Chapter II

MALAYSIAN SECURITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
Southeast Asia has been remarkably open to external influences. Malaysia and Indonesia shared with their neighbours the heritage of Indian cultural and religious influences for a number of centuries in the past. The Hindu-Buddhist period saw the emergence of two great empires, viz Srivijaya and Majapahit of the seventh and thirteenth centuries A.D., respectively. The first maritime trading empire of Srivijaya extended its territory and influence along the east coast of Sumatra and the west coast of Malaya, modern Kalimantan, and Western Java. Indeed it was the most powerful naval Power of Southeast Asia for most of the period between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. It commanded the Sunda Straits from Palembang and the Straits of Malacca from Aceh and Kedah, so much so that one of its rulers described himself as "the 

King of the Ocean Lands". Thanks to Buddhism and trade the empire was in regular communication with India and China. Between A.D. 670 and 740 there was exchange of envoys from time to time between the empire and China. Between A.D. 1025


2 This was also due to the expansion of Persian and other Muslim trade between India and China mainly under the T'ang dynasty. See Brian Harrison, Southeast Asia: A Short History (London, 1954), pp. 23 and 48.
and 1068 the Cholas of South India invaded and conquered the Srivijayan empire and Tumasik (Singapore). However, they left Srivijaya after forcing it to acknowledge their overlordship.

Srivijayan power was eclipsed in the thirteenth century by its rival Majapahit, the Javanese maritime trading empire. With a much wider agricultural base in the heartland of Java, Majapahit not only included the present-day Indonesia but extended its power widely over the Malay peninsula as far north as Kedah, Langkasuka, and Patani. It reached the zenith of its glory under the stewardship of Gaja Mada (Pateh or Prime Minister between 1130 and 1364. It was this period of prosperity and splendour which inspired the leaders of Indonesia in their recent confrontation (Konfrontasi) with Malaysia and influenced them to seek to restore the boundaries of their ancient empire.

The early fifteenth century saw the rise of the Islamic kingdom of Malacca, the first indigenous political kingdom in the Malay peninsula. The founder of this kingdom was Paramesvara, who married a Majapahit princess and chose Malacca as the seat of his kingdom (A.D. 1403). Malacca soon

3 Ibid., p. 42. In the opinion on Hall, "So far as the ascertainable facts go, the state of Majapahit was limited to East Java, Madura, and Bali." Hall, 1963 edn, n. 1, p. 33. John F. Cady is of the opinion that during 1330-64, when Gaja Mada flourished, "he claimed control over Bali, Macassar, parts of Borneo, ... all of lower Sumatra, and the Sunda area in Western Java, but much of this control probably amounted to little more than receipt of vassal tribute". John F. Cady, Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development (New York, 1964), p. 141.

4 According to Chinese sources, by 1406 the throne of Palembang had been claimed by Paramesvara of Malacca, who took Sailendra's ancient title of Maharaja. Winstedt, n. 1, pp. 32-33.
developed into a pirate centre and extended its territories at the expense of Singapore and Sumatra. During this period Siam was in the process of becoming the leading Power in peninsular Southeast Asia. The Malaccan kingdom felt the pressure of the Siamese threat. Paramesvara, therefore, sought help and support from the Ming Emperor of China to counteract the combined pressure of Siam and Majapahit, which were trying to establish their suzerainty over the strategic waterways and to control the trade passing through them. The Ming Emperor of China too was trying to extend his power in the region by means of several naval expeditions and was persuading the rulers of the region to pay tribute to the Middle Kingdom. In 1403 a Chinese delegation arrived in Malacca. Earlier there had been three other Chinese missions to the Southeast Asian region. Between 1405 and 1433 the Ming dynasty dispatched a series of naval expeditions to the Nanyang region (South China) demonstrating its concern in this region. In 1411 the famous Chinese Admiral Cheng-Ho called at the port of Malacca, and King Paramesvara of Malacca and his family accompanied him to the court of the Ming Emperor to pay tribute. According to Winstedt: "... the Malay Prince was entertained by the emperor in person and given magnificent presents, so mindful must China have been of past trade with the Malay Peninsula.

The visits of Malacca's rulers to China promoted trade.

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the size of China's touring fleet gave Malacca a sense of security." China's intervention enabled Malacca to stand up to the threat from Siam and Majapahit.

Malacca flourished as an emporium of spice trade and as an important centre for the dissemination of Islam in the Malay peninsula and the islands around it from the early fifteenth century to the advent of Europeans. It was the Indian and Arab traders and missionaries who spread Islam in the region during this period.

It is thus clear that China exercised much influence in the Southeast Asian region. Indeed it was during this period something of a Super Power in the region. It demanded and received tribute from these far-off countries and forced them to accept its suzerainty.

One characteristic feature of the coastal states of Southeast Asia was their rivalries for a thousand years. This could be attributed to the traditional geographic and economic factors operating to this day.

Malaya under British Colonial Rule

The political history of Malacca drastically changed with the coming of Europeans to Southeast Asia. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, and the Spaniards made deep inroads into Southeast Asia in order to control the spice trade. The Portuguese first

6 Winstedt, n. 1, p. 34. Emphasis added.
7 Ibid.
captured Malacca in 1511, but the Dutch displaced them in 1641. The Dutch arrived on the scene (Bantam) in June 1596, during the heyday of the Kingdom of Mataram. However, it was not until the commencement of the Industrial Revolution in Europe that Southeast Asia -- in fact all of Asia -- felt the impact of Western imperialism. Thereafter Britain played a leading role in the transformation of Southeast Asia into a colony for a century and a half. Though it developed the Indian connexion independently, it kept up Southeast Asia's links with India and China. In some way it can be said that Southeast Asia was an extension of the British Indian Empire. During the eighteenth century Britain emerged as the strongest naval Power in the world. It proceeded to defeat France for control of India and initiated the process of rapid commercial exploitation with the help of the new industrial technology. The acquisition of the island of Penang in 1786 by Francis Light of the East India Company set the stage for the commercial exploitation of Malaya by the British.

In the acquisition of Penang the British were chiefly guided by strategic considerations. The defence of the Bay of Bengal was of paramount importance to them on account of the need to ensure the safety of the East India Company's factories. They also regarded it as imperative to command the Malacca Straits to protect their trade and commerce in India and the Far East. They were especially impressed by the location of Malaya near Singapore, the focal point of

international waterways. In 1819 Stamford Raffles annexed Singapore. He called it the Malta of the East because of its strategic importance in relation to the sea route to China. He added: "It [Singapore] gives us the command of China and Japan, with Siam and Cambodia, to say nothing of the islands, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines themselves." Guided by this strategy, the British Government built up an important naval base in Singapore in the 1920s.

Malaya under British rule was divided into three types of administrative units: (1) the Straits settlements of Penang, Singapore, and Malacca, which came under direct British rule in 1867; (2) the four Federated Malay States which had Kuala Lumpur as the capital and where the British established a centralized form of indirect rule -- viz Perak, which passed into the hands of the British in 1874, and Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, which the British acquired between 1870 and 1880; and (3) the remaining four Northern Malay States of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu, which were called the Unfederated Malay States and which the British acquired from the Siamese under the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909. Relations between the British and the Southern Malay State of Johore were long regulated by treaty. However, this State became a part of the Unfederated


Mt.\le7 States in 1914. With that the process of bringing the Malay states under British colonial rule was completed.

