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# Najib, Hagel discuss security issues

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak received a courtesy call from United States Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel here yesterday.

Hagel, accompanied by his chief of staff, Mark Lippert, and the US embassy's charge d'affaires, Lee McClenney, spent 45 minutes with Najib.

Hagel, who arrived on Saturday, is on a three-day visit here as part of his four-nation trip to Southeast Asia.

Hagel, at a joint press conference with Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein at Putra World Trade Centre, said differences or conflicts should be resolved through diplomacy and negotiations. Otherwise, confrontations and provocations could lead to war.

He said it was vital for nations to establish a close working relationship and cooperation, especially in security and defence.

"From such bilateral collaborations, we can further it to regional and eventually a global level.

"This will build a better understanding to promote peace and stability via commerce, trade, counter-piracy and terrorism measures, disaster relief operations, education, intelligence gathering, training and exercises."

"We appreciate Malaysia's anti-crime initiatives, its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

"On our part, we are committed to asserting Malaysia's capability as well as that of other Southeast Asians."

He said the US had planned more than 75 activities with Malaysia, in-



**Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak** chatting with **United States Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel** in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. **Bernama pic**

cluding military exercises, to bolster the country's defence, as part of President Barack Obama's rebalancing focus for the Asia-Pacific.

On the conflict in Syria, Hagel said the US was ready to exercise all options against President Bashar al-Assad's regime for an alleged chemical attack on its citizens.

"Obama is assessing and considering all contingencies and is prepared to use the military option. He understands the risks and consequences on any option taken as the waters are not easy to navigate."

Hishammuddin said Malaysia appreciated US efforts to boost cooperation for defence and security rea-

sons, more so since February's intrusion in Lahat Datu, Sabah.

"We realise the importance of having friends who appreciate our system and are keen to enhance our capabilities. It is important to build trust among governments, agencies and stakeholders to achieve peace and stability."