

Najib gets phone call from Obama
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US President Barack Obama spoke by telephone with Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on Friday, and discussed nuclear proliferation, North Korea and financial regulation, the White House said.

"They discussed the ongoing global economic crisis, and stressed the importance of growth and sound regulatory systems in both their economies," the White House said in a statement carried by AFP.

"The president described US concerns over nuclear proliferation and discussed North Korea and Iran, stressing the importance of implementation of UN Security Council resolutions," the statement said.

"They also discussed ways to contribute to reconstruction and stability in Afghanistan."

The statement did not mention Malaysia's claim that Washington had meted out unfair treatment over its decision to relist the country on a human trafficking blacklist.

The annual "Trafficking in Persons Report", released last week, said Malaysia was failing to comply with minimum standards to eliminate trafficking and "is not making significant efforts to do so".

When asked about the matter today in Kuala Lumpur, Najib revealed that the subject was not brought up during the 20-minute conversation he had with the US president last night.

Obama acknowledges Malaysian leadership?

"No, that was not the subject of the conversation, (as) that would be handled separately," he said, without elaborating.

According to Najib, the "long conversation" he had with Obama sent a signal that the president acknowledges Malaysian leadership and the role it can play in carrying out the responsibility.

"Generally, Obama (also) appreciated Malaysia's contribution and leadership in several issues at national and international level.

"For example, he told me of his intention to restructure the global financial architecture and he said Malaysia has the ability to contribute its idea and leadership in this," he told reporters.

Following the conversation, Najib added that not only does Obama recognise the Malaysian leadership in handling internal affairs, but also when it comes to international issues.

He also said that Malaysia is already a key player in international affairs.

"As of now, we are playing a major role in the global financial architecture and we have voiced out our concerns through Asean regarding North Korean affairs. Meanwhile, we will keep playing our role in handling the Middle East conflict," said the prime minister.

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