History of the Borneo Territories

The history of the three Borneo territories of Sarawak, Sabah (old North Borneo), and Brunei has taken a course different from that of Malaya owing to their separation from the peninsula by four hundred miles of South China Sea. Until the beginning of the sixteenth century the Sung Emperor of China and the Majapahit empire exacted tribute from the Sultan of Brunei, who was also the nominal sovereign of North Borneo. The Sultan of Brunei was, however, able to make himself independent in the early years of the sixteenth century. The end of the sixteenth century witnessed a gradual decline and dismemberment of the Sultanate. The process of decline continued during the next two centuries so that the Sultanate comprised only Sarawak and part of North Borneo in the nineteenth century. There was a civil war in the nineteenth century. The then Sultan, unable to cope with his local foes, sought help from an English adventurer called James Brooke. Brooke demanded and obtained Sarawak in return for his help in quelling the civil strife in Kuching on 24 September 1841.

The Sultan of Brunei ceded North Borneo in 1877 to one Baron de Overbeck, an agent of the British firm of Dent Brothers. Overbeck learnt that the Sultan of Sulu, which now forms part of the Philippines, had a claim on the territory. He, therefore, entered into a treaty with the Sultan of Sulu in 1878. Early in the 1960s this treaty became the subject of a dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia in the context of the conflicting claims of the two countries to North Borneo (now Sabah). Each country gave its own interpretation of the treaty. The Philippines said that it pertained to a lease, while Britain and Malaysia interpreted it as embodying acession. Brunei came under the British Crown as a protectorate in 1888 by a treaty which gave Britain the right to conduct foreign relations. On 15 July 1946 the British North Borneo Company abandoned all rights in North Borneo, which ultimately became a British Crown Colony.

The modern history of Borneo dates from 1946, when the Sultan of Brunei ceded the Island of Labuan to Britain and James Brooke became its first Governor. In 1881 the British North Borneo (chartered) Company came into being. Seven years later the territory, together with Brunei and Sarawak, came under British protection. This arrangement lasted till the Japanese Occupation of the region in the early 1940s.

In the immediate post-war period, i.e. soon after 1945, the rulers of Sabah and Sarawak were confronted with grave

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problems; so much so that, in 1946, they thought it expedient to hand over their territories to Britain. Political activity in Sarawak was in low key till 1959 since the colonial Government did not allow the political parties to grow. However, the upsurge of national political consciousness in Malaya engulfed Sarawak as well. In Sabah, although the desire for political change was clearly discernible, there was no political organization to articulate the aspirations of the people. The plan for the formation of Malaysia was received with scepticism in the Borneo territories. Opposition to the plan was voiced initially by Donald Stephens, A.M. Azahari, and Ong Kee Hui from North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak respectively. They issued a joint statement from Jesselton (North Borneo) on 9 July 1961 criticizing and opposing Tunku Abdul Rahman's proposal for a Malaysian federation incorporating Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore in the existing federation of Malaya. Brunei, however, under the leadership of A.M. Azahari, prevaricated when the Tunku pushed forward the Malaysia proposal.

Consequences of British Rule in Malaya

The British colonial Government sought by means of a formally codified legal system and a laissez-faire pattern of economic growth to create an environment conducive to foreign capital. (The colonial economy in Malaya was dominated by


British capital). This policy was guided mainly by the belief that the most important function of the Government was maintenance of law and order and pursuit of a policy of economic liberalism. The policy resulted in considerable economic and commercial exploitation of Malaya. The boom in the rubber and tin-mining industries lured enterprising Chinese and Indians to migrate to Malaya. The Malays were not prepared to engage in an enterprise like tin-mining. The British colonial Government welcomed the large-scale immigration of Indians to work in the plantations so long as it felt that the Indian labourers were not in a position to "upset or undermine the Raj". They, however, did not look with a kindly eye on the immigration of Indian merchants lest there should emerge an Indian capitalist class to compete with European entrepreneurs. Nevertheless the colonial Government allowed Indian immigration, albeit on a limited scale, to counterbalance the increasing number of Chinese in Malaya. The extension of British rule to Malaya led to a large influx of Malays from different parts of Indonesia.

15 Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of Their Immigration and Settlement, 1786–1957 (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 45–46. Sandhu shows that the Indians who migrated to Malaya early represented "a powerful and respected commercial, economic and political force" and that those who went there during colonial rule in response to the need for "cheap, docile" labour "were chiefly illiterate labourers".

On Indians in Malaysia also see Simappa Arasaratnam, Indians in Malaysia and Singapore (Kuala Lumpur, 1970).

Immigrants from Indonesia took up cultivation of land in the areas inhabited by Malays. Their way of life was the same as that of Malays; they intermarried with them and, with the passage of time, were assimilated into the general milieu. On the other hand, the Indians and Chinese who worked in the mines and plantations, formed themselves into separate social organizations and lived away from Malays. J. S. Furnivall, who was the first to advance the concept of plural society, held colonialism responsible for leaving the different social groups divided and isolated one from another and for bringing them together "only in the contacts of market place".

Colonial rule gave Malaya a good deal by way of economic development and political security, but left a legacy of difficult problems which, according to Purcell, were political. The majority of Malays were not opposed to British rule, owing largely to the paternalistic attitude of the colonial

17 J. S. Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India (Cambridge, 1948).

18 Hugh Tinker, Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth, 1920-1950 (London, 1978), p. 8. According to Tinker, "the driving force of this empire was, of course, the motive of exploitation.... In this achievement of exploitation the Indians who were taken overseas as the agents and servants of the British were among the most thoroughly exploited." Victor Purcell described Malayan society as "a non-intercommunicating 'plural' society". Victor Purcell, The Revolution in Southeast Asia (London, 1962), p. 97.

Government towards them. This, coupled with the presence of an increasing number of overseas Chinese and Indians, was responsible for the low profile that Malays maintained towards political change in Malaya. The Indian and Chinese immigrants were emotionally attached to the countries of their birth and consequently appeared indifferent to the internal developments in Malaya. Their main preoccupation was to make money so that they might support their families in their respective countries. Thus the Chinese, who showed little concern for political development in Malaya, were deeply concerned about Kuomintang activity in mainland China. They were inspired not only by Chinese leaders like Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek but also by those who professed the Communist ideology. Some formed secret societies, while others engaged themselves in mobilizing and organizing workers and the masses for Communist struggle in Malaya. The Nanyang Communist Party, which was evolved in the winter of 1927-28 following a split between the Kuomintang and the Communists in China, was the forerunner of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The MCP, which replaced the Nanyang Communist Party, emerged in the late 1930s. The Indians too evinced deep interest in the freedom struggle of their mother country. They were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash


21 For Kuomintang activity in Malaya, see Pong Poh-seng, "The Kuomintang in Malaya", in Tregonning, n. 16, pp. 21A-26.

Chandra Bose, and Jawaharlal Nehru. They formed the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) out of the remnants of the Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army on the pattern of the Indian National Congress in August 1946. Nehru visits to Malaya in 1937 and 1946 encouraged them to fight for the cause of India’s freedom.

