

AUSTRALIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PROBLEM OF CONFRONTATION

by R. Catley

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This thesis is based entirely on my own research whilst a Research Scholar of the Department of International Relations in the Australian National University, except where otherwise specifically acknowledged in the text or footnotes.

6. Confidential Sources

Chapter Two

- p.55 Interview with Mr Ghazalie bin Shafie, Secretary to the Malaysian Department of External Affairs, in his office, Kuala Lumpur, April 1966. Ghazalie was one of the two Malayan members of the Cobbold Commission and seemed to the author to overestimate the enthusiasm for Malaysia in the Borneo states.

Chapter Three

- p.100 Interview with Ghazalie; and with Mr J. de Silva, a senior official in the Malaysian Department of External Affairs and de facto information officer at the time, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966. These two officials visited Djakarta as recounted on p.99.
- p.102 Interview with Sir Garfield Barwick, Australian Minister for External Affairs, 1961-4, in his Chambers, the High Court of Australia, Sydney, February 1967.

Chapter Four

- p.107 Interview with Barwick; and with Mr K.C.O. Shann, Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, 1962-6, at the Department of External Affairs, Canberra, July 1966.
- p.108 Barwick and Shann agreed on this point but both said that Australia was not intent on speeding up the formation of Malaysia, although that would have been welcomed.
- p.112 The Minister was Barwick, as he admitted to the author. Sir Garfield was very bitter about the Herald's publicising his briefing which he had emphasised was confidential.
- p.114 Both Barwick and Shann said that they thought that American policy towards West Irian changed after Kennedy became President. Barwick claimed that he played a decisive role in 'changing the whole direction of the ship of state', meaning Australia's policy towards West Irian. He said that he placed high priority on Australia's establishing good relations with Indonesia and implied that Menzies may not have been similarly concerned with Indonesia's friendship. He agreed, however, that the change in American policy had influenced Australian policy and had enabled him to persuade Canberra to accept Indonesian control of West Irian.
- p.115 Interview with Shann.
- p.117 Barwick admitted that Tange went to the US to ascertain Washington's views and to urge the Americans to declare their support for the Malaysia project. He added that he had hoped that Tange could accomplish his task with the minimum of publicity but that the press had quickly got on to Tange's trip to the US.

p.122 Footnote 3. Barwick; Shann; interview with Mr G. Jockel, a senior member of the Australian Department of External Affairs, Canberra, July 1966. All three stressed that by 1963 there was little doubt that Australia would support Malaysia. The quotation is from Shann.

Footnote 5. Interview with Mr de Silva.

p.124 Both Barwick and Shann (who was also present at Manila) told the author that Barwick had persuaded Subandrio to agree to negotiate with Malaya and not to use the negotiations as a means for sabotaging Malaysia. Mr de Silva agreed that Barwick had been influential in getting Indonesia to negotiate but did not see Barwick's role as being as crucial as the Australians suggested.

p.127 Interviews with J. de Silva; and with Mr de Costa, a senior official in the Singapore Department of External Affairs, at his office, February 1966; and with Mr G. Bogaars, Secretary to the Singapore Defence Department, at his office, February 1966. All three said that the Malayan and then the Malaysian Government desired maximum Australian support throughout the duration of confrontation, largely to have as wide support as possible. Bogaars added that it was felt that Australia, as a small power indigenous to the region, was a more acceptable guarantor to Asians than the UK or the US. Mr Reddaway, a senior British foreign office official, in an interview at his home in Singapore, February 1966, admitted that the UK for similar reasons desired a firm Australian policy of support for Malaysia. Barwick, Shann and Jockel verified these points and, as related in the text, said that in early 1963 Australia was reluctant to make a strong declaration of support for Malaysia.

p.142 Interviews with Shann and Jockel. Barwick said that at that stage the Malaysians could see no reason for a separate treaty.

p.145 Interview with Mr C. Wyndham, then ALP Federal Secretary, at ALP Headquarters, Canberra, September 1966; and with Mr E.G. Whitlam, then Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, at Parliament House, Canberra, November 1966.

p.148 Footnote 3. Barwick and Shann both felt that the British had not been sufficiently deferential towards the Indonesians.

Footnote 4. The opinion is Shann's. He also felt that while the conclusion of the Malaysia Agreement did not contravene the letter of the Manila Agreements it did contravene their 'spirit'. He tended perhaps to underestimate the difficulties which the British and the Malaysians faced, due probably to the fact that he was in Djakarta.

p.152 Interviews with Wyndham and Whitlam.

Chapter Five

p.159 Footnote 2. Interview with Mr de Silva.

Footnote 3. Interview with Mr S. Hart, First Political Secretary in the US Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, May 1966. Mr Hart had previously served in the US Embassy in Djakarta.

- p.160 The Malaysian Department of External Affairs provided the author with transcripts of the Malaysian-Indonesian negotiations. While these have been cited directly in other works, e.g. Brackman: Southeast Asia's Second Front, and Gordon: The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia, the author has not felt at liberty to do likewise. The transcripts have been accepted by and large at their face value for they do not seem to conflict with other reports of the negotiations and they are in harmony with the public dispute and the positions taken by the two states. In any case the Indonesian have not denied that they are accurate, although they appear to have formed the basis for press reports at the time.
- p.164 Mr J. Pedagian, Director of the Sabah Department of Information.
- p.180 Mr de Costa.
- p.181 See note to page 160.
- p.182 Interviews with Ghazalie and de Silva.
- p.183 Interviews with Bogaars; and with Mr G. Thomson, Director of the Political Study Centre, Singapore, March 1966.

