical waterways in the South China Sea. The two leaders underscored the importance of all parties concerned resolving their territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful means, including international arbitration, as warranted, and in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The two leaders highlighted the importance of all parties concerned avoiding the use of force, intimidation, or coercion, and exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities.

The Prime Minister and the President reaffirmed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in enhancing mutual trust and confidence amongst all parties concerned and recognized the need for ASEAN and China to work expeditiously towards the establishment of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

The two leaders underscored their commitment to promoting respect for human rights, as well as the importance of a vibrant and independent civil society consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights law. Respect for diversity, respect for the freedom to express different views and practice different faiths, respect for all religions and respect for the rights of all in the populations are essential to healthy and prosperous democracies.

Both leaders welcomed efforts to promote tolerance and inter-faith understanding and counter violence and extremism. In relation to this, the two leaders also appreciated the goals of the Global Movement of Moderates to promote greater understanding and moderation among people of all faiths by expanding government-to-government and people-to-people engagement.

President Obama commended Malaysia's leading role in facilitating the Southern Philippines Bangsamoro peace process that led to the recent signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

Both leaders welcomed the bilateral work agreement on the gainful employment of spouses of embassy and consulate officials which provides benefits for diplomatic families of both sides as well as the host country.

Economic and Trade Cooperation

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama celebrated the strong economic links between Malaysia and the United States, including bilateral trade amounting to U.S. \$40 billion annually. Prime Minister Najib and President Obama applauded the progress made so far in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations. They reaffirmed their commitment to work together to resolve the remaining issues and conclude the high-standard agreement as soon as possible so that both countries' businesses, workers, farmers, and consumers could begin benefitting. Both leaders also discussed the importance of enhancing multilateral cooperation to promote trade, investment and inclusive growth in fora such as ASEAN, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Noting that the United States was the largest source of foreign investment in Malaysia in 2013, the Prime Minister acknowledged the beneficial and significant role of U.S. investors in the development of Malaysia's economy. This close cooperation has resulted in support for Malaysian Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) through linkages between U.S. companies and Malaysian SMEs, sharing technology, promoting innovation and contributing to Malaysia's economic transformation agenda.

The President similarly highlighted the United States' openness to foreign investment, and noted the mutually beneficial nature of Malaysian investment in the United States. The President encouraged Malaysian participation in SelectUSA, a U.S. Government initiative to promote and facilitate inbound business investment and a key partner and support system for potential Malaysian investors, including SMEs, seeking investment opportunities in the United States.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of a strong intellectual property rights regime, to promote innovation and for the mutual benefit of innovators and consumers. Such a regime has already helped support investments in new growth areas including in emerging and high technology sectors as well as high value-added, knowledge-based and skills-intensive industries which should generate more high income job opportunities in both countries and support Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed nation by the year 2020. The two leaders expressed confidence that the ongoing economic reforms in Malaysia and the economic recovery of the United States would accelerate economic growth, opening greater opportunities for trade and creating employment in both countries.

Education and People-to-People

Recognizing people-to-people relations as the foundation of strong bilateral ties, the two leaders affirmed their shared intention to foster better understanding, goodwill and friendship between the peoples of both countries.

Reflecting the Prime Minister and President Obama's shared aspiration to enhance people-to-people interaction first discussed in 2010, the two leaders celebrated the success of the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program. Likening the spirit of the Fulbright ETA program to the Peace Corps program, which ran for two decades in Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib and President Obama announced that the governments of Malaysia and the United States have extended the Fulbright ETA Program for another three years.

The two leaders applauded the network of eight Lincoln Corners in six different Malaysian states and Kuala Lumpur that host hundreds of educational programs and promote connections between Malaysia and the United States. Both leaders also recognized the value of sharing the rich cultural heritages of our two countries through exchanges of displays in art galleries and museums in both countries.

The Prime Minister and President Obama welcomed the establishment of the Malaysia-America Foundation and the exploring of opportunities to establish sister city relationships between the two sides.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama acknowledged that university level linkages between the United States and Malaysia continue to grow. Both sides encouraged the expansion of research and study partnerships between U.S. and Malaysian institutions of higher education.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of youth empowerment, particularly in promoting entrepreneurship, environmental protection, education, and civic participation in Malaysia and across the region, including through such programs as the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC) and activities under the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).

Defense and Security

President Obama welcomed Malaysia's commitment to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with the endorsement of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Statement of Interdiction Principles.

