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Najib's policies put ties with US at all-time high

THE United States has regarded bilateral ties between Kuala Lumpur and Washington as "the best ever" since Datuk Seri Najib Razak became prime minister in April 2009.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said this was made known to him during meetings with senior US officials throughout his four-day working visit here since June 26.

The officials were from the State Department, National Security Council, US Interior Security Department and the Defence Department.

Among the matters discussed were Malaysia's humanitarian contributions to Afghanistan, the Fulbright English Teaching Assistance programme and visa applications for Malaysian students.

Also raised were regional issues — Malaysia's involvement at the Asean level, East Asia summit, overlapping claims in the South China Sea and negotiations to finalise the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

Describing his visit as fruitful, Muhyiddin said: "We were able to drive home the importance of stronger bilateral and trade relations between Kuala Lumpur and Washington.

"Our participation in the BIO event for the seventh time also showed the importance placed by the government on the development of science and biotechnology."

The luncheon he had with leaders and members of the US-Asean Business Council (USABC) on June 28 also spoke well of Malaysia's success in transforming the economy through the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) initiatives.

Those present included representatives of US companies that have operations in Malaysia, including Intel Qualcomm, Honeywell, Citi Group, AT&T, Ace Group and ConocoPhillips.

USABC, led by its deputy president Marc



Mealy, was briefed on the progress of Malaysia's GTP, ETP and its status in the TPP.

Muhyiddin said USABC representatives had expressed satisfaction over their investments in Malaysia and they also supported the government's transformation programmes.

"They said the programmes were unique and should serve as a model for other countries."

USABC, Muhyiddin said, had proposed that the government send more doctorate students to the US. They also agreed that Malaysian students undergo training at US companies after completing their courses before returning to Malaysia. This would help them gain experience and exposure of working in US multinational companies.

AT&T, meanwhile, told Muhyiddin that they were in the process of applying for MSC-status.

The deputy prime minister added USABC would be sending a group of US businessmen to Malaysia for four days beginning July 19.

"Overall, they were happy with the treatment and support extended by the government."

Muhyiddin also met US think-tank representatives over dinner and discussed issues related to religious extremists and terrorism.

He said the global movement of moderates concept, an initiative by the prime minister to fight extremism, was received positively by the think-tank.

Muhyiddin's visit to Maryland College Park University, meanwhile, paved the way for mutual cooperation between the government and the university in research and agro-biotechnology.