Chapter Six

- p.187 The opinion is Shann's.
- p.190 Interviews with Barwick, Shann and Jockel. Barwick said that when he was in the US in October 1963 he asked the Americans to stop giving aid to Indonesia. He thought this might have had some effect on Sukarno. When American officials explained their evaluation of the situation he said that he accepted their point of view. He also said that he resisted American promptings that more Australian military aid be given to South Vietnam.
- p.200 Footnote 5. Interview with Mr W. Pritchett, Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, Singapore, February 1966; and with Barwick, Jockel and de Silva.
- Footnote 6. Interview with Col. Richardson, Military Attache at the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, March 1966.
- p.202 Interviews with Barwick, Jockel and Richardson.
- p.204 Interviews with Jockel and Richardson.
- p.209 Interviews with Shann and Jockel. Shann said that there appeared to be a real danger that Indonesia would not take Australia seriously.
- p.216 The opinion is Shann's. Mr Hart agreed by and large.
- p.224 Interviews with de Silva and Bogaars; and with Dr Goh Keng Swee, Singapore Minister for Defence and Internal Security, Singapore, February 1966.

Chapter Seven

- p.230 Interviews with Jockel and Shann.
p.239 Interview with Mr de Silva who arranged for and supervised the mission.
p.240 Interview with Barwick.
p.242 Interview with Col. Richardson.
p.224 Interview with C.C. Too who is head of the Malaysian Special Branch which is concerned chiefly with internal security, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.
p.266 Interviews with wyndham and Whitlam.

Chapter Eight

- p.269 Interviews with Shann and Jockel.
p.277 Interviews with Whitlam and wyndham.
p.278 Interview with Jockel.
p.292 Interviews with Bogaers and Dr Goh; and with Mr de Silva.
p.302 Footnote 4. Interview with Whitlam.
Footnote 5. Interviews with Whitlam and wyndham.
p.303 Interviews with Ghazalie, Dr Goh and de Silva.
p.309 Interviews with Pedasian and Jockel.

Conclusion

- p.320 Interview with Mr Shann.

AUSTRALIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PROBLEM OF CONFRONTATION

by R. Gething

Preface

This thesis is an examination of Australian policy towards the formation of Malaysia and Indonesia's confrontation of that Federation. Although it is chiefly concerned with the period from early 1961, when Tunku Abdul Rahman announced that Malaya would seek 'an understanding' with Singapore and the states of northern Borneo, to late 1965, when the separation of Singapore from Malaysia all but coincided with an abortive coup in Djakarta, the train of events encompassed by that period cannot be considered in isolation. In Chapter One the development of Australia's post-war defence and foreign policies is outlined and the context within which the Australian commitment to Malaya was made is examined. The subject matter of Chapters Two and Three concerns the formation of Malaysia and Indonesia's adoption of a policy of confrontation towards that state. It is argued that while each of the governments who were principal participants in the Malaysia plan had valid reasons for desiring the establishment of the Federation, some political adjustments were required to ensure that it was acceptable to the peoples of the states directly concerned. Nonetheless, in 1963 the Federation was acceptable to a large proportion of those peoples. The reasons which Indonesia advanced for its hostility towards the Federation are examined and it is suggested that they provided insufficient justification for Indonesian policy. It is also suggested that other explanations for Indonesian policy may be advanced.

In Chapter Four the reaction of Australia towards the events described in the two preceding Chapters is examined. Australia approved of the Malaysia plan from its inception. In 1963, desirous of good relations with Djakarta after the settlement of the West Irian dispute, Canberra was again presented with the prospect of opposing Indonesia. Although much of Australian opinion would have approved of such a policy and was hostile towards Indonesia, members of the Government, particularly Sir Garfield Barwick, wished to avoid a new conflict with Indonesia. By September 1963, when Malaysia was formed, it had become clear that this was unavoidable and Sir Robert Menzies declared Australia's intention to help defend Malaysia if necessary.

In Chapter Five the internal politics of Malaysia are examined. It is pointed out that there were conflicts of quite a serious nature but that these did not justify Indonesian policy. It is argued that

during the period which the Chapter examines, from late 1963 to mid-1964, it became clearer that Indonesia was pursuing a policy of aggression and that her demands made a diplomatic solution to the conflict unlikely. It is also contended that during that period the viability of Malaysia became seriously questionable.

An examination of the Australian policy of 'graduated response', from late 1963 to early 1965, is the subject of Chapters Six and Seven. Despite Menzies' declaration of Australia's support for Malaysia and the Australian Government's adoption of a posture of firm support for the Federation during the Australian election campaign, Canberra remained reluctant to accede to the demands of her allies, particularly the UK, that Australia become militarily involved in the defence of Malaysia. During 1964, however, Australian involvement in that respect increased as Malaysia increasingly gained diplomatic support in Africa and from the US, and Indonesia became more clearly intransigent and escalated her attacks on the Federation. In early 1964 Australia began to assist Malaysia to improve her own defence forces; in late 1964 the Australian forces which had been stationed in Malaya since 1955 came into conflict with Indonesians who had landed on the peninsula; in early 1965, following indications of the likelihood of an increase in Indonesian activity in Borneo, Australian combat units were deployed in Sarawak where the military repercussions of confrontation had been most strongly felt.

In Chapter Eight the Australian commitment to Malaysia is discussed in terms of the overall context of Australian policy in Southeast Asia, particularly with respect to the dispute between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, the policy of the British Labour Government towards the region 'East of Suez', the Australian alliance with the US and its relationship to Australia's commitment to Vietnam and apprehensions about China, and the Sino-Indonesian entente.

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To the members of the Department of International Relations, ANU, I owe a particular debt. Collectively, they made my stay in Canberra a pleasant one. Professor J.D.B. Miller ensured that my time was well spent, read the penultimate draft of this work and made valuable contributions to the final product. Dr Peter Boyce, now of the University of Tasmania, guided my early research work and stimulated my interest in Malaysia and Singapore. Mr J.L.S. Girling provided useful and generous assistance during the later stages of my work. Dr T.B. Millar supervised my work from its inception to its conclusion. A thorough, exacting and painstaking supervisor, Dr Millar did much to ensure that this thesis was completed - to him I must express considerable gratitude.

None of these persons may be blamed, of course, for the opinions which are expressed in this work which is, in the final analysis, a product of my own endeavours.

