

By : **DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK**
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA

Venue : **Putrajaya**

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Title : **PM NAJIB RAZAK REMARKS AT JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH
PRESIDENT OBAMA**

1. It is an honour to host you, Mr President, and the United States' delegation. On behalf of the Malaysian people, I extend to you our warmest greetings.

2. Normally I would say 'Selamat datang', which means 'welcome' in our language. But since you grew up not far from here, you are one of the few world leaders who will understand me when I say: 'Selamat datang, sahabat saya'.

3. Forty-eight years ago, a US President first stepped onto Malaysian soil. Back then, TV was black and white. The Monkees were topping the US charts, with 'Last Train to Clarksville'. And 'The Sound of Music' movie was winning Academy Awards.

4. Today, Mr President, you see not rubber trees, as Lyndon B. Johnson did, but soaring skyscrapers. They are testament to the transformation that is taking place here in Malaysia. And on this journey, we are thankful for the United States' hand of friendship.

5. Over the past two months, the strength of our relationship has been revealed for all to see. From the day MH370 went missing, the US lent its considerable expertise to the investigation and its unique capabilities and assets to the search effort. We are grateful to you for standing by Malaysia in our hour of need.

6. The US and Malaysia have a longstanding relationship. We established diplomatic relations on the day of Malaysia's independence, in 1957. In the decades that followed, when ideological tensions tore at Southeast Asia, the US and Malaysia remained firm friends. And over the past few years, we have been working to strengthen the bonds between us.

7. Today, we see the fruits of this labour. On the economy, on security, and on people-to-people relations, we are closer now than ever before.

8. Earlier this morning, the President and I talked at length about the issues we face in the region, and in the world. And we took significant steps towards our shared objectives.

9. First and foremost, we agreed to upgrade our bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Partnership. This marks a new phase in our relationship: with greater collaboration on the

economy, security, education, science, technology and more. We also decided to reinvigorate the Senior Officials Dialogue as a key forum for high-level discussion. Together, these agreements lay a firm foundation for further co-operation to come.

10. Malaysia welcomes America's rebalancing towards Asia, and its contribution to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Our continents share an ocean; we should be connected by common policy, too. We believe all parties should share in Asia's remarkable growth story, provided they also share a commitment to the peace upon which it depends.

11. On global security, the President and I agreed to strengthen co-operation in peacekeeping training. Malaysia has also decided to endorse the Statement of Interdiction Principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative. I expressed my appreciation to the President on the US' strong support for ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, and for the confidence they have expressed in Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN next year.

12. As we prepare for this chairmanship, and as we bid for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, we seek a greater role in promoting global peace and regional stability. In these endeavours – and more – our friendship with the United States is immensely valued.

13. Just last month, Malaysia helped secure a comprehensive agreement in the Southern Philippines, ending a conflict which claimed 150,000 lives and denying Al Qaeda and its affiliates a possible foothold in that region. We have rejected religious extremism, by establishing a Global Movement of Moderates.

14. On the South China Sea, President Obama and I both stressed earlier the importance of upholding universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We agreed that the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties was vital, and that an effective Code of Conduct would enhance mutual trust.

15. The President and I have agreed a US – Malaysia English Teaching Assistant program, formerly known as the Fulbright program. I am happy to note that we have agreed on a bilateral work agreement for partners of diplomats. I would like to thank President Obama for agreeing to consider Malaysia's participation in the Visa Waiver Programme. I am glad that the US is now committed to provide technical briefings security requirements and information sharing agreements for this purpose.

16. Given the importance of innovation, technology and scientific research in competing in the global marketplace, securing clean energy and tackling climate change, the President and I welcome and will support the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council; we look forward

to launching the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre later today. The Centre is a success story that began at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit.

17. For centuries, our people have done business across the Pacific. Today we continue to do brisk trade – our bilateral trade has averaged at least 35 billion US dollars annually from 2010 to 2013. While last year the United States was Malaysia's largest source of foreign investment, investing 1.9 billion dollars in Malaysia and creating almost 8,000 new jobs.

18. President Obama and I welcomed the progress made on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations. Trade deals are always complex, but our countries are committed to resolving the remaining issues. I know all sides share our desire for an Agreement that delivers the best for our citizens and our businesses. I would like to thank President Obama for his understanding of Malaysia's sensitivities in the TPPA negotiations.

19. Malaysia has always been a bridge between peoples and cultures; a trading nation, bound by vital seas. We are a modern and progressive Muslim-majority nation; a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society. We have long known the benefit of co-operation across borders. And we have long recognised the power of shared prosperity.

20. In this context, it gives us sincere pleasure to welcome the US delegation for this historic visit. Your presence here, Mr President, will mark the beginning of the next phase of our partnership: with deeper friendship and a more comprehensive partnership. Over the past few days, we have found common cause on issues that matter: those that will deliver opportunity for our people, and security for our region. And we have set the stage for a new phase in our relationship; one based on the greater co-operation needed to equal the challenges of our time.