CHAPTER II

RELATIONS DURING EARLY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE
The Federation of Malaya's relations with Indonesia during early years of independence flowed out of a number of intricate factors like conflicting ideologies, differing personalities of decision makers, domestic conditions, national interests, divergent perception of world situation, perception of each other and of themselves. An attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the relations between the two countries since 1957 within the context of their foreign policy.

An Overview of Malaya's Foreign Policy

Even before the Federation of Malaya became independent on 31 August 1957, the Chief Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman had given considerable thought to the foreign policy of his country after independence. The long years of communist insurgency, which officially came to an end only three years after Malaya's independence, the assistance given by the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand in tackling the insurgency, the Anglo - Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA), the limitations, both economic and administrative, which inhibited the pursuance of an 'active' foreign policy, the necessity to maintain the balance between the Malays and the non-Malays, the fear of People's Republic of China which continued to exert
influence on the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and also the Chinese minority - all these factors influenced the nature and contours of Malaya's foreign policy.

During the tenth anniversary of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) held in May 1956, Tunku Abdul Rahman stated that his country's foreign policy would be free "from any influence" and would be "guided by the spirit of Bandung and Geneva".¹ According to a well known commentator on Malaya's foreign policy, Kuala Lumpur's foreign policy was officially declared as 'independent and non-aligned'², but the reality of the situation was that the Malayan foreign policy took a pro-Western orientation on all major issues relating to cold war. The opposition parties criticised the Federation Government for its 'vague, confused and contradictory' policies on several international issues.³ Tunku Abdul Rahman however defended his foreign policy as one of neutrality. To quote Tunku's words:

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¹ *Straits Times* (Singapore), 18 May 1956.
Our foreign policy is not hostile. It is neutral-neutral to the extent of the terms and meaning of word ‘neutral’. But where there has been a conflict between the Western ideology and Eastern ideology, then we side with the Western ideology.\(^4\)

The Malayan leaders tried to draw a distinction between ideological alignment and political alignment. Political leaders like Tunku Abdul Rahman and Ghazali bin Shafie tried to assert that since Malaya was not aligned politically with the West, its foreign policy was not to be taken as ‘pro-West’.\(^5\) For example, Federation of Malaya did not join the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) - formed in 1954 following the French debacle in Indochina. The question of Malaya joining SEATO, at that time, did not arise because Federation of Malaya was still under British domination. However, Britain was a member of SEATO. In 1957, the Federation leaders decided not to join SEATO because Malaya’s security interests were safeguarded by the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA).\(^6\) What is more, if Malaya had joined SEATO, it would have been considered as an unfriendly act by India and Indonesia.


\(^5\) Ott, n.3, pp.53-54.

the two leading non-aligned countries in the region with whom the Federation leaders wanted to establish cordial relations. Although not in SEATO, Malaya’s voting in the United Nations seemed to be close to the heel of SEATO countries. The indirect link with the SEATO was undeniable and was even admitted by the Tunku:

As you all know, we are not in SEATO. We are tied up with Britain under the Defence Agreement but whether that has indirectly tied us to SEATO is a question to answer. All I can say is that we are not in SEATO. In this respect, if SEATO countries are involved in any war, we are not committed to the war; but on the other hand if Britain entered the war and one of the countries which we are committed to defend, like Singapore, a British territory or Borneo is attacked, then we are treaty bound to fight. Perhaps, you may say we are indirectly committed with SEATO but I can say quite openly here and assure the House that we are not in SEATO.

The Federation of Malaya welcomed the SEATO as an 'effective shield against the overt encroachment of communism'. It was also an enthusiastic member and supporter of the Commonwealth. Being a member of the Commonwealth, military, security, economic assistances

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8 Cited in Boyce, n.2, p.42.

9 Straits Times, 26 April 1963.
and diplomatic support from other Commonwealth countries reached Malaya whenever needed. As most of the Commonwealth countries were members of the Colombo Plan, Malaya was in an advantageous position of getting assistance from Colombo powers also. The benign attitude of the Malayan Government towards the West was the outcome of the anti-communist character of the Alliance Government and its defence agreement with Britain. Tunku explained Kuala Lumpur's position on this issue as follows:

> There is no denying the fact that the Western imperialists have brought progress, comforts, prosperity and peace to their colonies. They have freed their colonies one by one, thus ending their role as colonialists. What the Western imperialists wanted was a trade relation with their former colonies. Although, we know they are cunning in business and at the same time selfish, they never hesitate to give assistance to this nation which is friendly to them when that nation needs such assistance.10

In spite of benign attitude towards the West, Kuala Lumpur took a firm stand against colonial domination of one country by another. According to Tilman, "Malayan voting on colonial issues was almost as correct as that of one of the most passionately or perhaps pathologically anti-colonial states like

10 *Straits Times*, 28 October 1963.
Indonesia". In the United Nations General Assembly debates, the Federation of Malaya advocated the boycott of South African products, as a protest to the policy of apartheid; years later others followed. In hastening South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961, Tunku played a significant role.

As foreign policy and domestic policy are closely inter related, it is necessary to assess Federation of Malaya's foreign policy against the backdrop of domestic policies. The vulnerable issue of maintaining the precarious balance between the Malays and the non-Malays, and the issue of containing communism influenced the domestic as well as foreign policies of the Federation of Malaya. Highlighting these twin facets, Yang di. Pertuan Agong stated in the Malayan Legislative Council:

> My Government intends to concentrate on home affairs. There will be no startling policy in the field of external affairs.


12 Straits Times, 31 August 1960.

It is the intention of my government to be on the most friendly terms with all countries of the world.¹⁴

Although Kuala Lumpur characterised its foreign policy as independent and non-aligned, it was forced to make deviations from the declared policy. The Federation was preoccupied with striking a political and economic balance between the Malays and non-Malays and fighting against communist insurrection and Chinese chauvinism. The prolonged struggle against communism which resulted in the declaration of Emergency, the vulnerability to external attack, scanty military resources and inadequate experience in international affairs were important factors which led towards orientation with Britain and its allies. The Prime Minister elaborated this point in detail.

