

**Obama Postpones His Keenly-Awaited Visit To Malaysia This Month, Says Najib  
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SEPANG, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- US President Barack Obama has postponed his much-awaited visit to Malaysia this month following the shutdown of the administrative operations in the United States, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Wednesday.

Najib, who received a telephone call from Obama Wednesday morning, said he understood the internal problems faced by the President and the challenges Obama faced in raising the National Debt Ceiling on Oct 17.

"Yet, Obama has expressed his intention to visit Malaysia at a date to be determined later.

"I informed him that I understand the domestic situation in the United States which does not allow him to make an official visit now and, even if he did visit Malaysia, it would be questioned by the American community," he told a press conference after launching the construction of the second hangar at the Sepang Aircraft Engineering facility.

Najib said Obama informed him that he was committed to visiting Malaysia.

"He (Obama) appreciated Malaysia's role and the bilateral trade between Malaysia and the United States," said Najib.

The US President was scheduled to attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2013 in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 11. This would have been his first visit to Malaysia.

The White House Office of Management and Budget ordered government agencies late Monday to begin shutting down after Congress failed to find a compromise on a government spending bill.

Najib said Obama would be represented by Secretary of State John Kerry, United States Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker and United States Trade Representative Michael Froman at the summit.

"It is very unexpected and unforeseen (on the crisis)... I empathize and understand, if I were in his shoes, I will do the same with such a major domestic crisis certainly it would be very hard for the US President to leave the country.

Asked how the crisis would affect the Malaysian economy, Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said it would not have any impact in the immediate-term.

"But, we do not know how long the shutdown will continue.

"The most serious consequence will be on Oct 17 when they do not review the debt ceiling, that means it will have a serious consequence on the US economy. With a major slowdown and even worst, recession, that certainly will affect global growth and Malaysia as well.

"However, it is still too early to say. We will monitor the situation very closely," he said.

Asked on whether Malaysia should continue with the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

(TPPA) negotiations as the United States, as the host country, was facing a crisis, Najib said: "It is quite separate from the current crisis in US which is subject to internal process. It has nothing to do with the TPPA".

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