

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	23 November 2015

Najib's leadership lauded

NJT-23/11/2015

ADMIRER: Turnbull commends PM for his role in battling terrorism

KUALA LUMPUR

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull yesterday acknowledged the leadership of his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Najib Razak in fighting terrorism, saying the cooperation between the two countries on the issue "has never been stronger".

Following their first meeting, on the sidelines of the ongoing summits here, Turnbull said: "I want to acknowledge the Prime Minister (Najib) for the very strong leadership you have been giving in the battle against terrorism."

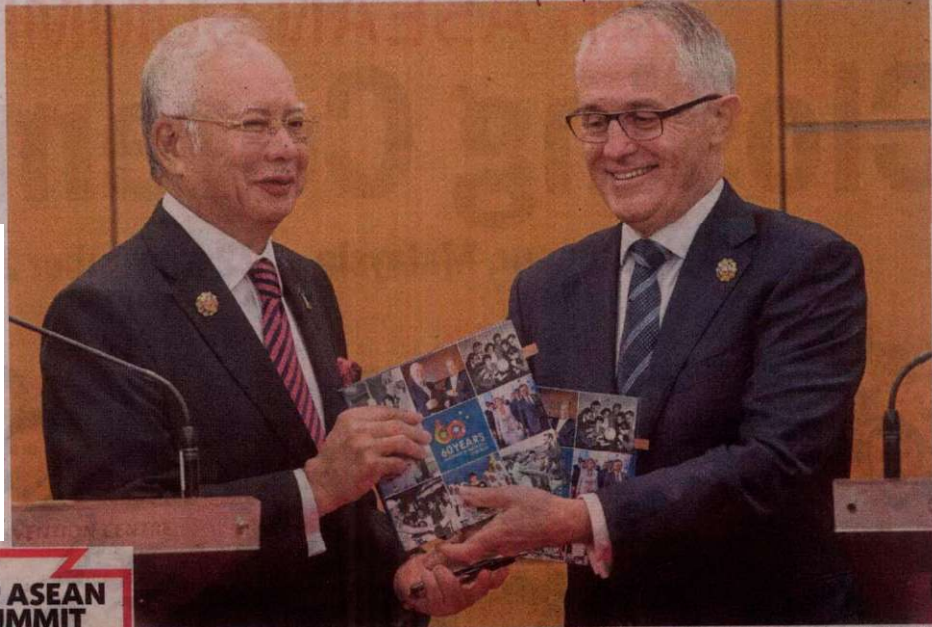
"The leadership you have shown as the head of a large Muslim country has been known around the world. I commend you," remarked Turnbull, who took over as the Australian prime minister in September.

At their bilateral meeting, Turnbull and Najib agreed to elevate Australia-Malaysia ties to a strategic partnership.

The move will strengthen political and strategic engagement between the two nations in developing an understanding of issues in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

Australia and Malaysia, in a joint statement yesterday, emphasised their commitment to strengthen the Asean-Australia Strategic Partnership and allegiance to biennial summits beginning next year.

"The prime ministers affirmed the



Datuk Seri Najib Razak exchanging autographed books titled '60 years Australia in Malaysia 1955-2015' with Malcolm Turnbull in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. EPA pic



importance of the East Asia Summit as the premier regional forum for discussion of strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern. They expressed support for strengthening the East Asia Summit and building up its political-security agenda."

Najib and Turnbull will continue to collaborate on regional matters of common interest, including through the Asean Regional Forum, Asean Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Asia-Europe Meeting and

the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

The statement said the formation of the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank was well received by the two nations.

Ministers from both countries stressed the importance of promoting a rules-based international order, respect for international law, ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight of the seas, and unimpeded lawful commerce, it added.

"They expressed concerns about recent and ongoing developments in the South China Sea, which have eroded trust and confidence and increased tensions. They agreed on the critical importance of refraining from the use of threat or force, of exercising self-restraint and avoid-

ing actions that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability in the sea."

Malaysia and Australia believe disputes should be settled through peaceful means, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The nations called for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea, and urged the early establishment of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

The leaders of both nations reaffirmed their commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the Malaysia-Australia Joint Defence Programme.