There is no question whatsoever of our adopting a neutral policy while Malaya is at war with Communism. Only when we are certain that people here have become truly Malayan-minded and have set their minds on making Malaya their only home, can the government declare the policy of neutrality. So long as this fight continued, I consider that we would be breaking faith with the people if this government were to enter into any form of diplomatic relationship with the communist countries... let me tell you that there are no such things as local communists. Communism is an international organisation which aim for world domination, not by

¹⁴ Boyce, n.2, pp.41-42.
aggression if they can avoid it, but by the use of tactics and methods among the sons of the country to overthrow democracy and to set up in its place a government after the pattern of all communist countries.\textsuperscript{15}

With the bitter experience of Emergency, no wonder, the newly independent Federation of Malaya pursued an anti-communist foreign policy. Tunku Abdul Rahman and his colleagues believed that Chinese chauvinism and expansionism posed the gravest threat to stability and security of Malaya.\textsuperscript{16} Under the protective umbrella of Britain, the Federation of Malaya adopted a low profile in its foreign policy, but on major cold war issues, it aligned itself with the 'Free World'.

Explaining the Government's policy on recognition of the communist countries, Ismail, the Malayan Ambassador to the United States, announced, in October 1958 that "We have decided to recognise all Governments with the exception of Communist Government of China and Nationalist Government in Formosa. We have not also recognised the Governments of smaller countries in the Soviet bloc".\textsuperscript{17} Malaya also opposed the admission of

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Straits Times}, 7 December 1958.

\textsuperscript{16} V. Suryanarayan, \textit{Malaysia's China Policy} (Monograph - 4, Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Madras, Madras, 1980), p.3.

\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Boyce, n.2, p.37.
China in the United Nations. Its representative to United Nations even characterised the "policies of these communist countries as a new and more devilish and sinister form of colonialism".  

The Federation of Malaya simultaneously supported the U.S. policy in Vietnam, Cuba and Gulf of Tonkin. Tunku even admitted that guns, ammunitions and vehicles were shipped to Saigon and that thousands of Vietnamese were trained in either jungle warfare or police administration as aid programme against communist aggression. The Federation of Malaya condemned the Chinese action in Tibet in 1959 and the seizure of Indian territories in 1962. The Tunku even launched a 'Save Democracy Fund' to help India to defend itself against Chinese aggression. Tunku explained his policy with regard to China and Communism as follows:

"China's emergence as a powerful military force, expressing the most militant form of Communism, has made the problem of survival for all the countries of Southeast Asia extremely acute. So far, pro-Peking forces are militantly active only in Vietnam, Laos and Indonesia... Our role, we feel, is not only to dispel unwarranted pessimism but to..."

18 Suryanarayan, n.16, p.3
20 Ibid., pp.664-5.
reaffirm by our own example and policy that democracy is a better answer to the social and economic problems of this vital region than Communism can ever be.21

In spite of the common antipathy towards communism, the Federation of Malaya did not recognise the Nationalist regime in Formosa. The large Chinese population of Malaya with their economic strength, the likely emotional and political influences on the Chinese and the bitter memories of the Kuomintang activities in the past seemed to have a bearing on Malaya's 'non-recognition' policy towards Taiwan.22 However, there was a strong pressure from the pro-Taiwan lobby in the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan.23 In 1964, Nationalist Government of Formosa was allowed to open its Consulate in Kuala Lumpur mainly for trade purposes.

The Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance, 12 October 1957

With the attainment of independence, Kuala Lumpur did not assume the sole responsibility for its

21 Ibid., p.670.
22 Suryanarayan, n.16, pp.1-3.
23 Ibid., p.3.
defence. Rather, under the Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance, the corner stone of the Federation's defence, both Federation of Malaya and Britain agreed for defence co-operation as follows:

In the event of an armed attack against any of the territories or forces of the Federation of Malaya or any of the territories or protectorates of the United Kingdom in the Far East or any of the forces of the United Kingdom within any of those territories or protectorates or within the Federation of Malaya, the Governments of Federation of Malaya and of the United Kingdom undertake to co-operate with each other and will take such action as each considers necessary for the purpose of meeting the situation effectively.\(^{24}\)

The two governments agreed to consult each other if peace of any one of the territories mentioned above was threatened. The Agreement allowed the United Kingdom to continue to maintain its bases and military facilities.\(^{25}\) However the Agreement prevented the UK from arbitrary use of these facilities, should hostilities involving either party occur anywhere else in the world. Without prior agreement of the Government of the Federation of Malaya, the UK should

\(^{24}\) Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on External Defence and Mutual Assistance, signed at Kuala Lumpur on 12 October, 1957 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1957), Article VII.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., Article IV and Article VI.
not commit its forces to active operations involving the use of bases in the Federation of Malaya. It was also obliged to vacate any base or any part thereof at the request of the Federation.26 At the same time, the Federation of Malaya did not make any compromise on the two issues of rejecting nuclear weapons and refusing to join the SEATO. The Agreement was opposed and criticised by opposition parties and trade union representatives as one which compromised Malaya's independence and sovereignty.27 The Tunku reiterated the government's position and declared that the pact was a matter of necessity. To quote Tunku:

... let us face facts and the facts are that we have at our command an army of less than one division in strength; we have no air force, not even a single plane or a single man; we have no navy; not even a single sailor and we have not even a sea going craft. With the revenue at our command we can never be able to build our force to the strength which we would require for the defence of our country.28

The Federation of Malaya was relatively a small nation facing several challenges of development. It had to concentrate on improving the standard of living of