In December 1942 Japan invaded Malaya. It sought to create an economically self-sufficient area, an area which it called the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, under its hegemony. Japan’s early successes in the military sphere gave a shattering blow to British rule in Malaya. Britain’s defeat at the hands of an Asian Power convinced the people of Malaya that Britain, which had put on the mantle of protector of the Malay States, was by no means invincible. Japan’s victory created an upheaval in Malaya, and almost all sections of its people turned anti-colonial and anti-Western. The old loyalties of the various communities were rudely shaken. While the Indians and Malays became anti-Western, the Chinese turned anti-Japanese. It thus created an upheaval in Malayan society.

23 Nadyan Raghavan, India and Malaya (Bombay, 1954), p. 78.


The Japanese plan initially was to treat Malaya and Sumatra as one political unit with headquarters in Singapore. The Japanese sought to restore the ethnic and linguistic links between Malaya and Sumatra, which, according to them, had been snapped by the British and the Dutch. They, however, dropped this plan in 1944 and put Sumatra under a separate administration.

Japan's policy in Malaya lacked firmness and consistency. Japan modified its policy from time to time during its occupation of three-and-a-half years to meet the exigencies of the war. Its plan to defend Malaya militarily called for political steps to strengthen Malayan nationalism. It, therefore, created two organizations, viz Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) or the Union of Young Malays led by Left-wing leaders in Malaya, and Pembela Tanah Air (PETA) or Defenders of the Fatherland, a voluntary military force. It also fostered a new political body called Kesatuan Ra'sayat Indonesia Semenanjong (KRIS) or the People's Association of Peninsular Indonesia. The aim of the KRIS movement was to quicken the political consciousness of Malays so as to make Malaya attain independence as a part of Indonesia. Malay and Indonesian nationalists thus saw the vision of a new state — Indonesia Raya (Greater Indonesia) — peopled by the Malay-

See Yoichi Itagaki, "Some Aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya under the Occupation, with Special Reference to Nationalism", in Tregonning, n. 16, p. 262.
Indonesian ethnic stock. This was aimed at strengthening Malay-Indonesian links. However, the PETA/KRIS movement collapsed with the Japanese surrender.

The Chinese in Malaya suffered most during the Japanese Occupation. The Japanese regarded the Chinese, especially the Communists, as their implacable enemies. According to one author, the Japanese executed some five thousand Chinese soon after occupying Singapore. Many Chinese in Malaya joined the MCP, which spearheaded the guerrilla war against the Japanese Occupation through its Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). One notable feature of this struggle was the attitude of the Supreme Allied Command, which aided and supplied arms to the Communist guerrillas. When the Japanese surrendered, the MPAJA (mostly Chinese) turned against the British. This was because the Chinese had been slighted by the British in favour of Malays. They, therefore, resented British rule, especially the action of the British in denying them equal citizenship rights with Malays. They also resented the pressure brought to bear upon them to join the anti-Communist struggle. The situation, however, changed albeit gradually. When in course of time


28 Purcell, n. 19, p. 47.
a plan was mooted for a Malayan union, the Chinese reacted favourably to it.

The point which needs to be stressed here is that there was a social upheaval in Malaya and that this social upheaval had far-reaching political consequences. Malaya had not witnessed during the Japanese Occupation any intense nationalist activity apart from that of the Left-wing group. There was consequently neither a strong nationalist leadership nor a mass political organization to fight against the return of the colonial Power. While the MCP, which, as we have already noted, was mostly Chinese in its composition, sought to ensure that the British did not return. The majority of Malays were anxious lest the Chinese should establish their hegemony. Malays were also afraid that Communism would triumph. Their suspicion was aroused especially when the MCP resumed its 12-year-old struggle against the British colonial Government in 1948. It should, however, be noted here that social tensions such as outbreaks of inter-communal hostilities were the result of the failure of the colonial administration to promote a sense of common nationality among the different communities. By pursuing the classic policy of divide and rule the colonial Government suppressed political activity, limited educational opportunities, fostered a sense of separatism, and generated inter-ethnic rivalry.

As we have noted earlier, the British colonial Government came out with a proposal for a Malayan union which was in essence a proposal for a common Malayan
citizenship which would give equal rights to the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians and to all others born in Malaya or domiciled there over a period of time. This was in the year 1946. The Malays opposed the proposal through their newly formed organization called the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), on the ground that it sought to undermine the traditional position and authority of the Malay Sultans. The British colonial Government then withdrew the proposal and held negotiations with the UMNO and the Malay Sultans. This resulted in the formulation of a federal plan. The All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) and the anti-imperialist party - the United Malay Front or Pusat Tenaga Ra'ayat (PUTERA) jointly opposed this federal plan. However, notwithstanding this opposition, a Malayan federation in accordance with the federal plan came into being on 1 February 1948.

The Communist Struggle of 1948: Problems of Security

At this juncture the MCP took the decision to resort to armed action to capture political power and entered upon protracted struggle which lasted as many as twelve difficult years. The decision to resort to armed action was taken after a conference of Asian Communist Youth held in Calcutta.


in February 1948. Determined to wage a war of liberation, the Communists organized a military force called the Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPABA) on the lines of the MPAJA. They started strikes and agitations all over the rubber estates and the tin-mines. Chin Peng, the Secretary-General of the MCP, called on the Communists to shift their emphasis from the urban to the rural areas. The rural Chinese, especially the squatters, gave enthusiastic support to the MPABA, which adopted Mao Tse-tung's strategy of capturing selected pockets close to the jungles and waging a guerrilla war. The strikers on their part captured the estates and the mines. The MPABA rechristened itself the Malayan Races' Liberation Army (MRLA) and described its struggle as a struggle against colonialism. For any objective analysis of the problem, it is important to consider the MCP viewpoint. As early as 1948 the MCP said:

In its present stage, the Malayan revolution takes on the characteristics of a new democratic revolution waged against the British imperialists, ... The objectives of the struggles are:

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31 Following the Conference of Asian Communist Youth, violence erupted in other Southeast Asian countries, but it would be wrong to say that the direction to capture power was issued by Moscow as it is sometimes made out to be. For details, see Ruth McVey, The Calcutta Conference and Southeast Asian Uprisings (New York, 1958). It is, however, reported that speeches made in the conference urged the Malayan comrades to adopt a militant line. A resolution passed in the conference advocated "the capture of power by the peasants and workers by any means". See Lucian W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning (Princeton, N.J., 1956), pp. 83-84.

overthrow the British imperialists, eliminate all their political, economic, and military influence in Malaya, wipe out the last vestiges of feudalism (including economically, the system of feudalistic exploitation and ideologically, education in feudal culture), replacing these with the formation of a Malayan People's Republic and a reconstructed and expanded new democratic economy and culture. 33

The MCP struggle of 1948, which forced the colonial Government to declare a State of Emergency was certainly a major challenge to the colonial and post-colonial regimes in Malaya. The fact that this lasted for twelve long years speaks of the dimensions of the security problem for the government. The impact of the Communist struggle and the Emergency on the political system is significant. According to one author:

The Emergency provided an opportunity par excellence to put into practice the principle of a strong Central Government in a federal union. The Emergency gave full rein to the establishment of a strong Central Government as stipulated in the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement restoring, in fact, the principle laid out in the abortive Malayan Union scheme. In effect, the MCP's decision to

33 Translation of Ma-lai-ya Kung-ch'ang-tang (The Malayan Party); Ma-lai-ya Koming Chan-luch wen ti (Strategic Problems of the Malayan Revolutionary War), First issued in December 1948, Published by the Assault Press (n.p.), 5 November 1950. Reproduced in Hanrahan, n. 22, Appendix 1, pp. 170-1.

