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Military cooperation with China

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SECURITY TIES: PM's office says Malaysia, China open to intel exchange, joint drills

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MALAYSIA is ready to discuss further possibilities of a joint military collaboration with China to tackle threats of extremism, terrorism, kidnappings and other crimes.

This was revealed after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak received a high-level delegation from China, led by President Xi Jinping's

special envoy, Meng Jianzhu, who is also the Political and Legislative Affairs Committee chief of the Communist Party of China.

The Prime Minister's Office yesterday said in a statement that China had expressed sincere gratitude to Najib for Malaysia's cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts and solving international crime, including the recent phone scam that preyed on Chinese citizens.

"The excellent cooperation between the defence and military es-

tablishments of Malaysia and China has been further strengthened via the elevation of bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. In response to the dynamic security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the threat of the Islamic State and food security, other areas of defence and military practical cooperation, such as exchange of intelligence and the formation of a secure communication link, may be further explored," the statement said.

As such, Malaysia was up for discussing further possibilities of joint military collaborations with China, including military exercises, as well as exchanges of high-level visits and meetings.

"Both sides agreed for the relevant ministers, senior officials and agencies to further explore details of such collaborations.

"We believe that positive discussions and collaborations with China, as well as other Asean countries, in these areas will further safeguard the mutual interests of all parties in the region."

The statement said Malaysia was confident that through constructive dialogues between Asean countries and China, all parties would achieve mutually-beneficial long-term solutions with regard to disputes in the South China Sea to ensure stability and prosperity in the region.

Besides the collaboration, the statement said, Najib also expressed

his appreciation of Xi's "One Belt, One Road" strategy and its importance in creating economic and cultural integration.

"Pertaining to this matter, Malaysia stands ready to explore the possibility of working together with China and Thailand to conduct a swift feasibility study to consider the development of the Kuala Lumpur-Bangkok High-Speed Rail and East Coast Rail Link to boost connectivity and tourism for Malaysia and Thailand.

"In addition, Malaysia also welcomes China as a partner to jointly develop long-term tourism infrastructure and property-related investments in the country," said the statement.