26 Ibid., see Article IV.
27 Saravanamuttu, n.6, p.23.
the people and had to provide necessary amenities and social services to its citizens. As such it could not afford to build up and maintain a huge defense force. Naturally, as justified by the Tunku, the Federation of Malaya had to depend on the United Kingdom and its Allies for external defence. Thus it entered into a mutual defence pact with the United Kingdom to ensure maximum security with minimum obligation. To a query as to why Malaya did not join SEATO, Tunku promptly replied that the Defence Agreement was felt too sufficient for the security and safety of the country to enter into any defence agreement with other countries.29

To sum up, Malaya's foreign policy was inward looking; it was a low profile policy which displayed pro-Western, especially pro-British and anti-communist stances. The objectives of Malaya's foreign policy - the protection and preservation of independence and sovereignty against outside interference and outside external aggression - got entwined with the pursuit of domestic policy objectives - nation building and development, protection against communist insurrection and Chinese chauvinism and maintaining the balance between the Malays and the non-Malays.

29 See Saravanamuttu, n.6, p.24, fn.
An Overview of Indonesia's Foreign Policy

In Indonesia, the internal scene was completely different. As described in the first chapter, Indonesia got independence only after a prolonged struggle. Naturally the ending of colonialism everywhere became one of the important objectives of Indonesia's foreign policy. This objective was even incorporated in the Preamble to the Constitution:

Independence being in truth the right of all peoples, colonialism, which does not accord with humanity and justice, must be abolished throughout the world... to promote the public welfare, to improve the livelihood of the people and join in establishing a world order based on freedom, everlasting peace and sound justice, the independence of Indonesian people shall be ordered in a Constitution of the Indonesian State in the form of the Republic of Indonesia...30

Due to the active involvement of the United Nations, United States, India and United Kingdom in its freedom movement, Indonesia was exposed to world politics even before independence. The prolonged armed struggle for independence and harsh nature of the Dutch colonial rule shaped the anti-colonial attitude among the national leaders which was far more stern and

severe than that of Federation of Malaya. Such a stern anti-Western attitude ultimately took the country to the path of non-alignment with either bloc. True to the principle laid down in the Preamble, Indonesia was also in the forefront of eliminating the remnants of colonialism in any form and in any corner of the world, through an independent and active foreign policy.

A clear statement regarding 'active and independent foreign policy' of Indonesia was made by the Prime Minister, Mohammad Hatta, in 1953:

The (foreign) policy of Indonesia is not one of neutrality because it is not constructed in reference to belligerent states but for the purpose of strengthening and upholding peace. Indonesia plays no favourites between the two blocs and following its own path through the various international problems. It terms this policy 'independent' and further characterised it by describing it as independent and active. By 'active' is meant the effort to work energetically for the preservation of peace and relaxation of tension generated by two blocs through endeavours supported if possible by the majority of members of the United Nations.31

The policy of non-alignment with power blocs or the 'independent and active' foreign policy as Indonesians preferred to call it, was reaffirmed by

31 Kalayani Bandyopadhyaya, *Burma and Indonesia - Comparative Political Economy and Foreign Policy* (New Delhi, 1983), p.159.
successive governments of Indonesia but with varying degrees. The desire to achieve equality with Western states and to resist new dominations were the ideological factors which influenced Indonesia to follow such an independent policy. As Herbert Feith remarked, independent and active foreign policy became a sort of ideological prism through which all practical policies had to be refracted.32

An important feature of foreign policy in the early 1950s was that the issues and decisions regarding relations with other countries were very much interlocked with the domestic arena. For instance, in the first three and half years of Indonesia's independence, the conduct of foreign policy was primarily determined by the immediate economic rehabilitation of the country which impelled the government to prefer tolerance of Western interests rather than the rhetoric of independent and active foreign policy.33

During the period of Liberal Democracy (1951-57), Indonesia's non-alignment policy offered an ideological


consensus among ideologically heterogeneous political parties. Whenever a Prime Minister or Foreign Minister tried to deviate from such ideologically oriented non-alignment policy, trouble arose. For example, the conclusion of an agreement between the Foreign Minister Subardjo and the U.S. Ambassador in Jakarta on economic and military assistance in January 1952 led to the forcible resignation of Sukiman Cabinet in February 1952 for abandoning the independent foreign policy.34 The Wilopo's coalition government also was forced to resign following the crisis over an attempt to expel peasant squatters from land leased to Dutch owned tobacco companies in East Sumatra.35 During the tenure of Ali Sastroamidjyo, with PKI behind it, Indonesian foreign policy witnessed an 'active' trend if not an 'independent' policy. In the Bandung Conference held in April 1955, Ali Sastroamidjyo raised the image of his country as the champion of anti-colonialism and brought Indonesia to the forefront of Afro-Asian leadership.36 During his tenure, Indonesia also improved its relations with the Soviet Union. The

34 This controversial issue is described in detail in Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 198-207.
35 For details, see Ibid., pp. 293-301.
conclusion of Dual Nationality Treaty with People's Republic of China on 22 April 1955, which granted the right to the Chinese residents in Indonesia to choose between the two nationalities within two years, marked the beginning of cordial relationship between China and Indonesia. At the same time, the opposition to the Manila Pact sponsored by the United States in September 1954 and Indonesia's call for a halt to the Indo-China conflict were aimed at preventing the intrusion of cold war in Southeast Asia. Inspite of his significant international role, Ali Cabinet fell from office in 1955 purely over the domestic issue of nominee for the post of Army Chief of Staff.