34 As public access is denied to archival materials (records) for a period of thirty years in Malaysia, a complete account of the event cannot yet be produced. The most authoritative account of the event to be written so far is an historical piece by Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-60 (London, 1975). Also see Pye, n. 31; and Hanrahan, n. 22.
extend its struggle through an open challenge by force of arms made it necessary on the part of the Government to deal with it on a pan-country basis.

The strategy and tactics of armed revolution employed by the MCP had important implications for the task of ensuring Malaya's security. In retrospect it is clear that the overall strategy of the MCP was derived from the Chinese rather than the Soviet line. The MCP's Central Political Bureau stated: "A study of Mao Tse-tung's military concepts as well as full cognizance of the laws of development of the characteristics of the war are imperatives in the course of the struggle."

It, therefore, planned to conduct its armed struggle in three phases: (1) guerrilla warfare with increased guerrilla supplies and equipment through raids and ambushes against security forces and police stations to disrupt the British economic system in Malaya/Malaysia; (2) exertion of relentless pressure upon the Government to concentrate on "main supply and communication lines and strategic points"; and (3) the setting up of "liberated areas" in the territory under the

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control of the insurgents "to use it as base for expansion ultimately to take control over Malaya".  

The response of the British colonial administration was to declare a state of Emergency (1948-60) and to introduce an elaborate system of regulations aimed at quelling the Communist struggle. It also called in the British Army (Gurkha troops) to assist the police. It, further, banned the MCP on 23 July and declared as illegal all organizations allied to the MCP. It formed a "special static defence system, organized special police and militia forces, imported former Force-136 personnel and Palestine police to track down the Reds and, in addition, set up a national registration and identity card system".  

The MCP struggle led to the institution of a large police intelligence unit known as the Special Branch and the Police Field Force, a para-military wing of the police. According to one author:

Through the Emergency and even into the late 1960s the numerical strength of the police remained higher than that of the Malaysian military. Although a specific technique of joint Army/Police operations (together also with civilian departments) was evolved and successfully developed, in many counter-insurgency actions the police role became more important than the Army's.

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38 Hanrahan, ibid., p. 112.

There ensued a direct tussle between the British colonial administration and the guerrillas over food and supplies. The British colonial administration embarked on a plan called the Briggs Plan to resettle the Chinese squatters found in the jungle fringes which the guerrillas were using as hide-outs. The places where such squatters were resettled were called New Villages. The Briggs Plan was carried out by soldiers with ruthless ferocity. A full account of the MCP struggle and the counter-insurgency measures is beyond the scope of our discussion here. Suffice it to say that the MCP did not succeed in capturing political power. The colonial and post-colonial Governments were able to avert trouble.

The outbreak of the Communist struggle made a significant impact on the Malayan nationalist movement. The attainment of self-government by the federation in 1955 paved the way for the eventual realization of full independence. Meanwhile there emerged an alliance system by the merger of three parties - the UMNO, the MCA (i.e., the Malayan Chinese Association), and the MIC (i.e., the Malayan Indian Congress). In the first general election held in 1955 (during the Emergency) the Alliance Party with its slogan "Merdeka" (independence) was elected with a majority. In view of these developments, the MCP decided to seek a political solution. Chin Peng,

40 J.H. Brimmel, Communism in Southeast Asia (London, 1969), p. 232. The Political Bureau of the MCP also noted: "Our handicap lies in the fact that our armed forces were formed without a revolutionary cadre of regular army men. None of our troops have received sufficient training before the outbreak of the struggle, nor have our commanders been graduated from any regular military academy." Chung-yang Cheng-chih chu, as reproduced in Hanrahan, n. 22, p. 202.
Secretary-General of the MCP, held talks with the Chief Ministers of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, Tunku Abdul Rahman and David Marshall respectively, at Baling on the Thai border on 28-29 December 1955 with a view to the conclusion of a truce. He declared that the MCP would lay down arms only if it was accorded recognition as a legal political organisation. The Tunku refused, and Chin Peng withdrew to the jungles. The MCP is engaged in its struggle of guerrilla Communism to this day. Later developments related to the MCP struggle are discussed elsewhere in this study.

Malaya attained independence on 31 August 1957. The Emergency continued even after independence. It was withdrawn only on 31 July 1960. The struggle between the outlawed MCP and the Government security forces is still in progress.

**British Commonwealth Security System and Malaya/Malaysia**

The post-colonial state of Malaya/Malaysia was a legacy of British colonialism. Being militarily weak, Malaya/Malaysia depended for security on Britain and the Commonwealth. Britain maintained close economic and political links with Malaya and Singapore through the Commonwealth even after Malayan independence. Britain had trained the armed forces of Malaya/Malaysia and supplied military equipment in the pre-independence days. It had made huge investments in Malaya/Malaysia. It, therefore, had a stake in the security of Malaya/Malaysia. According to an estimate, by the end of 1962 the entire British investment excluding oil, insurance, and
banking amounted to £140 million in Malaya/Malaysia as against £171 million in India.

During the Second World War the security and defence of the empire formed an integral part of the British defence policy. The British Empire and the Commonwealth were important factors in the British defence policy. The Defence White Paper of 1948 states:

The security of the United Kingdom is one of the keystones of Commonwealth defence, but equally, the United Kingdom alone, without the support of the Commonwealth, would lose much of its effective influence and power. If war should ever be forced upon us, besides defending these islands, we should have to play our part in defending the resources on which the Commonwealth must rely. The control of communications and of strategic key points is essential to the achievement of this aim.

France, Britain, and the United States felt that the victory of the Communists in China, the worsening situation in Indo-China, and the outbreak of the Korean War called for a security arrangement in the Southeast Asian region to check the spread of Communism. Australia and New Zealand too feared a Communist threat from China. In the period following the

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41 Financial Times (London), 8 July 1964. Being primarily a commercial country, Britain's main source of external income was its overseas investments. For British investments in Malaya, see G.C. Allen and Audrey G. Donnithorne, Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya: A Study in Economic Development (London, 1944), edm 2.


