

KL Enjoys Warm, Cordial Relations with Washington – Envoy

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From Jamaluddin Muhammad

LOS ANGELES, Feb 12 (Bernama) -- Kuala Lumpur enjoys a very warm and cordial relationship with Washington, thanks to the good chemistry between Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and United States President Barack Obama, said a Malaysian envoy.

"Our doors for discussion are always open," said Malaysian Ambassador to the United States Datuk Dr Awang Adek Hussin.

Obama had come to Malaysia two years in a row, the first time during a state visit in 2014 and the second, for the ASEAN-related meetings last year.

For the record, Obama had invited Najib for 'golf diplomacy' in Hawaii in December 2014.

"The US likes to engage ... not like in those (old) days when the US liked to use force on us and show its might," Awang Adek told Malaysian journalists here Thursday.

He stressed that although Kuala Lumpur was close to Washington, it had to say what it had to say, even to a friend.

The United States sometimes finds "very strong" Malaysia's stance on Palestine and the Middle East when it presented its views at the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member, he said.

"That is our principle. We have to say even to a friend what we believe in and I think they can accept that ... and this is important so that we can have open dialogue," he added.

Awang Adek said Malaysia respected the United States but when it was felt that it had overstepped itself in terms of being fair to small countries, "then we have to say" what had to be said.

He said Malaysia and the United States enjoyed a strong relationship that had been upgraded to a comprehensive partnership in 2014.

Malaysia-US bilateral trade stood at US\$30.2 billion (RM126.8 billion) between January and November 2015, with Malaysia's imports reaching US\$17.2 billion (RM72.2 billion) and exports, US\$13 billion (RM54.6 billion), a trade surplus in favour of Malaysia, he said.

As for investments, American companies had made investments worth US\$500 million (RM2.1 billion) in 12 projects between January and September 2015, an increase of 28.5 per cent from the corresponding period in 2014.

"The Americans are the second largest investors in Malaysia with total investments of US\$28 billion

(RM117.6 billion) to date, after the Japanese with US\$32.5 billion (RM136.5 billion)," he said.

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