Finally, I must thank my wife who, among other things, typed this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAJC	Afro-Asian Journalists Conference
AAPSO	Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation
Ad. News	Adelaide News
Advert	Adelaide Advertiser
AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs
AIPS	Australian Institute of Political Science
AJPH	Australian Journal of Politics and History
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANU	Australian National University
ANZAM	Defence arrangement involving the UK, Australia and New Zealand
ANZUS	Mutual defence treaty of 1951 between the US, Australia and New Zealand
APOP	Australian Public Opinion Polls
ASA	Association of Southeast Asian States
Aust	The Australian
CCO	Communist Clandestine Organisation of Sarawak
C-M	Brisbane Courier Mail
CMF	The Australian Citizens Military Forces
CNIA	Current Notes on International Affairs
CPD, HR	Australian Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives
C. Times	Canberra Times
DEA	Australian Department of External Affairs
Dj. D. Mail	Djakarta Daily Mail
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
D. Tel	Sydney Daily Telegraph
ECMPS	Extracts from the Chinese and Malaya Press in Sarawak
Ed	Editor or editorial
FEER	Far Eastern Economic Review
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
Indon Herald	Indonesian Herald
ISC	Internal Security Council (Singapore)
JAS	Journal of Asian Studies
JSEAH	Journal of South East Asian History
KMT	Kuomintang
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
M. C. with S. C.	Malaysian Communications with the UN Security Council
Mel SN Pic	Melbourne Sun News Pictorial
Merc	Hobart Mercury
M. Herald	Melbourne Herald
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MPD, HR	Malayan (later Malaysian) Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives
MSC	Malaysian Solidarity Convention
MSCC	Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee
NEFO	New Emerging Forces
NLF	National Liberation Front of South Vietnam
NYT	New York Times
NZEAR	External Affairs Review, New Zealand
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
OLDEFO	Old Established Forces
PANAS	Party Negara Sarawak
PAP	Peoples Action Party of Singapore
PIR	Pacific Islands Regiment
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PPP	Peoples Progressive Party
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force

RSL	Returned Servicemens League
SANAP	Sabah National Party
SATU	Singapore Association of Trade Unions
SCN, Debs	Sarawak Council Negri, Debates
SEAFET	Southeast Asian Friendship and Economic Treaty
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
S-H	Sydney Sun-Herald
SKW	Sarawak by the Week
SLA, Debs	Singapore Legislative Assembly, Debates
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
SNAP	Sarawak National Party
ST	Straits and Sunday Times
SUPP	Sarawak United Peoples Party
UDP	United Democratic Party (Malaya)
UKPD, HC	United Kingdom Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UPKO	United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation
UPP	United Peoples Party (Singapore)
USIS	United States Information Service
USNO	United Sabah National Organisation
TNKU	Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara (The National Army of North Borneo)
WA	West Australian
WDNEP	Weekly Digest of the Non-English Press (Singapore)

INTRODUCTION

During the mid-1960s Australia became increasingly interested in developments in Southeast Asia and increasingly concerned at the possibility of their adversely affecting Australian security. Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia contributed significantly to that process and to the passing of the traditional Australian apathy towards foreign affairs in time of peace. Southeast Asia came to be regarded as an area productive of war and conflict: Australia reacted by seeking to become a regional power.

The factors which influence and shape the foreign policy of any state are multifarious. To this generalisation Australia provides no exception, although it might be asserted that the relative smallness of Australia's population and the openness of its society assists in the investigation of the Australian political process. A thorough analysis of the formulation of foreign policy requires some investigation of the social milieu within which it is produced. In the case of Australian policy towards Asia this is of particular importance. Reference might be made to the circumstances which produced the 'White Australia' policy,¹ to the impact which the Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia and assaults on Australian territory during World War II had on Australian conceptions of her defensive requirements, and to the cultural and ethnic differences between Australia and her northern neighbours. These factors have been influential in Australian foreign policy, especially with respect to her alliances with her 'great and powerful friends'. This work, however, does not pretend to be an extensive examination of Australia's policy towards Southeast Asia nor does it seek to investigate the totality of that policy, except insofar as it is directly related to the subject in hand. It is concerned rather with a particular aspect of that policy during a particular period of time.

1

See A.T. Yarwood: Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion, 1896-1923 (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964), and H. London: Colouring White Australia (Forthcoming).

The period with which this study is concerned extends from the inception of the Malaysia plan, in early 1961, to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in August 1965. The reasons for the selection of the former date are self-evident. The separation of Singapore from Malaysia changed the essential character of the Federation. Further, it all but coincided with the abortive coup in Indonesia. These two events fundamentally altered the situation and led to the opening of a new chapter in Australia's policy towards the Malay archipelago.

The subject matter of this study falls into two broad categories: the events which produced Malaysia and Indonesian confrontation; and the contemporary developments in Australia. Until 1963, those two processes appeared to be quite distinct, particularly since Australia was not a primary participant in the Malaysia plan. The evolution of confrontation led to Australia being more closely associated with the development of Malaysia, until by 1964 Australia was a party principal to the problem of confrontation. The organisation of this work reflects those developments. During the first five chapters Australian policy and events in the Malay archipelago are treated as distinct but related themes. Thereafter they are more clearly integrated, reflecting their closer inter-relationship. This approach has the apparent disadvantage of presenting two disconnected subjects in the early chapters. But some investigation of the development of Malaysia and confrontation, and of Australia's policy towards the region both before and during the evolution of that situation, are prerequisites for a satisfactory analysis of subsequent developments. The alternative approach, that of dealing with both developments simultaneously, would seem to be unwieldy and to sacrifice clarity for continuity.

Despite the recent growth of that body of literature concerned with Australian foreign policy, there has been no extensive treatment of Australian policy towards Malaysia. Partly for that reason this work has adopted the historical approach to the subject in order more easily to establish its features and development. Some effort has been made to determine the broad factors influential in the formulation of Australian foreign policy and the degree to which they affected its implementation. This subject has again attracted but scant academic attention. Little

along the lines suggested by the propounders of the decision-making analysis approach¹ has been produced with respect to Australia, although Professor Greenwood's general survey of the subject is deserving of mention in that context.² Professor Albinski also provides some valuable insights into the factors influencing Australian foreign policy, specifically with regard to the process by which Australia became increasingly apprehensive about China after a communist Government assumed power in that country.³ But domestic political factors are but one aspect of the formulation of a state's foreign policy.