44 These two countries, realizing Britain's inability to provide them security and protection in times of threat, sought help and co-operation from the United States. This led eventually to the conclusion of the ANZUS treaty.
Korean War and the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu the need to forge a strong security arrangement in the area to check the spread of Communism acquired a new urgency. Britain was obviously interested in the security of Malaya. Wrote Sir Anthony Eden:

The long series of diplomatic exchanges with our French and American allies, the discussions at Berlin and the final negotiations at Geneva in 1954 involved the security of the non-communist world in South-East Asia.... Our campaign against guerrillas in Malaya, then in a critical phase, gave us a close interest in the Indo-Chinese vortex. 45

The result of these negotiations between the Americans, the British, and the French -- the three colonial-imperial countries in the region -- was the birth of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Malaya, being still a British colony fell under the jurisdiction of the SEATO. It, however, opted out of the SEATO on the attainment of independence, but entered into a bilateral treaty called the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) with the United Kingdom. This raised a controversy. Some people felt that the terms of AMDA involved Malaya in the SEATO. When the defence plan of the SEATO was announced in Washington, D.C., in February 1955, it was stated that Singapore would be the central base of the


46 The SEATO Treaty was signed in Manila on 8 September 1954. The organization itself, however, came into existence on 19 February 1955. Its members were the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines.
joint British-Australian-New Zealand air force with a total of five hundred planes and that the American air force would use the airfields in Singapore in times of war.

With the foregoing in mind let us examine here some aspects of the British and Western security system.

**ANZAM and the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve**

Britain, Australia, and New Zealand concluded in 1948 a relatively little known treaty called ANZAM. This treaty was intended to facilitate consultation and co-ordination of the military activities of Australia, New Zealand, and Malaya with a view to ensuring the security and protection of the Malayan area. The British colonial administration in Malaya received substantial military assistance from Australia and New Zealand in its war against the MCP. Defence cooperation within the ANZAM framework continued till the conclusion of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement following Malaya's attainment of independence in 1957.

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47 *Straits Times* (Singapore), 11 February 1955. Information on the SEATO activities was not made public, but the role of the SEATO included training in counter-insurgency and counter-subversion and intelligence gathering.

48 "Settlement on Defence, 1953", Cmd Paper 8783, (1953), p. 17. Australian and New Zealand troops were sent to Malaya on 1 January 1955 and on 22 January 1956 respectively to fight against Communist guerrillas in Malaya. For ANZAM, see Peter Lyon, "Reorientations in Southeast Asia: ANZUK and After", *Round Table* (London), April 1972; and T.B. Miller, *Australia's Defence* (Melbourne, 1966). For a discussion on Australia's participation, see Derek McDougall, "Evolution of Australia's Defence Policy in Relation to Malaysia-Singapore, 1954-1971", *Journal of Southeast Asian*
The defence and security of Malaya, especially in the context of the MCP insurgency in that country, was the paramount concern of Britain in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. In collaboration with Australia and New Zealand, Britain formed a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, containing naval, air, and army units and garrisoned it in Malaya and Singapore. The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, announced on 1 April 1955 his country's desire to "participate in the establishment in Malaya as a very important part of the Manila Treaty area, as a contribution to the defence of the Treaty area, of a strategic reserve in which the United Kingdom and New Zealand will participate". Thus was created a powerful strategic reserve to be sent out to trouble spots in the Commonwealth at short notice. This reserve was put under the British command in Malaya and operated in almost the same manner as ANZAM.

**AMDA (Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement)**

Malaya, as we have already noted, attained independence in 1957. Internally, however, it continued to face a threat to its security on account of the MCP insurgency. Externally, the sceptre of Communism haunted the whole of Southeast Asia, following the Communist victory in North Korea and North Vietnam and, of course, in China. Besides, the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) had emerged as a force to be reckoned

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with in Indonesian politics. This was a matter of concern for the Government of free Malaya; for Indonesia was a giant-size neighbour with which Malaya had close cultural and historical links.

In terms of military strength, Malaya at the time of its independence possessed an armed force consisting of eight infantry battalions with very few auxiliary units. It had no naval or air force. This small armed force lacked experience, and its ability to defend the country was open to doubt. As we have seen, it was the British troops and the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve which had provided security to Malaya during the critical days of struggle against the MCP. The British were aware of the weak military position of Malaya and of its inability to defend itself against the MCP, which, following the failure of the talks between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Chin Peng, had resumed its armed struggle. Hence, anxious to ensure the safety of their investments in Malaya, they continued to evince active interest in Malayan security.

Indeed, between 1949 and 1957, in addition to a special grant of £16 million to the Government of Malaya Britain spent about £55 million on the maintenance of the troops it had stationed in Malaya. In view of the high cost of defence, the Governor of Malaya was far from being able to bear the entire burden of defence and security of the country single-handedly. It was

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50 Federation of Malaya, Legislative Council, Debates, session 3, 3 September 1957, col. 3234.

51 UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 576, session 3, 4 December 1957, col. 54.
thus to develop its defence forces that it concluded AMDA. AMDA was a guarantee given by Britain to Malaya/Malaysia against external threat or aggression and for mutual assistance. Malaya on its part allowed Britain (Article III) "to maintain in the Federation such naval, land, and air forces, including a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, ... for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and international obligations". It also allowed Britain to (Article IV) "maintain and use bases and facilities in the Federation". The AMDA framework included an "anchor power", viz Britain, and two "associate powers Australia and New Zealand through Letters of Exchange with Malaya/Malaysia" and a major consumer and, with the separation of Singapore, two consumers of alliance security". In a sense AMDA formalized the arrangements for defence co-operation made by Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in some form or other in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. It was concluded to extend legal coverage to the defence assistance being provided by Britain, Australia, and New Zealand and to ensure the continuance of such assistance after Malayan/Malaysian independence.

AMDA was an explicit defence framework worked out in response to the security needs of the Malayan Government. It

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may be pointed out here that during this period Britain acted to protect the overall strategic interests of the West in this part of the world. AMDA, which was also devised to protect British economic interests in Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore, was a political compromise since the interests of the states concerned diverged because of differences in their perceptions of their respective national interests in the face of the economic and political changes that had occurred. It may, however, be pointed out that certain provisions of AMDA did involve Malaya in the SEATO, whose strategic objectives involved Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve set up in British Malaya in 1955. Closely interpreted, phrases and formulations like "Commonwealth and international obligations" (Article III) and "armed attack ... on any of the territories or protectorates of the United Kingdom in the Far East or any of the forces of the United Kingdom within these territories or protectorates ... or other threat to the preservation of peace in the Far East", (Article VI) also brought the SEATO into the picture. Of course Article VIII stated with respect to Malaya:

In the event of a threat to the preservation of peace or the hostilities elsewhere than in the area covered by Articles VI and VII the Government of the United Kingdom shall obtain prior agreement of the Government of the Federation of Malaya before committing United Kingdom forces to active operations involving the use of bases....