Burhanuddin Government, which succeeded Ali Government, tried to follow a conciliatory approach in its relations with Western States to have their backing in its dealing with the Dutch over the West Irian issue. However such policies failed to get domestic endorsement. As a result, he had to step down from power. With the decline of Parliamentary Democracy and the introduction of Guided Democracy, President Sukarno assumed full control over foreign policy. With the


38 Leifer, n.33, p.39
growing strength of *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) with which Sukarno established 'mutually protective relationship' against the power of Army, Indonesian foreign policy tilted towards the left. Such a trend was in contrast to that of the Federation of Malaya where the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was banned, and the Emergency was still in operation and the Commonwealth Forces were engaged in anti-guerrilla operations. Another development which had its fallout was the growing importance of the Army and the steady flow of arms from Soviet Union and China. Relations with the United States took a nose dive with the growing rapprochement between Indonesia and Soviet Union. The introduction of Cold War, the formation of SEATO, the operative area of which was in Indonesia's neighbourhood, naturally came in for strident criticism. The unsympathetic role of the US in the West-Irian issue and its involvement in the regional uprisings further worsened relations between Indonesia and the United States. Indonesian Government viewed the American involvement as if "to split Indonesia in two in order to ensure that at least one part of the country

39 PKI was a staunch supporter of Sukarno in almost all major issues of domestic as well as foreign policy. For a good account, see Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno, Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965* (Ithaca, 1974), p.177.
would remain non-communist. American involvement fanned the flames of anti-Western feelings in Jakarta. During Sukarno's tenure, the idiosyncratic variable became an unchallenged factor in decision making. Sukarno viewed imperialism and colonialism in any form as the root cause of international tension. He introduced a new principle for explaining all major world issues in terms of a conflict between the Old Established Forces (OLDEFOS) against the New Emerging Forces (NEFOS). In the Belgrade Conference of Non-alignment in 1961, he first spoke of this conflict as the source of world tensions.

Thus, while Indonesia was following a dynamic non-aligned foreign policy, Federation of Malaya was making all efforts to combat communism and even made steady progress in suppressing the communist terrorists. What is still more interesting, while the economy of the Federation Malaya showed steady progress, Indonesia drifted from one crisis to another. It was quite apparent that while Malaya deliberately adopted a low profile foreign policy, foreign policy became an important factor in Indonesian political system.

40 Leifer, n.33, p.50.

41 Lalita Prasad Singh, Power Politics and Southeast Asia (New Delhi, 1979), p.54.
Foreign policy was even used as a tool to keep the balance among the political opponents and to promote internal solidarity. Foreign policy was pursued as a continuation of revolutionary struggle with the prime concern for securing West Irian which Sukarno viewed as a question of colonialism and independence. The domestic function of foreign policy was clearly indicated by Sukarno when he stated in his opening address to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955 as follows:

And I beg of you, do not think of colonialism only in the classic form which we in Indonesia and our brothers in different parts of Asia and Africa know. Colonialism has its modern dress, in the form of economic control, international control, actual physical control by a small but alien community within a nation.42

Unlike the Federation of Malaya, Indonesia was a leading member of the Afro-Asian bloc. As such, forging solidarity among NEFOS and thereby securing Indonesian leadership seemed to be the primary agenda of foreign policy. Sukarno preferred to forsake the economic development of the country just to sustain political freedom of Indonesia. Sukarno himself in his Independence Day speech in August 1962 referred to the chaotic economic and financial conditions prevailing in

42 Leifer, n.33, p.52.
Indonesia. Given his political orientation, he ignored the economic realities and urged that the elimination of all foreign influences must be given priority.\textsuperscript{43} It was the tragedy of the post war Southeast Asian history that the two countries which culturally and linguistically were so similar had to drift away from each other.

\textbf{EARLY BILATERAL RELATIONS}

On attaining independence, Federation of Malaya pursued a foreign policy which laid great emphasis on befriending its immediate neighbours. Tunku Abdul Rahman highlighted this feature of the foreign policy:

\begin{quote}
We can not and do not aspire to rely on the might of arms to promote our future hopes preferring to live in peace and friendship with all especially our neighbours.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Naturally, Indonesia with which Federation of Malaya shared common ethnic, historical and cultural ties, was an important focus of attention of the Malayan foreign

\textsuperscript{43} For Sukarno's views on the role of economic development in nation building, see the text of his speech before the October 1964 Cairo Conference. Government of Indonesia, Department of Foreign Affairs, \textit{The Era of Confrontation} (Jakarta, 1964), p.20. Also refer Ide Anuk Agung Gde Agung, \textit{Twenty Years of Indonesia's Foreign Policy, 1945-1965} (Yogyakarta, 1990), pp.445-6.

\textsuperscript{44} Rahman, n.19, p.669.
office. The hardening of Malaya/Malaysia's attitude towards Indonesia, with the passage of time, was an offshoot of several developments - the changing international situation and differing responses from Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta; the proposal for Malaysia which meant the incorporation of Singapore and Borneo territories; and People's Republic of China's attitude towards Southeast Asia and the growth of communist influence in the region. In the following pages an attempt is made to describe the change in the relationship between Federation of Malaya and Indonesia from one of cordiality to ill will.

The Treaty of Friendship and Cultural Agreement

Keeping in line with the objective of befriending its neighbours, Kuala Lumpur made sincere efforts to promote cordial ties with its big neighbour Indonesia. Indonesia welcomed Malaya's independence on 31 August 1957, the Federation Mission, which was opened in Jakarta early in 1957, was raised to an Embassy. Enche Senu bin Abdul Rahman became the Federation's first Ambassador in Jakarta while Mohamad Razif became Indonesia's first Ambassador.

45 Government of Malaysia, Department of Information, Malaya/Indonesia Relations, 31st August 1957 to 15th September 1963 (Kuala Lumpur, 1963), col.4.
in Kuala Lumpur. In 1958, a Consulate was opened in Medan. The Malayan Ambassador evinced keen interest in concluding a Friendship and Cultural Agreement between the two countries. However, Tunku Abdul Rahman, initially did not show much enthusiasm; and therefore the proposal got delayed. In November 1958, Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaya, visited Indonesia and the relations between the two countries started gathering momentum. Reciprocating the Malayan goodwill, Ruslan Abdul Gani, Indonesian Minister, declared that Malaya and Indonesia were historically inseparable and that their friendship was inspired by ideals of freedom and justice. A Joint Communiqué, issued at the end of visit, envisaged the conclusion of a Treaty of Friendship which would "not only give formal expression to the close friendship that existed between the two countries but also provide the basis for cooperation and collaboration towards the growth of a common language and a common culture". The success of this first goodwill mission was welcomed as 'a happy augury' for future relations between the two countries.