This study devotes considerable attention to the situation with which Australia was faced, and seeks to relate it to developments in Australian policy. This has been necessary for a number of reasons. First, Australian policy cannot be adequately analysed without some investigation of those developments to which Australia in large part was reacting. Secondly, there is no adequate treatment of those events suitable for that purpose.⁴ Finally, in 1965 Australian combat forces were committed to South Vietnam under circumstances which the Government claimed were similar to those which obtained in Malaysia. That commitment excited considerable criticism in Australia of a similar kind to that levelled against the American commitment in America.⁵ The basis of those criticisms was that South Vietnam was not under attack from without, that its Government was unpopular, and that those very forces which the Western allies were fighting were the true representatives of the Vietnamese people. It would seem important to determine whether similar criticisms might have been levelled against the Australian commitment to Malaysia and why they were not levelled at the time.

1

See Bernard C. Cohen: The Political Process and Foreign Policy: The Making of the Japanese Peace Settlement (Princeton University Press, 1957), The Influence of Non-Governmental Groups on Foreign Policy Making (World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1959), and The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton University Press, 1963); Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin (eds): Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1958).

2

Gordon Greenwood: 'Australian Foreign Policy in Action', Chapter One in Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper (eds): Australia in World Affairs, 1956-60 (Cheshire for AIIA, Melbourne, 1963).

3

Henry S. Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China (Princeton University Press, 1965).

4

Arnold C. Brackman: Southeast Asia's Second Front (Pall Mall, London, 1966), is the only extensive treatment of the subject presently available.

5

Arthur M. Schlesinger: The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-66 (Deutsch, London, 1967), provides a sophisticated and moderate presentation of those criticisms.

It remains to give some indication of the sources which have been consulted in the research for this study. Research was begun in 1965 at a time when, although Australian interest in foreign policy and the affairs of Southeast Asia was increasing rapidly, few academic works existed on these subjects. Since that time, studies of Australia's strategic policies and situation have proliferated and those have, where relevant, been consulted. But Australia's policy towards Malaysia has not attracted academic attention to the same extent as Australian policy towards Vietnam. Consequently the analysis of Australian policy is based largely on primary sources. The increased interest shown in these issues on the part of Australian politicians has led to these sources being both extensive and, by and large, accessible.

The lack of full documentation (which is rarely complete in any historical field) has been at least partly compensated for by access to persons who were party to the formulation and implementation of the policies under consideration. A number of these persons have been interviewed and on occasion their opinions have been cited directly, but perhaps more valuable have been the interpretations which they have suggested and the opportunities which those interviews have allowed for a direct assessment of the factors which influence Australian policy. As many of those who were interviewed insisted on remaining anonymous, they have all been given that status but a list of some of the interviews has been made available to the examiners of this thesis. It is important to stress that those persons' testimonies have been cited as evidence only when they may be substantiated from other sources or when such interpretations may be reasonably inferred from the circumstances. Only in exceptional cases has this general rule been broken, and then, it is hoped, for reasons which are clearly apparent. In most cases the public record provides ample documentation. Sir Alan Watt, a former senior Australian diplomat, comments about his own work, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965:

The material used for this book is taken from public sources. As a member of the Commonwealth Public Service for twenty-five years I am, of course, bound by the restrictions applicable to all Australian officials. This has involved deliberate omission of certain facts acquired in an official capacity. It is my considered opinion, however, that the facts omitted do not distort the main outlines of the story - otherwise

I would not have written it. Most people, in my experience, underestimate the amount of valuable material on foreign policy available from public sources. 1

Assessment of Australian public opinion and its influence on Government policy has proved to be more difficult. Officials were more reluctant to speak on this issue. In addition, public opinion itself has been difficult to estimate. It has been assumed that the press, opinion polls, the statements of organised political groups or of organised groups voicing political opinions, and election results, reflect public opinion. In defence of this method two arguments might be advanced: it is the only one available; and it is the method by which the Government itself assesses opinion, and it is that assessment, if anything, which influences policy. The relationship between public opinion and foreign policy has been established, or perhaps more properly inferred by a variety of methods.

With regard to the analysis of Malaysian politics similar comments might be made. The author spent some months in early 1966 in both eastern and western Malaysia and Singapore, and interviewed and met a large number of academics, journalists, politicians and officials, most of whom must remain anonymous, but some of whom will be identified for the satisfaction of the examiners. Similar criteria have been applied to the use of their testimonies as to those of their Australian counterparts.

Owing to ^{the} exigencies of confrontation, the author, a citizen of the UK, did not visit Indonesia. The assessment of Indonesian policy has been less intensive, yet not primarily for that reason. This work is chiefly concerned with the Australian commitment to Malaysia.

1

Alan Watt: The Evolution of Australia Foreign Policy, 1938-1965 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967) p.viii.

CHAPTER ONE

Australian Security in the Post-War World

During the Second World War Australia had faced for the first time a serious military threat. The protective umbrella of the British Imperial defence system had alone proved to be inadequate to safeguard Australia, but in any case the Labor Party, which had formed the government since 1941, was less prepared than its predecessors to accept a subordinate role within that system.¹ However, the Labor Government's foreign policy objectives in the post-war years were largely supported by the Opposition parties. The Minister for External Affairs, Dr Evatt, did come in for some criticism on the grounds that he paid insufficient attention to the need to cooperate with the UK and that he overestimated the role which the United Nations might play in safeguarding Australian security,² but the difference between the Government and Opposition on foreign policy was one of emphasis rather than substance.³ There was a consensus that Japan still represented the potentially most serious threat to Australia; it was also agreed that the most effective means for combatting any military threat would be to form a collective security pact with other nations interested in the

1 See Lloyd Ross: 'Some Factors in the Development of Labour's Foreign Policies', Australian Outlook, March 1949, pp. 32-46.

