

## **PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT HOLLANDE**

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Malaysia and the French Republic have known each other for a long time and have developed close relations in many areas, especially in defence and security. I am confident that our close ties will not only endure the test of time but will deepen and strengthen in the years to come.

The most significant part of our relationship has always been defence and security as Malaysia is a big procurer of French military equipment. Among others, part of our discussions today revolved around possibilities of acquiring French defence equipment.

We also talked about the need to work closely together to fight militancy, extremism and global terrorism where I shared our experience in Malaysia and some of the challenges we face. President Hollande and I agreed that we should work closely together in this aspect.

I presented him with a copy of our deradicalisation module which has been successfully carried out in Malaysia with a success rate of about 95% and I hope that this would contribute to the global fight against extremism and terrorism, I believe moderation is the

key principle for us to adopt. I reiterated that moderation is also Malaysia's answer to the growing influence of militancy and extremism.

President Hollande and I also talked about bilateral trade and investment between our two countries which account for RM15.2 billion with France being Malaysia's 18th largest trading partner.

We noted that French companies here play a big role to the Malaysian economy as over 60,000 Malaysians are employed by French companies in Malaysia.

I also personally thanked President Hollande for not agreeing to a bill to tax Malaysian palm oil. I shared with him the importance of the palm oil industry in Malaysia where more than 600,000 people depend on it as their source of income. I assured President Hollande that the palm oil industry in Malaysia is developed in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner. I explained that we are also developing our own standards in the palm oil industry to be accepted by the European Union and not just France.

We also discussed further cooperation in tourism, human capital development and education.

All in all, it has been a very productive discussions and I am confident that his visit will definitely usher even stronger bilateral relations between our two countries.

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