Ibid.

Ott, n.3, pp.112-13.

Malaya/Indonesia Relations, n.45, col.5.

Ibid., col.6.
In April 1959, the goodwill visit from Malaya was reciprocated by the then Prime Minister of Indonesia, Djuanda. During his visit to Kuala Lumpur, the Treaty of Friendship and Cultural Agreement was signed on 17 April 1959. By this Treaty both countries agreed to promote bilateral co-operation and also to resolve any dispute if it arises "in a true spirit of friendship and goodwill". Article 4 of the Treaty clearly indicated:

The two High contracting parties agree that in case any dispute on matters directly and exclusively affecting them should arise, they shall endeavour to settle such disputes through usual diplomatic channels in a true spirit of friendship and goodwill. If a settlement cannot be found through such channels within a reasonable time, they shall endeavour to settle them by other ways and means in accordance with the United Nations charter and the principles enunciated at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955.  

The Treaty also extended the areas of co-operation to Consular relations, trade, communications, the surrender of fugitive offenders, cultural and educational exchanges and language standardization by achieving the greatest possible uniformity in their use

50 Government of Federation of Malaya, Department of Information, Treaty of Friendship between the Federation of Malaya and the Republic of Indonesia (Kuala Lumpur, 1959), Article IV. This is included in this dissertation as Appendix - I.
and development. By this Treaty both countries agreed to examine and alleviate or modify the inconvenience and restrictions suffered by their nationals while travelling and residing in the two countries on a reciprocal basis. This Treaty, the first of its kind for Malaya, was significant as it provided a concrete basis for the establishment of closer ties, so essential for peace and well being of Southeast Asia.

The next four years witnessed a number of cultural exchanges between the two countries. Indonesia offered scholarships to few Malay students to study in Indonesian universities. Unfortunately both scholarship students and private students, numbering around 50, found it difficult to secure suitable accommodation and educational facilities. This led to more complaints than complements from Malayan students. Indonesia also provided grants for few Malayan Air Force cadets. This programme was more successful than the scholarship programme. A few visits by rubber experts were also arranged. In October 1960, General

51 Economic Review of Indonesia (London), vol.5, no.12, December 1958, p.16.

52 n.50, p.2.

53 n.45, cols.10-12.

54 Williard A. Hanna, "Pan-Malayan Relations: Malaya and Indonesia-A Strange Estrangement", American Universities Field Staff Reports Service (New York), vol.8, no.6, pp.9-10.
Nasution, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian National Army together with his wife and a group of officials made an official visit to the Federation and visited various military establishments. Early in 1961, when disastrous floods occurred in West Java, Malaya expressed its sympathy for the victims. In order to develop the Malayan and Indonesian languages into one common language, a delegation was sent under Director of Dewan Bahasa, Tun Syed Nasir Ismail, to Indonesia for discussions with the Indonesian Language Implementation Committee. The Malayan government readily approved the proposed new spelling system whereas the Indonesian government did not ratify the proposal. By that time, amicable relations between the two governments were overshadowed by serious irritants. After 1962, there were no cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Pemerintah Revolusione of the Republic of Indonesia
Revolt (PRRI)

The Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (Pemerintah Revolusione Republic Indonesia) revolt, as mentioned in the first chapter, broke out in

55 n.45, col.16.
56 Ibid.
Indonesia in 1957. It was a Sumatra-centred revolt against the Java-based regime in Jakarta. Although it attracted the sympathies of many peninsular Malays, in conformity with the spirit of friendship and in accordance with international practice, the Federation Government adopted a position of 'strict non-involvement' as it considered the revolt as an internal matter for Indonesia. Indonesia was very much disappointed over the Malayan Government's reluctance to assist the Indonesian Government to suppress the rebellion. Malaya's 'neutral stand' was even interpreted as an expression of moral support to the rebels. Indonesia felt more aggrieved when Federation of Malaya gave political asylum to number of rebels. Malaya's explanation that it granted asylum only after obtaining an undertaking from them that they would not participate in any activities aiming at overthrowing the Indonesian government did not convince the Indonesian government. Jakarta's doubts about Malaya's position were reinforced by the evidence that the rebels were able to purchase arms from Singapore and from the Thai-Malayan border area. They were also able to obtain foreign exchange by selling Sumatran products in the British Colony of Singapore and the Port of Penang in

57 Ibid., col.19.
Malaya without any restrictions from the Government of Malaya. Jakarta was further irritated when the Federation of Malaya allowed some rebels to visit Malaya. The Federation of Malaya claimed that it took immediate action to refuse entry into the Federation to such people who were believed to be actively engaged in the rebellion inspite of their possession of valid travel documents. The problem however became acute by the Malayan Government's refusal to hand over the thirty rebels including the prominent members of Masyumi and Partai Sosialis Indonesia, on humanitarian grounds. Kuala Lumpur tried to justify its action by declaring that as there was no extradition agreement between the two countries and therefore, handing over these rebels would be tantamount to recognising a state of insurgency in Indonesia in which case the proper procedure would have been to intern those alleged rebels. Subsequently the thirty Indonesians in Penang were prosecuted under Malayan law as illegal entrants and were told to leave the territorial limits of the country.

58 It was alleged by the Sukarno government that during the PRRI revolt, Tunku even invited Sumatra to join Malaya. "Jakarta Relents", The Economic Weekly (Bombay), vol.15, no.23, 1963.

