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Malaysia not being bullied into TPPA negotiations

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia is not being bullied by the United States in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations, both President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak declared.

Najib said Malaysia went into the negotiations on its own accord as Kuala Lumpur was a believer in free trade.

"We were not bullied into it," he said. "I would like to thank President Obama for his understanding of Malaysia's sensitivities in the TPPA

negotiations," Najib said.

"We are working around the sensitivities and challenges, and trying to iron out things with the intention of working out a deal in the near future.

"Trade deals are always complex but we are committed to resolving the remaining issues," he said when asked by an American journalist whether Malaysia was bullied into the negotiations.

Najib said Malaysia was committed to the process of getting the

acceptance of the people on the TPPA.

"There will be winners and losers in the process but the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages of the FTA (free trade agreements)," he said.

Malaysia has continuously highlighted specific concerns and sensitivities in the areas of government procurement, state-owned enterprises, bumiputra issues and environment, among others.

Obama in his reply denied

Washington was bullying Kuala Lumpur saying it was important for everybody not to jump to conclusions before the final agreement.

He said he was being bullied by his own (Democratic) party on the pact while protests against the agreement were due more to "people being fearful of the future or have invested in the status quo".

Obama added that he strongly believed that the TPPA was the right thing as it created jobs and businesses which would benefit coun-

tries like Malaysia that were transitioning from labour-intensive orientation to high-skilled labour-driven.

To a question on more expensive medicine after the TPPA was concluded, Obama said US companies had done extraordinary work in research and development to provide medical breakthroughs that saved lives around the world.

He, however, said all parties in the TPPA had agreed to find a way to make sure medicine would be available to the poor.