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64 Eden, n. 45, p. 77.
Indeed Dato (later Tun) Razak went so far as to claim in 1967 that this clause had given Malays a veto over the use of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve for the purposes of the SEATO. The actual extent of involvement of the bases in the affairs of the SEATO can be inferred from a subsequent clause in the same Article: "This shall not affect the right of the Government of the United Kingdom to withdraw forces from the Federation of Malaya." A full-length discussion of AMDA is beyond the scope of this study, and our purpose in this analysis is only to show how a controversy arose over the involvement of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in SEATO operations. Thus Malaya/Malaysia stayed out of the membership of the SEATO, but its partnership in a mutual defence treaty with Britain indirectly linked it with the Anglo-American alliance system in Southeast Asia.

Although AMDA was a pact signed between the two states on a basis of equality, it reflected in practice the dominance of the "anchor Power", via Britain. While either of the partners had the right to ask for a review of the treaty "on paper", strategic necessity forced Malaya/Malaysia to depend entirely on AMDA for its security. Placing the agreement before the Parliament of the Federation of Malaya for ratification, Tun Tu Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya, declared: "A pact is made between a new nation that

55 Chin Kin Weh, n. 53, p. 9.

seeks to protect her interest, her independence and her sovereignty and another nation which she feels can give her this protection.” In 1963 Singapore became a part of the Federation of Malaysia and came within the scope of AMDA. It had been the headquarters of the British Pacific Fleet in 1948, and it was now considered to be most valuable for the plans to resist Communist expansionism in the region. Its inclusion within the scope of AMDA meant that it could be used as a base “for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Malaysia and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia”.

During this period anti-Communism got closely interlinked with Malaya’s concept of security. The Tunku too made this clear in a speech in 1958:

"It is as much the duty of the British people as the Malays to meet the Communist challenge and crush it. It is accepted by all people of the world that the fight against the Communists in Malaya is not Malaya’s concern alone. The Reds are trying to establish Communist dictatorship in Southeast Asia, if they succeeded, the whole of Southeast Asia will be lost and it will be a terrible setback to the cause of the free world."

67 Federation of Malaya, Legislative Council, Debates, session 3, 3 October 1957, col. 3355. Later on the Tunku said that this agreement “indirectly connected Malaya with SEATO”. Straits Times, 12 September 1958.

68 The Times (London), 10 June 1948.


60 The Times, 31 March 1963.
The New Federation of Malaysia
and Indonesia's Konfrontasi

The proposal to form a new federation, the Federation of Malaysia, by incorporating the British colonial territories of Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore precipitated an international crisis which came to be called Indonesia's Konfrontasi or Confrontation Policy (1963 to 1966). The merger of Singapore and the Borneo territories in the Federation of Malaya was part of the process of decolonization and gradual liquidation of the British Empire in Asia. It was perhaps in consonance with the British design not to transfer power to separate states but to unite them together. In 1949 Malcolm MacDonald, the then British High Commissioner for Southeast Asia, explained the British viewpoint to Mohammad Hatta, the Vice-President of Indonesia. He said that Britain's intention was to grant freedom to these three territories, not as separate states, but as one state united together. In view of this one may well hold that Konfrontasi was the kind of hypothetical situation for which AMDA had been designed.

An important consideration for the formation of Malaysia was the security of these territories against Communist expansionism. The leaders of the People's Action Party (PAP)


of Singapore convinced the Alliance leaders of Malaya that the threat they perceived from Communism could be neutralized only by bringing the various territories together in a new federation, the Federation of Malaysia.

Although a full-length discussion on the various stages of the conflict between the Federation of Malaysia and Indonesia, the motivations behind Indonesia's military action against Malaysia, and the international crisis it perpetrated is beyond the scope of our study, it must be said here that the Government of Indonesia fiercely criticised and sought to forestall the formation of the Federation of Malaysia even through military means. The genesis of Indonesia's *Konfrontasi* is closely linked with the development of the concept of the New Emerging Forces (NEFOS), which became a key element in the conduct of the foreign policy of Indonesia in the early 1960s. Sukarno criticized Malaysia as *a

63 For a comprehensive discussion on "Confrontation" see
product of neo-colonialism", He said: "Malaysia is to protect the safety of tin for the imperialists and Malaysia is to protect oil for the imperialists. For this reason we are determinedly opposed without any reservation, against Malaysia." The PKI also vehemently criticized the proposal for Malaysia as an attempt to perpetuate neo-colonialism and to subvert the democratic and patriotic movements of the people in the territories concerned. According to the Government of Indonesia, AMDA would also operate for Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore, and the extension of the pact right across the Kalimantan border was a threat to Indonesia's security.

Indonesia's opposition to Malaysia found expression in many ways. Not only did Indonesia aid and abet uprisings like the Brunei revolt (1962) but it also mounted a diplomatic-military offensive and posed a security threat to Malaysia. Nevertheless the Federation of Malaysia came into being on 16 September 1963. The declaration of the Malaysia Day led to intensification of Indonesian guerrilla activity across the Borneo borders and to the snapping of diplomatic and commercial ties between Malaysia and Indonesia.


Some of the military aspects of Konfrontasi may be briefly recounted here. Indonesia issued a threat to intensify its confrontation with Malaysia. It made a series of deep incursions into Sarawak from Kalimantan (the Indonesian part of Borneo) in the weeks following the formation of Malaysia. In December 1963 it launched a substantial attack on Sabah. According to Mackie, these "raids seem to have had a threefold purpose -- of setting up semi-permanent camps, mainly in the remote jungle areas of the 3rd and 4th Divisions; of recruiting or stirring up disaffected groups in the population to oppose Malaysia...." President Sukarno announced a "Ganjang Malaysia" or "Crush Malaysia" campaign, stating that "Indonesia may change its tactics but her goal will remain the same". 68

Britain's interest in the defence of Malaysia was linked to its role east of Suez which had to be maintained in the face of Indonesia's Konfrontasi. Thus the British Gurkha troops, with aid from Australia and New Zealand, defended the Malaysian territories against the Indonesian guerrillas.

Meanwhile the Philippine Government put forward its claim to be regarded as the rightful sovereign of Sabah in June 1962. This claim arose out of its own interpretation of the agreement signed between an Austrian, Baron de Overbeck, and the Sultan of Sulu in 1878 regarding the territory of Sabah. 69

The Philippine claim proved to be most complicated both historically and legally. More serious were the political implications of it, for it brought both the Government of Indonesia and the Government of the Philippines together in their opposition to Malaysia. It should, however, be mentioned here that unlike Indonesia, the Philippines disapproved of the use of military means to press its claim to Sabah or to bring pressure to bear upon Malaysia.

Despite opposition to Malaysia, the Philippines offered to play the honest broker. Prolonged negotiations between Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia resulted in a summit conference of three heads of State/Government, viz President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Macapagal of the Philippines, and Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaya, in Manila from 30 July to 5 August 1963. Prior to this summit conference there was a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the three countries in Manila (from 7 to 11 June 1963) which prepared an agreement which later came to be known as the Manila Accord. The heads of State/Government approved and accepted the Manila Accord, which constituted a high-water mark in the Malaysian-Indonesian efforts to arrive at a settlement of the dispute. In Manila, Indonesia and the Philippines made it clear that they had no objection to the formation of Malaysia "provided the support of the people of [the] Borneo territories is ascertained by an important

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authority, the Secretary-General of the United Nations or his representative". The three heads of State/Government also upheld President Macapagal’s plan for a Greater Malay Confederation, to be called Maphilindo, and pledged to hold "regular consultations at all levels to be known as Mushawarah Maphilindo".

