

President Obama. Okay. Thank you very much. *Terima Kasih.*

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:32 p.m. at the Perdana Putra. In his remarks, the President referred to King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Queen Tuanku

Hajah Haminah of Malaysia; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Prime Minister Najib referred to Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, a former aide to Malaysian opposition leader Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who brought sodomy and corruption charges against his former employer in 1998.

Remarks at the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia April 27, 2014

President Obama. Well, hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello!

President Obama. *Selamat petang.* [Laughter] I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for bringing me here today, as well as Cheryl Yeoh. Where's Cheryl? She was here just a second ago.

Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. Cheryl. There's Cheryl.

President Obama. There she is over there—[applause]—who's going to be directing the Malaysia Global Innovation and Creativity Center, or MaGIC, and Startup Malaysia.

As Prime Minister Najib indicated, we are here because we have a shared commitment to fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship, especially among our young people. We want you to be able to create things and start your own companies and your own businesses and come up with your own products and services, because that's how our societies grow. And the dreams and talents of these young people help to fuel our economies and create jobs, and they also bring our countries closer together.

So, 5 years ago, when I was in Cairo, I called for a new partnership between the United States and Muslim communities around the world, partnerships where we could focus on the things that matter most in people's daily lives, including jobs and providing for our families. So often, the conversation between the United States and Muslim communities was around security issues, but the truth is, day to day, what people are concerned about is jobs and businesses and improving quality of life for

themselves and their families. And that was not enough of a conversation that was taking place.

So I was proud to host the first Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Washington. Prime Minister Najib, who has been working to empower entrepreneurs here in Malaysia, hosted last year's summit in Kuala Lumpur. And the impact has been phenomenal.

Around the world, we are helping young entrepreneurs connect and collaborate and start their own businesses, serve their communities, tackle global challenges like expanding education and combating climate change, and create this center to turn their ideas into reality. And this center is a direct result of the entrepreneurship summit that the Prime Minister hosted. It's a one-stop shop so young entrepreneurs, they can come here, they can get help with their—to file a patent for their ideas, they can access loans and venture capital, they can get technical training and assistance, and they can get their businesses up and running.

And we just had a chance to see some innovations of some young entrepreneurs that have already been started: an online tool that helps student learn with digital presentations; a very impressive electric gocart; a device that helps diabetics monitor cold sweats so that if they are in need of medical assistance, somebody will be alerted right away. And so this is the kind of entrepreneurship that Prime Minister Najib and I want to encourage. And it's innovation like these that's going to make our lives better and safer and healthier.

These young people here, they're going to be creating all kinds of amazing things when

they get older. And the fact that this center is giving them the opportunity to learn computer coding early on, understanding that computer sciences and IT are going to be one of the keys to future growth, I think is a testament to some outstanding investments by the people of Malaysia and the next generation.

So I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for all his efforts to support young entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. I want to thank all of you for your determination and your

imagination. I'm very excited to see what's going to happen not only with the entrepreneurs here in the future, but these young people and the remarkable things they'll do to help Malaysia grow, help the region grow, and help the world grow.

So *terima kasih banyak* for the good work that you're doing. [Laughter] Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:53 p.m.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall Meeting at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia April 27, 2014

President Obama. Hello, everybody. Well, good afternoon. *Selamat petang.* Please, everybody have a seat. It is wonderful to be here, and it is wonderful to see all these outstanding young people here.

I want to thank, first of all, the University of Malaya for hosting us. I want to thank the Malaysian people for making us feel so welcome. Anita, thank you for helping to moderate.

These trips are usually all business for me, but every once in a while, I want to have some fun, so I try to hold an event like this where I get to hear directly from young people like you, because I firmly believe that you will shape the future of your countries and the future of this region. And I'm glad to see so many students who are here today, including young people from across Southeast Asia. And I know some of you are joining us online and through social media, and you'll be able to ask me questions too.

Now, this is my fifth trip to Asia as President, and I plan to be back again later this year, not just because I enjoy the sights and the food—although, I do—but because a few years ago, I made a deliberate and strategic decision as President of the United States that America will play a larger, more comprehensive role in this region's future.

I know some still ask what this strategy is all about. So before I answer your questions, I just

want to answer that one question: why Asia is so important to America and why Southeast Asia has been a particular focus, and finally, why I believe that young people like you have to be the ones who lead us forward.

Now, many of you know this part of the world has special meaning for me. I was born in Hawaii, right in the middle of the Pacific. I lived in Indonesia as a boy. [Applause] Hey! This is the Indonesian contingent. [Applause] Hey! Yes, that's where they're from. My sister Maya was born in Jakarta. She's married to a man whose parents were born here, my brother-in-law's father in Sandakan and his mom in Kudat. And my mother spent years working in the villages of Southeast Asia, helping women buy sewing machines or gaining an education so that they could better earn a living.

And as I mentioned last night to His Majesty the King and the Prime Minister, I'm very grateful for the Islamic Arts Museum in Malaysia for hosting an exhibit that showcased some of my mother's batik collection, because it meant a lot to her and it's part of the connection that I felt and I continue to feel to this region.

So the Asia-Pacific, with its rich cultures and beautiful traditions and vibrant society, that's all part of who I am. It helped shape how I see the world. And it's also helped to shape my approach as President.