59 n.45, cols.21-25.
On 28 January 1960, Subandrio, the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, proposed an extradition treaty between Indonesia and the Federation of Malaya. Kuala Lumpur refused to entertain this proposal as it did not want the extradition arrangement to cover political refugees. This refusal was interpreted by the Indonesian government as aid and abetment of the Indonesian rebels.\textsuperscript{60} This episode brought a rift in Malaya-Indonesia relations although outwardly both continued to express feelings of sincere co-operation. It is necessary to point out in this connection that during confrontation, some of these rebels who stayed back in Malaya assisted the Federation Government through their propaganda broadcasts and by gathering information from their motherland.\textsuperscript{61}

\textit{West Irian Issue}

Another irritant which affected the relations between the two countries was the \textit{Irian Barat} (West Irian or West New Guinea) issue. The Round Table Conference in The Hague, which was held between August and November 1949, reserved the question of West New Guinea for future negotiation; however, the recovery of

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., col.25.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Straits Times}, 7 April 1964.
West Irian became a great issue in Indonesia. On 17 August 1950, Sukarno declared in his Independence Day speech:

... we will fight till the end of time as long as one part of our country—however small that part may be—is not yet freed... We will continue fighting, we will keep on fighting whatever may come until West Irian has been returned to our fold.62

In later years, Indonesia’s claim to West Irian was asserted more and more vociferously.63 This strained the Dutch-Indonesia relations and led to the seizure of Dutch enterprises in December 1957. On 17 August 1960, Sukarno announced the breaking of diplomatic relations with Holland and thus intensified the campaign to recover West Irian. In the wake of the futile mission to Washington under General Nasution in October 1960, Indonesia turned to Soviet Union for arms supply. In early 1961, Netherlands made statements suggesting the independence of West New Guinea as a separate state.64 It was at this point that the United


states decided to intervene in the conflict. It decided to reject the Dutch invitation for the ceremonial opening of New Guinea Council on 5 April 1961. In the UN both Indonesia and Netherlands failed to get a two-thirds majority for the resolution submitted on their behalf. On 10 November 1961, Sukarno openly advocated a military attack on the disputed area. On 19 December 1961, Sukarno delivered his 'Trikora' command to the nation to prepare for mobilisation. He even announced that Irian would be returned to Indonesia by the end of 1962.65 The Dutch however refused to transfer West Irian to Indonesians.

By early 1962, there was a noticeable change in the Dutch attitude. In January 1962, the Dutch Prime Minister declared his government's willingness to negotiate. After Robert Kennedy's mission, both Indonesian and Dutch negotiators met in Washington. But Indonesia withdrew from this negotiation after two days and landed armed infiltrators in the West Irian. Final negotiations took place with the mediation of Bunker of the United States by which West New Guinea's administration was to be placed under a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority between 1 October 1962 and 1 May 1963 as transition period. Thereafter the

65 Ibid., p.352.
territory would be administered by Indonesia. The West Irian campaign was one which brought both President and Army closer. This issue helped the President to maintain his image as a revolutionary leader. The Army supported Sukarno in this issue as it provided a rationale for major purchases of arms and for extending the influence of Army in politics. A National Front for the Liberation of West Irian (FNPIB) was established in January 1958 with General Nasution as the General Chairman and the Territorial Commanders as local chairmen to channel the efforts and activities of various youth and functional bodies in the struggle for the liberation of West Irian. The installation of officers of the Front took place in the Presidential palace on 15 August 1958. However the FNPIB was replaced by Sukarno's own National Front in mid 1960.

On the question of West Irian, Indonesia did not receive the expected support from the Federation of Malaya. In the United Nations General Assembly, Malaya abstained from voting in favour of Indonesia's claim. Naturally Malaya was bitterly criticized by the

66 Van der Kroef, n.63.

67 The Front failed in its purpose due to conflict of interests between the President, the Army and Communists in upholding the front for their own benefit. See Ghoshal, n.62, pp.173-4.
Indonesian press. Tun Ismail, leader of the Malayan delegation, explained the stand of Malaya in the following way:

As a new member and as a representative of a Government which until a few months ago had no responsibility... in the foreign relations of the country, my delegation thought it wise not to vote one way or another on a matter upon which I must confess, we are in no position to ponder upon deeply and carefully and which we are aware, had great political and economical significance.68

However, in the United Nations, Malaya indicated clearly that it was for a peaceful liquidation of Dutch 'vestigial colonialism' in West Irian.69 This dispute, Malaya apprehended, would be exploited by the communists and would soon involve Malaya also due to the proximity of Indonesia and West Irian. Tunku Abdul Pahman urged a peaceful settlement between the Dutch and Indonesia and even proposed an international conference to bring about a solution. It is interesting to note the ambivalent stand of the Malayan Government. It did not openly support the Indonesian claim nor did it condemn the aggressive posture of Jakarta. A policy of opposition or indifference to the Indonesian claim might have led to domestic dissent especially among the Malays. But it

68 Ott, n.3, p.124.
69 n.45, col.33.
offered its good offices for mediatory efforts. The Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, wrote to President Sukarno on 20 September 1960 expressing his country's desire to assist in bringing about a solution. Dr. Djuanda, the acting President of the Republic of Indonesia, in the absence of Sukarno, agreed in principle to Tunku's proposal to transfer West Irian to the United Nations as a trust territory before effecting the transfer of the territory directly to Republic of Indonesia. However, Djuanda specified that the period of trusteeship should not exceed one year. In November 1960, Tunku during his visit to Canada and the United States, appraised the leaders of the two countries of his proposal for the settlement of the dispute and requested their full support for his mediatory efforts. The then Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold also promised his support for the efforts of Tunku who expressed his fears of possible jeopardization of peace and security in the region if the dispute was not settled amicably. In a Joint Communique issued after discussions between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dr. Jan de Quay, Netherlands Prime Minister, Dr. Luns, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the States Secretary for Netherlands in New Guinea, the Netherlands

70 *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), vol.6, no.1, 24-31 December 1960, pp.3707-708.
Government expressed its willingness to subject their policy to the Security Council and to the judgement of the United Nations. Thus the Federation Prime Minister did a creditable job by bringing both parties to the negotiation table and by facilitating the introduction of the United Nations in the problem. It was Tunku's first major role as a mediator on the international level. He viewed this mediatory role as a most sacred mission.  