2 On Evatt's foreign policy see two collections of his speeches, The Foreign Policy of Australia (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1945) and Australia in World Affairs (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1946).

3 See G. Greenwood: 'Australia's Foreign Policy', Australian Outlook, March 1947, pp. 53-62.

western Pacific region.¹ The failure of the Labor Government to negotiate such a pact may not be attributed to its lack of enthusiasm, for that was clearly in evidence,² but rather to the lack of interest shown by the US, which was absorbed with events in Europe and retrenching her military forces.³

In December 1949 the Labor Party suffered an electoral defeat and was replaced by a Liberal-Country Party coalition government led and dominated by the Prime Minister, R.G.Menzies.⁴ The new government had been elected on a strongly anti-communist platform.⁵ The hostility shown towards communism could be partly attributed to factors associated with domestic politics, for the Australian Communist Party was widely held to have been responsible for the considerable industrial disturbances experienced in Australia from 1945 to 1949. But such hostility was, as one commentator has pointed out, inherent in 'the social character of the Australian community, which is petty-bourgeois, self-centred, sectional, small-minded [and] traditionally xenophobic to a mild degree'.⁶ Just as the new government adopted a more forceful anti-communist policy within Australia,⁷ so communism came to be regarded as the most

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See statements by Evatt, CPD,HR, vol.190, 26 Feb 1947, p.166 ff; *ibid.*, vol.196, 8 April 1948, p.747; *ibid.*, vol.201, 9 Feb 1949, pp.85-7. For more detailed analysis see R.N.Rosecrance: Australian Diplomacy and Japan, 1945-51 (MUP, Melbourne, 1962); Henry S. Albinski: 'Australia's Search For Regional Security in South-East Asia', (Unpub. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1959) pp.216-22; C.P.Fitzgerald: 'Australia and Asia', in G.Greenwood and N.Harper (eds): Australia in World Affairs, 1950-55 (Cheshire for AIIA, Sydney, 1957) pp.201-2.

2

At one stage it appears that Australia attempted to use its control over Manus Island, which the US wished to use as a naval base, to manoeuvre the US into concluding a mutual defence agreement. See J.J. Dedman: 'Encounter Over Manus', Australian Outlook, Aug 1966, pp. 135-53; Rosecrance: *op.cit.*, Chapter Five; J.G.Starke: The ANZUS Treaty Alliance (MUP, Melbourne, 1965) pp.15-19.

3

See statements by the Prime Minister, B.J.Chifley, CPD,HR, vol.202, 20 May 1949, p.129, and the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, NYT, 19 May 1949. See also Leicester C.Webb: 'Australia and SEATO', in G.Modelski (ed): SEATO: Six Studies (Cheshire for ANU, Melbourne, 1962) pp.51-2; and Starke: *op.cit.*, pp.1-26.

4

In 1963 he became Sir Robert Menzies.

5

R.G.Menzies: Joint Opposition Policy - 1949 (Sydney, 1949).

6

J.D.B.Miller: 'Communism and Australian Foreign Policy', in J.D.B. Miller and T.H.Rigby (eds): The Disintegrating Monolith (ANU Press, Canberra, 1965) p.220.

7

See Leicester C.Webb: Communism and Democracy in Australia (Cheshire for ANU, Melbourne, 1954) for an account of the Government's unsuccessful efforts to have the Communist Party declared illegal.

serious external threat to Australian security. Undoubtedly the commencement of the Cold War was influential in this process, but of major significance was the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950. Within four days Australia had committed air and naval units to fighting alongside the Americans in support of South Korea. On 26 July 1950 it was announced that Australia would also contribute ground forces.¹ The Korean War had serious repercussions on Australian foreign policy. It strengthened the Government's conviction that communism presented a serious threat in Asia generally and to Australia in particular, and events in Korea were regarded as a prologue to future communist aggression.² The Labor Party came to similar conclusions.³ The Government became even more anxious to conclude a security treaty with the US, it increased defence expenditure and, following China's intervention in Korea, began to view China as the controlling power behind the communist threat to Australia. Together with the dissolution of the European empires in Asia and the political upheavals which followed, these events led to considerable anxiety within Australia about the country's security. Such tendencies in Australian attitudes and policies can be illustrated by reference to three aspects of the country's foreign policy: the Japanese Peace Treaty, the ANZUS Treaty and SEATO.

Rosecrance has described in some detail how Australian policy towards Japan after the war shifted from the most stringent repression of the Japanese to the most liberal restoration of Japanese sovereignty'.⁴ That shift was a result of two factors: Japan was no longer regarded as the major threat to Australia,⁵ and the US, which Australia estimated would be the most likely guarantor of her integrity, was anxious, in the interests of global

1

Australia was the first country after the US to make such an announcement.

2

See broadcasts by Menzies, 20, 22 and 25 Sept 1950, CNIA, Sept 1950, pp. 658-69; and R.G. Casey: Friends and Neighbours (East Lansing, Michigan, 1958) pp. 75-87, where he discusses 'Is Communism A Threat To Australia?'

3

See statements by Chifley, CPD,HR, vol.20, 15 March 1949, p.1411, and Calwell, *ibid.*, vol.211, 30 Nov 1950, p.3503.

4

Rosecrance: *op.cit.*, p.242.