Inasmuch as Maphilindo was an attempt by Southeast Asians to solve Southeast Asian problems all by themselves, it needs to be discussed here in some detail. Maphilindo had clear racial overtones: it was conceived as the basis for the forging of a cordial, fraternal relationship between the three countries of Malay origin. This provoked a good deal of discussion on the future of the region. In Malaya the people of Chinese origin found the concept objectionable on account of its racial character. Surprisingly, the British too were opposed to it as they felt that it might whittle down their influence in the region. In Indonesia the PKI was opposed to it. So was the Soviet Union. The Government of Indonesia, however, welcomed the concept and for two reasons. First, it saw in it the emergence of an entirely Southeast Asian responsibility for the defence and security of the region. Second, the concept was in keeping with its policy of opposition to the stationing of foreign troops in the region and its policy of non-alignment. The concept, however, proved abortive; for, following the creation of the Federation

71 Ibid., Appendix X. Maphilindo is an acronym for Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia.
of Malaysia, Indonesia resumed its Konfrontasi with Malaysia. Besides, the idea failed to attract mass support in both Malaysia and Indonesia. The Government in either country did nothing to popularize it.

Indonesia received support from both the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union in its confrontation with Malaysia. In 1961 the Soviet Union gave it military assistance to the tune of $400 million. Liu Shao-chi, Vice-Chairman of the People’s Republic of China, visited Jakarta in 1964. The two countries, China and Indonesia, agreed on this occasion to oppose Malaysia.

Two significant developments led to the end of confrontation. They are: Singapore’s separation from Malaysia and the abortive coup d'etat of 30 September 1965, known as the Gestapo, in Indonesia. The aftermath of the Gestapo saw the end of Sukarno’s Old Order (Orde Lama) and the introduction of the New Order (Orde Baru) under military leaders. The new leaders set themselves the task of ending confrontation and of establishing diplomatic relations with Malaysia. Thus Malaysia survived Indonesia’s Konfrontasi. Its size, however, was reduced following Singapore’s separation in 1965. Singapore’s separation came about owing to serious differences between the leaders of Singapore and the rest of Malaysia. The Alliance Party (the UMNO, the MCA, and the MIC) of Malaysia and the PAP of Singapore found themselves at logger-

72 Mackie, n. 68, pp. 185-6.

heads. Lee Kuan Yew denounced the formation of political parties on communal lines and advocated multi-racial parties. He also challenged the idea of a dominant role for the Malays in Malaysian politics. He wanted a "Malaysian Malaysia". His decision to form the Malaysian Solidarity Convention, a coalition of the PAP and the opposition parties, drove a wedge between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. The ethnic Malays of the peninsula regarded the convention's call for a "Malaysian Malaysia" as designed to pave the way for the political dominance of the PAP and the Singapore Chinese. The brewing political discontent born out of what was perceived as racial discrimination sparked communal trouble between the Malays and the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya in May 1965. As a result, on 7 August 1965, "An Agreement Relating to the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia" was signed between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew. The Separation Agreement made provision for a Treaty of External Defence and Mutual Assistance and a Joint Defence Council between Malaysia and Singapore.

Here a brief evaluation of the impact of Konfrontasi on Malaysia's security may be made. In the first place, the question which immediately comes to mind is: Did Konfrontasi strengthen the ties between the constituent units of Malaysia? Judging by the developments leading to the separation of Singapore, the answer should be negative.

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74 For the Separation Agreement, see the Government of Singapore, Gazette Extraordinary, 9 August 1965.
There was also initial opposition to Malaysia in Sarawak and Sabah although the local elites to an extent had been won over by the Alliance Government. In Sabah, though Tun Mustapha came to power as a supporter of Malaysia and as a critic of the concept of State autonomy that his opponent Donald Stephens was pleading for, he took a different stand later as Chief Minister of the State. In fact he showed insubordination to the Federal Government. Another question in this context would be: Did Konfrontasi promote racial unity between the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians? Once again the answer would be negative. Following ratification of the Bangkok Agreement, Foreign Minister Adam Malik of Indonesia, giving expression to the feeling of racial affinity, said: "No one has won or lost; victory goes to the Malay people, the great race in Southeast Asia, to which both Malaysia and Indonesia belong". This aggravated racial tension. The Chinese in Malaysia viewed with serious misgiving the prospect of an Indonesian-Malaysian rapprochement. Thirdly, Konfrontasi had


Tun Mustapha, who was playing a parallel game with the Federal Government, claimed to have been born in 1918 in the Sulu Archipelago (today a part of the Philippines). His support for the Muslim insurgents in the Philippines and his effort to achieve autonomy for Sabah are too well known to need mention. Ibid., pp. 45-55.


77 Behera, n. 63, p. 85. About four years after confrontation (13 May 1969) Kuala Lumpur witnessed the bloodiest racial riot in its history. This can be said to show that Indonesia's Konfrontasi did not promote racial unity in Malaysia.
a great impact on Malaysia's concept of national and regional security. It made the Government of Malaysia realize the need to lay special stress on the development of its defence apparatus. With the extension of the national boundaries to include Sarawak and Sabah, the danger of internal subversion also increased. This in its turn called for a further strengthening of the armed forces to safeguard the security of the nation in the face of the Communist insurgency.

Besides, as we have discussed above, the formation of Malaysia had not been smooth enough. The process of creation of the new federation had been marked by political differences between the Federation of Malaya and the new Borneo States, which presaged danger to internal security. It also led to Malaysia's developing and equipping its armed forces to deal with emergencies independently of the British and Commonwealth defence arrangements. The fear of the Government of Malaysia that the British and Commonwealth defence arrangements might not be adequate for any sudden crisis in the internal situation was reinforced when the British Labour Government

73 Chandran Jeshurun, *The Growth of the Malaysian Armed Forces, 1963-73: Some Foreign Press Reactions* (Occasional Paper No. 35, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, September 1975), pp. 2-3. As early as May 1963 Tun Razak stated in Dewan Ra'ayat: "... we have now, as a result of Malaysia, a much bigger area to cover and a much longer coastline to protect, and we have, therefore, to expand our defence forces to look after this area. Whatever policy we adopt externally we must still have enough defence forces, firstly, to maintain law and order in our country and, secondly, to look after the close defence of our country." Federation of Malaya, Dewan Ra'ayat, Debates, vol. 1, no. 4. 29 May 1963, cols 597-8.
decided in 1963 to withdraw militarily from areas east of Suez by the mid 1970s. (Later the date for such withdrawal was revised to 1971.)

