

RELEASE IN FULL

Dear Madam Secretary,

I'd like to let you know of a huge success for you and the President's focus on entrepreneurship. Seventeen top Silicon Valley entrepreneurs just spent almost a week in Kuala Lumpur, working first with 800 aspiring Malaysian entrepreneurs, both social and business, who gained admission to the program, free of charge, from thousands of applicants solely based on their ideas. The Americans began intensively developing those with the strongest 100 proposals, which will culminate with the 10 most promising Malaysians traveling next June to Silicon Valley to pitch to angel investors.

Sparks flew on all sides, at the conference and a buzzing reception Catherine and I hosted. The American entrepreneurs were impressed and even moved by the pent-up creativity and passion of the Malaysians. The Malaysians were themselves blown away that co-founders of Youtube, Linked-In, Skype, Priceline and more traveled to Malaysia to mentor them. It became the talk of KL – including with Prime Minister Najib and Malaysia's top business community – and a great boon to American-Malaysian ties. Some of the Americans had done events like this in other countries, but all say they want to do more. They are delighted with their government's enthusiastic support for using entrepreneurship to strengthen relationships around the world.

"StartupMalaysia" was the brainchild of Dakshinamoorthy Balakrishnan – "Dash" – whose inspiration came from participating in the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship last year. I introduced Dash to you briefly after your town interview in Kuala Lumpur last November; he is our partner in several embassy programs promoting entrepreneurship. For this project he went big, egged-on, he told me, by a conversation with Farah Pandith during her visit in May. He collaborated with a savvy entrepreneur/Stanford U teacher, Rebecca Hwang, to develop the proposal, corral Silicon Valley, and convince the Malaysian government to fund the first part of it. Now they're enlisting corporate sponsors to keep it alive.

What Dash started will grow and endure, enormously benefitting Malaysia, America and our relationship. Several of the Silicon Valley folks tell me they will be back. We'll report all this by cable, but I wanted to let you know directly how Startup America has caught on here.

Best regards from KL,

Paul

cc: Jake Sullivan
Kurt Campbell
Farah Pandith
Jose Fernandez