5

Casey argued that 'the immediate problem that we have to consider from the point of view of the security of Australia and the stability of Asia and the Pacific, is the security of Japan, even more than security against Japan', CPD,HR, vol.216, 6 Feb 1952, p.24.

strategy, to rehabilitate a non-communist Japan.¹ Australia may have preferred a treaty restricting Japanese sovereignty but more important for Australian security would be the conclusion of a defence treaty with the US. In 1951 the US accepted Canberra's proposal and signed with Australia and New Zealand a mutual defence pact, popularly known as the ANZUS Treaty. ANZUS was in large measure 'the indispensable quid pro quo for Australian ratification of the Japanese peace treaty'.² ANZUS was the culmination of Australia's efforts to conclude mutual defence arrangements with the US. The treaty offered Australia US protection and access to US policy planning,³ and envisaged a more extensive regional collective security pact along the lines of NATO.⁴ ANZUS, as the embodiment of Australia's reliance on the US, became the cornerstone of Australian defence and foreign policy.⁵

Three years later, following the settlement at the Geneva Conference of the problems posed by the defeat of the French in Indo-China, Australia joined Britain, the US, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines and on 8 September 1954 signed a collective security treaty at Manila which led to the formation of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation.⁶ The SEATO treaty was a result of events in Vietnam and was aimed primarily at combatting communism and China. As R.G. Casey, then Minister for External Affairs, admitted, 'the Australian Government quite frankly considers that ... the primary purpose of the Treaty is to combat Communist expansion. This is also the view of the US Government'.⁷

1
Casey: op.cit., pp.58-61.

2
Rosecrance: loc.cit..

3
Casey clearly recognised the importance of this issue, CPD,HR, vol.2, 27 Nov 1953, p.665.

4
For text of ANZUS see CNIA, July 1951, pp.403-4; for reference to collective security system see preamble.

5
For more detailed examination of ANZUS see Starke: op.cit., pp.27-160; D.Sissons and N.Harper: Australia and the United Nations (AIIA, New York, 1959) p.125 ff; Casey: op.cit., pp.62-74; Fitzgerald: op.cit., pp.208-9; Albinski: op.cit., pp.266-302; G.Greenwood: 'The Commonwealth', and N.Harper: 'Australia and the United States', both in Greenwood and Harper (eds): op.cit.; Sir Alan Watt: Australian Defence Policy 1951-63 (Dept.of Int.Rels., ANU 1964, mimeo) pp.1-27.

6
G.Modelski (ed): SEATO: Six Studies, remains the best treatment of SEATO.

7
Casey: op.cit., p.111.

But SEATO did not live up to the expectations of the Australian Government, which had been at the treaty's inception one of its keenest members:¹ the organisation's membership was not universal and its existing members rarely agreed on concerted action; the treaty came in for criticism from the non-aligned states of the area;² and, largely due to US opposition, no standing SEATO force was formed.³ SEATO was the shadow of collective security without its substance: US power continued to be the dominant anti-communist force in the region. In order to make the SEATO commitment credible, the US in 1962 issued what amounted to a unilateral guarantee to Thailand by declaring that in its interpretation the 'Treaty obligation is individual as well as collective'.⁴ For Australia SEATO provided a useful forum, the facade of collective security, and a US commitment to the Asian mainland. It in no way superseded ANZUS, but it did extend the US defence perimeter to Indo-China, a fact of some significance for subsequent Australian strategic planning.

SEATO and the events which had preceded and stimulated its formation 'also brought fundamental changes in Australian defence policy'.⁵ By 1954 it was clear that Canberra felt that communism, directed from Peking, posed a serious threat to Australian security.⁶ Australia's eagerness to form SEATO reflected her fear that communism would advance towards Australia through Southeast Asia, successively absorbing each state by subversion and infiltration.⁷

1 See Webb: op.cit.; Watt: op.cit., pp.28-48.

2 See Rosemary Brissenden: 'India, Neutralism and SEATO', in Modelski: op.cit..

3 See statement by US Secretary of State, John Dulles, that 'the United States opposed chopping up and segregating these [US] forces by allocation to South East Asia. The United States prefers to have mobile power to use anywhere at short notice when needed', CNIA, Feb 1955, p.121.

4 The Dean Rusk - Thanat Khoman Joint Statement, Washington, 6 March 1962, Modelski: op.cit., pp.293-4. See also Donald E. Naachterlein: Thailand and the Struggle for South East Asia (Ithaca, New York Cornell U.P., 1965) pp.228-35.

5 Webb: op.cit., p.78.

6 For an extensive treatment of this subject see Henry S. Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China (Princeton University Press, 1965).

7 CPD,HR, vol.6, 27 April 1955, pp.205-11. (Statement by Casey).

without SEATO, Casey argued, those states 'would have fallen one by one, like ripe plums'.¹ This image, widely held in Australia, of communism and Chinese influence seeping southward,² provoked a countervailing conception of Australia's defence strategy best represented by the phrase 'defence in depth'.³ As Sir Philip McBride, then Minister for Defence, argued, Australia must be prepared

to hold off the Communists at the farthest point advantageous to us, and we must consolidate our strength there as quickly as possible....It is a matter of vital importance to maintain the gap between Australia and the present highwater mark of the southward flow of communism. 4

This strategy was to be pursued in two ways: the use in Asia of Australia's own military capacity, and cooperation with Australia's allies. Australia also hoped to tie her powerful allies, particularly the US, to specific commitments to the region between herself and China, for Australia's own defence forces were of little strategic consequence.

The Labor Government had allowed the large war time military establishment to run down considerably, and on coming to office the Menzies Government announced that the defence forces would be substantially increased.⁵ During the Korean War those forces were indeed strengthened and in the financial year 1952-3 5.1 per cent of the Australian National Income was spent on defence.⁶ In 1954 McBride announced that the Government was implementing the policy of the 'long haul' to make the country prepared for the outbreak of war.⁷ In fact during the following eight years Australian expenditure on defence remained roughly constant at about £190 million per annum and as a per centage of the National Income

1
Ibid., p.207.

2
See statements by Casey, CPD,HR, vol.23, 23 April 1959, pp.1513-21, and 29 June 1959, CNIA, June 1959, pp.335-9.

3
CPD,HR, vol.5, 28 Sept 1954, p.1630.

4
Ibid..

5
CPD, Senate, vol.206, 22 Feb 1950, p.7.

6
T.B.Millar: Australia's Defence (MUP, Melbourne, 1965) p.172, for table giving Australia's expenditure on defence forces 1945-64.