Unfortunately even before Tunku returned to Kuala Lumpur from Holland, Indonesia bitterly criticised his mediatory efforts. Subandrio, Foreign Minister of Indonesia, commented that the Tunku had a rather inflated opinion of his position in world politics. He rejected the Tunku's proposal for UN participation in the dispute except to supervise an immediate transfer of West Irian to Indonesia. This statement was quite contradictory from that of Djuanda in his capacity as Acting President. Tunku, who believed that he had the support of the Indonesian government, felt dismayed and depressed over the Indonesian reaction. To quote his words "If Dr. Subandrio represents the official view of

71 Straits Times, 15 November 1960.

72 Quoted in J.A.C. Mackie, Konfrontasi: The Indonesia - Malaysia Dispute (Kuala Lumpur, 1964), p.35. The Tunku's mediatory efforts at the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference also failed as there was no enthusiasm from the Indonesian side. Also see n.45, cols.33-47.
the Indonesia government, then my next move is to sleep in bed happily." The 'self imposed' mediatory role of the Tunku and the way he played that role was interpreted by Indonesians as humiliating. It would only help to raise the prestige of Malaya in the eyes of the world at the cost of Indonesia's. It was claimed by the Malayan Government later that when the West Irian problem seemed likely to flare up into another war between Indonesia and Holland, the Tunku did not restrain Sukarno from recruiting Malay volunteers. According to reliable Malayan Government sources, Indonesian officials in this drive got the support of anti-Malaysian political parties. These recruits proved effective camouflage for active propaganda and for the mobilization of support for Indonesia. Selected recruits from these volunteers were given military training along with political indoctrination. It was alleged by the Malayan Government that they were later used by Indonesia as recruits for an Indonesian Fifth

73 "Tengku Abdul Rahman's Visits to Canada, USA, UK and Holland", Asian Recorder, 24-31 December 1960, vol.6, no.1, pp.3707-708.

74 In 1962 and 1963, Indonesian agents in Singapore attracted pro-communist Chinese recruits by projecting Indonesia as a bulwark against the imperialists and their 'puppets'in Kuala Lumpur. At the same time, they exploited the Malay fear of the Chinese to recruit Malays to work and be trained by Indonesians. John O. Sutter, "Two faces of Konfrontasi: Crush Malaysia and the Gestapu", Asian Survey (Berkeley), vol.6, no.10,1966, p.525.
Column. Most important was the establishment of APREMA (Angkatan Pemuda Revaluation Malayan), a clandestine organisation aimed at the revolutionary overthrow of Malayan government and its replacement by a pro-Indonesian Government. It was even alleged by the Malayan Government that these volunteers returned to Malaya and were utilised by Indonesia during the time of confrontation.

Even after the settlement of West Irian issue, the Federation government did not grant stop-over facilities to Netherlands' ships en route from West Irian to Europe as it did not want to offend the

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75 A detailed account of the role played by General Gusti Pengeran Harto Djustikusmo since his arrival on 13 November 1958 in Singapore as the Indonesian Counsell General, in extending the intelligence and subversive activities against Malaya and later against the Federation of Malaysia was published in the Government Publication entitled Indonesian Intentions towards Malaysia. The Command Paper 12 of 1965 entitled A Plot Exposed, placed in the Dewan Raayat on 27 February 1965 also described how a number of politicians in Malaya like Ahmad Boestaman, and Ishak bin Haji Mohamed were 'bribed and encouraged' by Sukarno's regime to conspire against the Tunku Government to bring it down. Such allegation was however denied by Haji Ishak. According to him, he was approached only by a few members of opposition to leave the country for any place to form a Malayan Government in exile. For details see Aziz Ishak, Special Guests (London, 1977).

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Indonesian government. It is interesting to note here that the Bunker plan which settled the dispute did not differ materially from the proposal made by the Malayan Prime Minister.

ASA Plan

Soon after independence the Malayan Premier was reported to be planning for a defence treaty organisation comprising Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam outside the framework of SEATO. He rejected the proposal by Sukarno for an Islamic bloc comprising Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, North Borneo and Southern Philippines as 'impossible'.

In January 1959, the Tunku discussed his plan for a regional organisation with the Philippines President Garcia while on a visit to Manila. They jointly announced a plan for setting up a Southeast Asia Friendship and Economic Treaty Organisation (SEAFET) with the objectives of promoting economic, trade and educational co-operation. They also invited

77 n.45, col.46.
78 Boyce, n.2, p.55.
79 Straits Times, 18 April 1958.
80 Malay Mail (Kuala Lumpur), 21 April 1958.
81 Ott, n.3, p.122. Also see Saravanamutti, n.6, p.42.
Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam to join. Indonesia reacted adversely on the plea that such a proposal would only give rise to undesirable speculations on the part of other nations and that it would prevent the attainment of the desired objective of close co-operation. Jakarta wanted the promotion of bilateral relations, instead of multilateral relations. The way Indonesia turned down the proposal, without even bothering to find out the facts of the proposal or what the proposals contained, disappointed Tunku who was hoping for Indonesia's favourable response to the plan.\textsuperscript{82} The rejection of the proposal by Indonesia may be due to the fact that the plan was initiated by Malaya, an 'aligned country' in the eyes of Indonesia. Whatever the reason may be, the rejection by Indonesia was noted as an unfriendly gesture by Malaya.\textsuperscript{83} For about two years, the plan for SEAFET did not materialise. Eventually it was abandoned and in its

\textsuperscript{82} Despite the refusal on the part of Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand and the Philippines formed the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in July 1960.