Confrontation diplomacy entailed the convening of a series of international meetings to bring confrontation to an end. These meetings resulted in a number of initiatives towards the creation of a new regional grouping in Southeast Asia in which Indonesia might play a leading role. The Maphilindo spirit, which, as noted above, emerged during the period of confrontation, was looked upon by Tun Razak as an attempt to involve Indonesia in a kind of regional framework like the Association of Southeast Asia (ASEAN). The whole international outlook of Malaysia underwent change as a result of its confrontation with Indonesia. Considering its far-flung territories and meagre resources, Malaysia's capacity to fight subversion and Communist insurgency was open to doubt. Malaysia realized that its destiny was linked with its immediate neighbours and that in order to preserve its national security, it should throw its weight behind its neighbours. It also realized that in any form of regional co-operation Indonesian participation was necessary. It, therefore, became an active partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore.

Confrontation was also a contributing factor to a proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia. The

79 Mackie, n. 68, p. 167.
initiative in this matter was taken by Malaysia. When the British announced their decision to withdraw their troops from areas east of Suez, Malaysia was obliged to look for "an alternative means of security with as little cost as possible". Tun Abdul Razak, then Deputy Prime Minister, declared that Malaysia was in favour of a neutral Southeast Asia to safeguard its security. He also hoped that the Great Powers would desist from interfering in the affairs of the region.

Five-Power Defence Arrangements and Malaysia

The decision of the British to withdraw militarily from their base in Singapore and to give up their commitments under AMDA came in the months following the end of confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia. A number of reasons may be given for this decision. With the return of the Labour Party to power in Britain there was a review of the country's commitments world-wide. Britain's economy was under serious strain, and there was need for a drastic cut in defence expenditure. Such a cut was impossible without a review of the commitments and a suitable change in strategic thinking. At the same time Britain was seized of the need to make

80 Vishal Singh, "The End of the Conflict in Vietnam, and the Prospects for Southeast Asia", International Studies (Delhi), vol. 12 (1973), p. 566. Tan Sri Zaiton Bin Ahmad, Secretary-General, Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, indicated to Professor Vishal Singh in an interview in Kuala Lumpur on 31 May 1973 that because of Malaysia's experience of confrontation with Indonesia, "she cannot afford to be aligned".

81 Straits Times, 17 February 11 March 1968.
alternative arrangements for the defence and security of Malaysia and Singapore so as to protect British economic interests in the region. As Healey, then British Minister for Defence, said, Britain was mindful of its responsibilities and interests in the region. It was not "turning its back on an area in which we have appreciable economic interests, as well as deep historic ties".

A 5-Power (Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore) Ministerial meeting was held in London in April 1971. The communique issued at the end provided for a loose consultative framework for the external defence of Malaysia and Singapore. The communique declared:

In the event of any form of armed attack externally organized or supported or the threat of such attack against Malaysia or Singapore, their Governments would immediately consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately in relation to such attack or threat.

The five Powers also agreed to set up an Air Defence Council which would meet alternately in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, and a Joint Consultative Council, a forum for regular consultation at the level of senior officials on matters relating to the defence arrangements.

Besides, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain established an arrangement called ANZUK in November 1971 to provide


83 Federation of Malaysia, Foreign Affairs Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), vol. 4, no. 2, June 1971, p. 8.
strength to the 5-Power defence arrangements. These three external Powers undertook to contribute forces to be stationed under this new arrangement called ANZUK in Malaysia and Singapore. ANZUK was thus designed to protect the national interests of its partners with the explicit concurrence of Malaysia and Singapore. While the 5-Power defence arrangements and ANZUK were closely related to each other, they were not one and the same thing.

ANZUK was dismantled on 1 January 1975. It thus lasted three years. During this period the international environment in the Western Pacific as well as in the Southeast Asian region changed. In Australia and New Zealand the Labour Party came to power in 1972. In the United Kingdom also a Labour Government was elected to power in February 1974. The end of the war in Vietnam and the emergence of a Sino-US rapprochement led to a change in the five Powers’ perceptions.

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According to Thomson: "The 26,000 British servicemen remaining in 1971 were replaced by a three-nation force of 7,200-3,400 Australians, 2,600 British and 1,200 New Zealanders." See Thomson, n. 82, p. 153.

86 There is, however, no formal ANZUK Defence Agreement. Two sets of letters were exchanged between Malaysia and the three external Powers on the one hand and between Singapore and the three external Powers on the other.
of the international situation. The Australian Labour Government, after coming to power, decided to reduce the strength of its force to 150 troops and take them off the ANZUK command by April 1976. This called for a reconsideration of the future of the two Australian Mirage squadrons under the Integrated Air Defence System (of the 5-Power defence arrangements). In 1973 Whitlam, while withdrawing Australian troops, said: "In no way do we repudiate or downgrade the Five Power Arrangements.... Some components of Australian forces are going home but Australia is not going away."

In March 1973 the late Tun Dr Ismail, then Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, paid a visit to Australia. He remarked that in view of the expansion of Malaysia's own air force, the Butterworth Air Base might get "a little crowded". Such public statements made it clear that the defence arrangements were transitory in nature. Malaysia's aim was to phase out all defence arrangements with external Powers in step with the process of neutralization of Southeast Asia.

Although the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN states adopted the Malaysian proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, the Integrated Air Defence Command with its headquarters in Butterworth and an operational base in Tengah (Singapore)

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86 Thomson, n. 82, p. 154.
87 Quoted. Ibid.
were allowed to continue. A small British technical unit, two Australian Mirage squadrons, one New Zealand transport squadron, and a visiting Skyhawk squadron were reported in 1975 to be still present in Malaysian and Singapore soil. According to Malaysian leaders, the 5-Power defence arrangements served the purpose of providing a psychological assurance to Western investors.

Though the 5-Power defence arrangements were not envisaged to be permanent, there was no indication as to how long they were going to continue and what shape they were likely to take.

Malaysia faces the problem of internal security in its northern part bordering Southern Thailand as well as in East Malaysia — Sarawak and Sabah — bordering the Indonesian State of Kalimantan in the form of Communist guerrilla activity. The multi-racial character of its society demonstrates a potentially explosive communal situation within the country. (The racial riot of 1969 is a case in point.)

The leaders of Malaysia are still afraid lest the Philippines

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90 Thomson, n. 82, p. 158. According to Thomson: "In naval terms, the three ANZUK powers are separately and nationally interested in the security of South- east Asian waters for their merchant ships — the United Kingdom as operating 10 per cent of the world's mercantile marine, and as responsible for the defence of Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand as vulnerable from the sea and dependent on seaborne commerce, and not wishing that their adjacent Southeast Asian waters should be dominated by a major force with a naval offensive potential, using the pretext of moving in to fill a vacuum of naval power." Ibid.
should revive its claim to Sabah as a former part of the Sulu Sultanate. Although the 5-Power defence arrangements cannot be used to quell communal tension, they do provide a sense of security to the Malaysian Government. Not very long ago Commonwealth troops stood by Malaysia throughout the critical period of Indonesia's Konfrontasi.

Today Malaysia has, besides the problem of Communist guerrilla activity, a potentially explosive communal situation involving the Malay and Chinese ethnic groups. The Chinese and, to a certain extent, the Indians have a tendency to look to their respective mother countries. This comes in the way of their integration into Malaysian society. Because of their numerical strength and the external pulls of the Chinese and the Indians, the makers of Malaysian foreign policy need to take due note of China and India, especially in the context of national security.