7
See statements by McBride, 11 April 1954, CNIA, April 1954, p.288 ff, and CPD,HR, vol.5, 28 Sept 1954, p.1629 ff.

declined to 2.7.¹ If Australia was seriously concerned about threats to her security during this period she gave little indication of seriously preparing to resist them herself. McBride gave some indication of the reasons for this when he argued that 'we have a domestic problem which is peculiar to any young and developing country. It is the reconciliation of the demands of defence preparedness with those of national development'.² In 1957 Menzies explained the rationale of Australian defence policy.³ He argued that while a global conflict was unlikely, limited conflicts could be expected to break out at any time, particularly in Southeast Asia. Australia intended to maintain a highly trained, well equipped and mobile force that could intervene in such conflicts and help prevent limited aggression. She would do this largely in concert with the US and would seek to coordinate her policy planning with that of Washington. As one commentator astutely observed:

the strategic role for which Australia prepares itself is a role in the Cold War and limited wars. It provides for the type of forces that give it a voice in Cold War alliances and that can play a useful role in putting out brushfires (but not in defending Australia itself) 4

In other words, as for most small powers, Australian security was dependent less on military planning than foreign policy.⁵ In exchange for US protection Australia would provide support for

¹ Millar: loc.cit..

² Statement of 11 April 1954, CNIA, April 1954, p.289.

³ CFDHR, vol.14, 4 April 1957, pp.571-79. See also statement by Athol Townley, then Minister for Defence, *ibid.*, vol.25, 26 Nov 1959, pp.3183-91, and Casey, CNIA, Dec 1957, pp.964-5.

⁴ B.B.Schaffer: 'Policy and System in Defense: the Australian Case', World Politics, Jan 1963, p.238. Emphasis added.

⁵ Modelski: *op.cit.*, p.6, comments that Australia and New Zealand 'are small states amiably dependent upon the great powers for their independent survival'.

American policies elsewhere in the region.

The Menzies Government publicly admitted that it viewed Australian security as being dependent largely upon the actions of its 'great friends and allies'¹ and that 'we in Australia have relied not on our own strength alone, but primarily on combined efforts with our friends'.² On one occasion Menzies expressed this sentiment in a more forthright fashion: 'True, Australia is an independent nation and has a perfect right to express its views whatever the result....But the fact is that we are not truly independent, except in legal terms'.³

Australia had accepted that her security was dependent upon US policies and sought to ensure that the US pursued policies, in Southeast Asia in particular, which were consonant with Australian desires. As in the pre-war imperial system when Australia could be most influential by seeking to affect British policy, so in the 1950s the Menzies Government concluded that it was through Washington that its influence could be most effectively asserted.⁴

Contemporaneously Australian policy towards Britain and her Southeast Asian colonies developed. During the inter-war years Australian defence strategy had been largely dependent upon a British presence in the region. In 1923 the British had begun to construct at Singapore a naval base which Australia had regarded as 'essential for ensuring the mobility necessary to provide for the security of the territories [including Australia] and trade of the Empire in Eastern waters'.⁵ Subsequent Australian policy rested on the assumption that in the event of war a British Fleet

¹ CPD,HR, vol.6, 20 April 1955, p.49 (statement by Menzies).

² Casey: *op.cit.*, p.16. Similarly Menzies referred to 'our friends, without whose help we cannot hope to maintain our freedom against a major challenge', 'The Pacific Settlement As Seen From Australia', Foreign Affairs, Jan 1952, p.195.

³ Age, 31 July 1958.

⁴ See Casey: *op.cit.*, pp.15-16, and statements by Casey CNIA, Dec 1957, p.140, and CPD,HR, vol.2, 27 Nov 1953, pp.663-5.

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Papers, General Session 1923, vol.II, p.627 ff, The Imperial Conference of 1923, Summary of Proceedings, p.8.

would be stationed at that base.¹ Despite the collapse of Singapore in 1942 and the ALP's pre-war disinclination to rely on British defence assistance, the Chifley Government was clearly affected by the long standing notion of imperial defence. Thus at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London, May 1946, Chifley reported:

I told the Conference...that the approach to a common scheme of defence for this area should be by agreement between the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, and thereafter with the United States of America and later with other nations....It was agreed that this matter should be examined by the Governments concerned. 2

But the US was not prepared at that stage to become involved. Three years later, Chifley indicated that the Commonwealth countries had acted alone:

In cooperation with the British and New Zealand Governments, Australia has made appropriate arrangements whereby Britain and New Zealand are represented in the Australian Government machinery....Planning for the Pacific area is thus proceeding. 3

This was the first clear intimation of what later came to be known as the ANZAM arrangement.⁴

The ANZAM arrangement has not been fully explained publicly but some relevant statements have been made. In 1950 Menzies conceded that his Government intended to implement

a decision taken by the previous Government in May 1948 to authorise strategic planning to be developed on the official level through the Australian defence machinery in conjunction with representatives of the United Kingdom and New Zealand for the regional defence of the South-West Pacific area, the boundaries of which include Malaya. 5

1

See the accounts in the official histories of World War II: Paul Hasluck: The Government and the People, 1939-41 (Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1952); G.H.Gill: The Royal Australian Navy, 1939-42 (Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1957) pp.36-42; and S.Woodburn Kirby: The War Against Japan, vol.I, The Loss of Singapore (London, HMSO, 1957) pp.1-22.

2

CPD,HR, vol.187, 19 June 1946, pp.1559-60.

3

Broadcast of 15 May 1949, CNIA, May 1949, p.645. See also statement by J.J.Dedman, Minister for Defence, CPD,HR, vol.196, 29 April 1948, p.1251.

4

Standing, presumably, for Australia, New Zealand and the British forces in the Malayan area, the abbreviation appears to have come into use about 1954.

5

CPD,HR, vol.208, 31 May 1950, pp.364-5.

