

ASEAN in the center of Asia is a force of stability, prosperity, and peace.

As the Prime Minister mentioned, I'm pleased today that we're elevating our relationship to a new level: a strategic partnership to guide and strengthen our ties for decades to come, including in maritime cooperation. The United States and ASEAN will be closer than ever.

ASEAN plays a vital role in advancing a rules-based order for the Asia-Pacific. I commend ASEAN for working to ensure that all nations uphold international law and norms, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation, and freedom of overflight. And I applaud ASEAN for working to create a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. For the sake of regional stability, claimants should halt reclamation, new construction, and militarization of disputed areas.

I also congratulate my fellow leaders on the formation of the ASEAN Community, which is another major step toward integrating economies and greater regional stability. And as the Prime Minister noted, we are already a major investor in ASEAN. We do an enormous

amount of trade. You will continue to have the support and partnership of the United States.

And I expect that we'll also have an opportunity to discuss the urgency of confronting climate change. ASEAN, like the rest of the Asia-Pacific, is increasingly feeling the effects of warmer temperatures. Almost all the countries here today have submitted their post-2020 climate targets. So, working together, I believe we can achieve an ambitious and durable climate agreement in Paris.

We'll have time to discuss, hopefully, some other issues: educational and scientific exchanges, the work that we are doing to counter violent extremism and terrorists. But our partnership I think has grown stronger throughout these meetings, and I'm looking forward to a very productive session again here in Kuala Lumpur.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia November 22, 2015

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to spend some time with Prime Minister Lee and the delegation from Singapore. As Singapore celebrates 50 years and as the relationship between the United States and Singapore moves into its 50th year, it is wonderful to report that the state of our bilateral relationship is very, very strong.

I think, around the world, people admire the incredible progress that Singapore has made in creating prosperity and opportunity for its people and for being an excellent international partner. And here at ASEAN and previously at APEC, I think we've seen that although Singapore does not have a large population, it punches above its weight because of its wise policies and ability to work with all countries.

Prime Minister Lee and I had an opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues, many of them that were echoed during the EAS summit. We expressed concern about the work we need to do together to counter ISIL and to continue to improve our intelligence and counterterrorism efforts.

We talked about the South China Sea and the importance of upholding the basic principles and norms that have underwritten prosperity and stability in this region for many, many years. We are two of the countries that helped to get TPP over the finish line, and we are both excited about the prospects for creation of jobs and new businesses and new opportunity in both our countries. And we discussed a wide range of multilateral issues, such

as climate change, that are going to require the support of large countries and small if we're going to be able to succeed.

So I want to thank the Prime Minister for the excellent cooperation that we have between our two countries. We're looking to build on it in the future. And as Prime Minister Lee mentioned before the press walked in, one of my goals as President has been to show the consistent engagement of the United States in this region, and it's made much easier when we know we've got outstanding partners like Singapore.

So thank you very much.

Prime Minister Lee. Well, I thank President Obama for making time for this meeting with my delegation. We discussed what President Obama has described to you. But what—the point which I made to the President was that the countries in this region all appreciate America's engagement and participation in the region, its contribution economically, and security issues in terms of the overall strategic balance.

And what matters most to the countries is to know that this will be maintained. The President himself has made six trips to this region, every year attending the ASEAN meeting. And that's greatly appreciated. And it's important to know that this will continue beyond November 2016. The President said, well, that depends who wins the next election. But whoever wins the next election, America has interests in this region, which are enduring and which are worthy of attention and focus to advance them and to continue to be a constructive and strategic player in Asia for many years to come.

President Obama. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Lee. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:56 p.m. at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's News Conference in Kuala Lumpur November 22, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Let me begin by once again thanking the Government and the people of Malaysia for hosting us at the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia Summits. These gatherings are enormous undertakings, but thanks to Malaysia's leadership and incredible hospitality, they have been a great success.

Earlier this week, as I headed to this region, there was a headline in one of our publications back home that asked: "Obama's Asian Distraction?"—question mark. And the premise seemed to be that this region was somehow disconnected from pressing global events. I could not disagree more. This region is not a distraction from the world's central challenges, like terrorism. The Asia-Pacific is absolutely critical to promoting security, prosperity, and human dignity around the world. That's why I've devoted so much of my foreign policy to deepening America's engagement with this re-

gion. And I'm pleased that on this trip we made progress across the board.

With my fellow leaders from Japan, Australia, and the Philippines, I reaffirmed that our treaty alliances remain the foundation of regional security. The United States is boosting our support for the Philippines' maritime capabilities and those of our regional partners. At the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia Summits, a key topic was the South China Sea, and many leaders spoke about the need to uphold international principles, including the freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes. And to make sure we keep deepening our partnership here in Southeast Asia, I invited all 10 ASEAN leaders to the United States next year. I'm pleased they accepted, and I look forward to continuing our work.

On the economic front, we worked with our APEC partners to advance a regional economic