The two leaders reaffirmed the longstanding military-to-military cooperation between Malaysia and the United States which provides a solid foundation for enhancements across a broad front. Both leaders acknowledged the value of continuous dialogue on regional and global security challenges as well as coordination on military matters through the Malaysia-U.S. Strategic Talks (MUSST) and the Bilateral Training and Consultative Group (BiTACG).

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama decided to continue discussions on opportunities for practical future cooperation in the maritime domain, including ways the United States could support the development of Malaysia's maritime enforcement capacity through the provision of training, equipment and expertise.

President Obama applauded Malaysia's troop contributions to peacekeeping in United Nations missions, including in Afghanistan and Lebanon and thanked Malaysia for its successful deployment of a military medical team in Afghanistan. Both sides committed to strengthen cooperation in peacekeeping training under the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and welcomed U.S. support for the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre.

The two leaders welcomed the expansion of ties between the defense industries of Malaysia and the United States, which contribute to Malaysia's economic development. Both sides committed to work further to nurture and deepen defence bilateral engagements, including promoting the interoperability between the two armed forces.

Malaysia and the United States noted with satisfaction the progress in various ongoing scientific sectors, including cooperation to raise awareness and capacity in biosecurity laboratories and research facilities in Malaysia dealing with biological threats. These activities reflect a shared commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda, which seeks to accelerate progress toward a world safe and secure from threats posed by infectious disease.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama expressed a firm commitment towards enhancing cooperation between their two countries in trade and investment. Among the areas of interest are customs administrative matters and to this end would therefore encourage officials engaged in the negotiations to expedite the early conclusion of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement. The two leaders are also committed to work toward finalizing the memorandum of understanding on immigration information exchange.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama also decided to consult on Malaysia's interest in meeting the statutory requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program. As a first step, the United States has committed to provide technical briefings on security requirements and information sharing agreements this year.

Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding on Transnational Crime signed by both sides in 2012, the two leaders look forward to convening the inaugural Joint Working Group Meeting to review the efficiency and effectiveness of our law enforcement cooperation.

The two leaders decided that Malaysia and the United States would strengthen cooperation in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and management, including exploring capacity building initiatives to increase preparedness in handling natural and man-made disasters.

Environment, Science and Technology, and Energy Cooperation

The Prime Minister and President Obama welcomed the active cooperation between Malaysia and the United States in science and technology following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology Cooperation in 2010. Pursuant to the MOU, the leaders noted the establishment of focus areas on biotechnology, marine science, climate studies, conservation science and management under the Joint Committee of Science and Technology.

The Prime Minister highlighted to President Obama the initiatives under the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC), a joint New York Academy of Sciences and Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) forum with a mandate to develop science, technology and innovation strategies to achieve Malaysia's vision 2020.

Malaysia recognized the U.S. Government's tremendous role as an important partner of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI). The Prime Minister conveyed his appreciation to President Obama for United States' contributions of more than U.S \$60 million in technical and financial assistance and capacity building programs to CTI member countries.

Noting the shared visions of the two countries to develop a stronger bio-based economy to ensure sustainable growth, both leaders recognized expanded private sector research collaboration and cooperation in biotechnology.

The Prime Minister sought the United States' support to build Malaysian knowledge and expertise to develop green technology and thanked President Obama for U.S. assistance in creating Malaysia's newly announced green technology development strategy and clean energy cooperation to date under the U.S. Asia Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership.

The Prime Minister and President Obama reiterated a common commitment to the conservation of biodiversity and agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing illegal wildlife trade.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, both leaders pledged their commitment to elevate the Malaysia-U.S. bilateral cooperation to a Comprehensive Partnership that would cover wide-ranging areas for the expansion of trade and investment, security and defense, education, science and technology, energy, and people-to-people relations, for the collective benefit of both countries.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib.

Names: Najib Razak.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Nonproliferation efforts; Asia : Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Asia : South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Commerce, Department of : SelectUSA trade and investment initiative; Commerce, international : Intellectual property law, strengthening efforts; Education : Foreign exchange programs; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Humanitarian assistance programs; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; Malaysia : Economic growth and development; Malaysia : Malaysian Airlines Flight 370, disappearance; Malaysia : President Obama's visit; Malaysia : Prime Minister; Malaysia : Relations with U.S.; Malaysia : Security cooperation with U.S.; Malaysia : Trade with U.S.; Malaysia : U.S. assistance; Malaysia : U.S.

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