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China's defence package 'attractive proposition'

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - China's proposed bilateral defence package has attracted interest from Malaysia, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today.

The draft package, detailed in a memorandum-of-understanding handed over to armed forces chief Jen Tan Sri Mohamad Zahidi Zainuddin by visiting People's Liberation Army chief of staff Gen Liang Guanglie, contained various aspects concerning the exchange of information, intelligence sharing, staff training, equipment procurement and joint military exercises.

Najib declined to reveal the exact details of the MoU but said that it was attractive and that the Government would study its contents before replying to China.

"We have to take into consideration the vast opportunities proposed by China in education, economy and politics, which I believe will mutually benefit both countries.

"China is especially keen to assist us to expand our defence procurement and manufacturing sectors," Najib told newsmen after a courtesy call from Liang at Wisma Pertahanan in Jalan Padang Tembak.

Najib added that China had thus far participated in deploying its naval vessels on visits to Malaysia, had taken part in exhibitions and also exchanged military personnel, such as defence attaches.

Liang, who is on a six-day visit here from Friday, also called on Mohamad Zahidi and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

His visit includes tours to the Armed Forces Military Academy, Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Putrajaya and historical sites in Malacca.