\textsuperscript{83} In Tunku's view, Indonesia, by declining to join the ASA, broke the solemn undertaking given at the Bandung Conference to create an organization for intra-regional economic co-operation. Tunku further criticised Indonesia for its failure to see the proposal as one which sprang entirely from the energies and beliefs of the three countries concerned. He rejected the idea that the ASA Plan was a mere tool of American imperialism. Rahman, n.19, p.665.
place an Association of Southeast Asian States was formed on 31 July 1960 in Bangkok with Federation of Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand as its member states. Its objectives were to promote co-operation especially in economic, cultural and social spheres among member states. The member nations set a Regional and three National Secretariats. Each contributed US $1 million for the implementation of identified projects like simplification of immigration and travel formalities and integration of communication facilities. The Malaysia crisis and Filipino claim to North Borneo disrupted the cordial relations between Malaysia and the Philippines and resulted almost in the cancellation of the Second Annual ASA conference. On 3 April 1963, the last Conference was held. The Tunku's speech delivered in this Conference explaining the healthy and unhealthy developments in the region was interpreted as 'anti-Indonesian' by Jakarta.

Differing Personalities

Equally important were the differing personalities - a flamboyant President who wished to

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84 For a detailed account on the aims of ASA, see ASA: Report of the First Meeting of Foreign Ministers (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), pp.13-14.

play a major role in international politics and the soft spoken Anglophile Prime Minister. The differences in the personalities, their political styles, combined with the extremist and moderate policies contributed to the worsening of bilateral relations.86

The differing styles became apparent in 1955 itself. Soon after the resounding victory in the 1955 elections and with independence around the corner, Tunku Abdul Rahman, as the Chief Minister of Federation of Malaya, paid an official visit to Jakarta on the invitation of the Burhanuddin Harahap Government, a Masyumi - led, strongly anti-communist 'caretaker' government.87 Unfortunately, the condescending and the patronising manner of Sukarno, the volatile politics in the Indonesian Republic and the increasing popularity of the PKI left a negative impression on the Federation Chief Minister. It was reported that in one rally, Sukarno turned and pointed to Tunku who was sitting on the same stage and declared in a patronising manner, "Here is a man I am trying to persuade".88 Over the next few years, events tended to deepen the initial impact into personal antagonism between the two men. It

86 Hanna, n.54, p.76.
87 Mackie, n.72, p.27
88 Ott, n.3, p.111.
would be difficult to find two other Southeast Asian leaders who differed so radically in terms of personality, style, values and ambition at that time. There is little doubt that Sukarno expected Tunku Abdul Rahman to appreciate and admire the leader of larger and more powerful Indonesia. What is more, Indonesia had a long anti-colonial heritage unlike the Federation which maintained close relations with the former colonial power; Indonesia continued with its anti-Dutch trade policies, unlike the Federation which encouraged foreign capital for economic development; Indonesia nationalised foreign enterprises. These qualities in Sukarno's leadership and their fall out on Indonesia's policies, Tunku seemed to have believed, would only disturb the peace and progress of the region.89

Other Irritants

Another issue that exacerbated bilateral relations was the formal and informal exchanges of complaints regarding smugglers and fugitives which caused disturbance to normal trading and fishing.90 Neither government was satisfied by the explanation given by the other regarding these accusations.

89 Ibid.
90 Mackie, n.72, p.30.
In 1957, the Indonesian government, without the normal courtesy of informing the Malayan government, issued a proclamation extending the territorial water of Indonesia upto 12 miles from the outermost limits of Indonesian territory.\(^{91}\) This unilateral act was resented by Malaya as it would overlap its territorial waters. The Federation Government declared that "it would take a serious view of any act which involves an infringement of the sovereignty of the Federation within its territorial water."\(^{92}\)

The presence in Indonesia of a number of leftist Malays who had fled from Malaya before Merdeka posed another problem. In July 1958, the Federation Ambassador categorically warned the Malayan nationals in Indonesia to make a final choice between Indonesian and Malayan citizenship.\(^{93}\) It was also alleged by the Malayan Government that Sukarno, during his visit to Singapore on 18 July 1955, advised the Indonesians in Singapore, "Stay here permanently as long as your hearts are with Indonesia".\(^{94}\) The Malayan Government, in retrospect, interpreted these statements as Indonesian

\(^{91}\) n.75, p.7.

\(^{92}\) Ibid.

\(^{93}\) Ibid.

\(^{94}\) For details see A Plot exposed, n.75.
aspirations for 'Indonesia Raya' and it was trying to build up pro-Indonesia sentiments by appealing to culture, race and religion. The Federation Government also alleged that under Brigadier Gudi Pengeran Harco Dja tikusumo, the then Consul-General for the Republic of Indonesia, the Consulate staff carried out subversive activities in fulfillment of their Government's policy to overthrow the elected government of Malaya. These activities further widened the schism between the two countries.

It is quite obvious that during the years preceding the announcement of the proposal for 'Malaysia', the Federation's relations with Indonesia were never extremely friendly although gestures were made now and then by both countries. The common ethnic and historical ties did not deter the strains from cropping up in their relations. Moreover, with the passage of time, there developed a lack of personal warmth between the two leaders which also contributed to the deterioration of bilateral relations.

95 The document Indonesian Intentions Towards Malaysia issued by the Government of Malaysia gives a complete account of Indonesian interventions in Malaya. According to this White Paper, the Indonesian Consulate in Singapore became the centre of intelligence activity and almost every staff became an intelligence agent. Also refer Harold James and Danis Shert Small, The Undeclared War (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), p.XV.