According to the findings of a semi-official British study group published in 1956,¹ this agreement on defence coordination was later extended to cover an obligation to Malaya's defence about 1954 or 1955.² In 1963 the Chief of Imperial General staff, General Sir Richard Hull, then in Canberra for an ANZAM meeting, said that

ANZAM was not a treaty...but a term used to denote consultative arrangements for coordinating the defence interests of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom....No formal document of any kind existed....It covered no precise area but related naturally to common defence interests in this part of the world. 3

The Australian commitment to Malaysia evolved from an obligation originally accepted by Chifley.⁴

The decision to originate ANZAM coincided with the beginning of guerrilla activity in Malaya but preceded the announcement of the Emergency Regulations by one month.⁵ Although the ALP had been prepared to establish ANZAM it did not want to commit Australian forces to fighting in the Emergency. The Liberal Party was less equivocal and Harrison, while Acting Leader of the Opposition, criticised the Labor Government's non-interventionist policy, complaining that 'whilst in Malaya some definite action is being taken, we in Australia are taking no action'.⁶ This difference of approach became apparent with the change of government in 1949.

In early 1950 rumours began to circulate to the effect that Australia was considering assisting Britain in Malaya,⁷ but the Government at first refused to be drawn on the issue,⁸ despite the approval expressed by some of its backbench supporters for such

1 Collective Security in South East Asia (RIIA, OUP, 1956) p.20. The group included Senior British Service personnel.

2 See infra, pp.17-8.

3 C.Times, 28 Feb 1963.

4 See Watt: op.cit., pp.49-55; and Millar: op.cit., pp.69-76 and diagram, p.96.

5 See Richard Clutterbuck: The Long, Long War (Cassel, London, 1967) pp.25-41.

6 CPD,HR, vol.197, 16-17 June 1948, p.2115.

7 CPD, Senate, vol.207, 19 April 1950, p.1501 (O'Sullivan); CPD,HR, vol.207, 19 April 1950, p.1566, and Adjournment Debate pp.1620-1; ibid., 2 May 1950, p.2063.

8 Ibid., vol.206, 22 March 1950, p.1052 (Menzies); ibid., vol.207, 19 April 1950, p.1566 (Menzies); ibid., 21 April 1950, p.1773 (Menzies).

action.¹ The Government did admit, however, that it regarded Malaya as being 'of vital concern to the security of Australia'.² It also declared that 'there is a general movement of Communist activity...in a south-easterly direction...[constituting] a grave threat to the safety of Australia',³ and that 'events in Malaya are, of course, a part of the global pattern of imperialistic communist aggression'.⁴ The ALP made no secret of its opposition to the despatch of Australian forces to Malaya.⁵ (Two of its leading members later argued that the insurrection was a result of rural poverty rather than communist agitation.)⁶ Then on 31 May 1950 Menzies revealed that the Government had been considering a request from the UK for assistance from the RAAF, and that Cabinet had decided to station a squadron of Dakotas on active duty in Malaya. He specifically denied that any other request had been made.⁷ Within a month the Korean War broke out and Australia's attention and energies were focused elsewhere. Until 1955 the British fought almost alone in Malaya and by that time had largely suppressed the revolt.⁸

The years 1954 and 1955 witnessed considerable changes in Australian defence strategy: Southeast Asia came to be regarded as the region most vital to Australian defence, and Australia for the first time stationed forces overseas in peacetime⁹ in order, the Government declared, to assist in the defence of that region.

1

Ibid., vol.206, 22 March 1950, p.1052 (Kent-Hughes); ibid., vol. 207, 9 May 1950, p.2252 (Ryan) and p.2266 (Swartz).

2

Ibid., vol.207, 20 April 1950, p.1685 (Spender).

3

Ibid., 19 May 1950, p.2741 (Menzies).

4

Ibid., vol.208, 30 May 1950, p.3350 (Menzies).

5

Ibid., vol.207, 19 April 1950, p.1566 (Ward), pp.1622-3 (Clyde Cameron); ibid., Senate, vol.207, 26 April 1950, pp.1792-3 (McKenna).

6

CPD,HR, vol.208, 8 June 1950, pp.4031-5 (Ward), pp.4050-1 (Chifley).

7

Ibid., 31 May 1950, pp.3464-65. The request was probably made by the British Commissioner-General in South East Asia, Mr Malcolm MacDonald, during a visit to Australia.

8

See Clutterbuck: op.cit..

9

Apart from Occupation Forces.

Following the Geneva Conference, the Australian Government indicated that it was contemplating such revisions of its strategic planning. On 5 August 1954 Menzies said that his Government did not preclude the idea that Australian forces might be permanently stationed overseas,¹ and four days later the Minister for the Army, Mr Francis, announced that Australia was reorienting her strategic planning and considered Southeast Asia to be the most likely area in which Australian forces would be involved in military operations.² In November the British Commissioner-General to Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, visited Australia accompanied by British Service Chiefs,³ and it was reported that the UK was pressing Australia to contribute to a strategic reserve to be based in Malaya.⁴ Such reports aroused some comment in Australia,⁵ where the withdrawal of the Australian battalion from Korea appeared to suggest that it might be redeployed.⁶ An Opinion Poll taken in February 1955 indicated that 60 per cent of Australians would support the despatch of troops to Malaya and only 22 per cent would oppose it.⁷

In February 1955 the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference was held in London amid renewed reports of British requests for an Australian military presence in Malaya.⁸ The ANZAM powers conferred separately in London and on 8 February issued a statement revealing that 'the opportunity was taken to discuss as one element in the defence of the Manila Treaty area, the security of Malaya'.⁹ The following day Menzies clarified this statement, saying that

¹
CPD,HR, vol.4, 5 Aug 1954, pp.63-9.

²
SMH, 10 Aug 1954.

³
The Commander in Chief of British Far East Land Forces, Sir Charles Loewen, and the Commander in Chief of the Far East Royal Navy Station, Admiral Sir Charles Lambe.

⁴
SMH, 16 Nov; ST, 24 Nov 1954. The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr Holland, who received a similar British delegation, later appeared to substantiate these reports, Dominion, 13 Jan 1955.

⁵
Age, 19 Dec 1954; statement by the RSL, SMH, 6 Dec 1954.

⁶
Statement by McBride, CPD,HR, vol.4, 14 Sept 1954, p.1182.

⁷
Australian Public Opinion Polls, Feb-March 1955.

⁸
ST, 4 Feb; SMH, 31 Jan.

⁹
CNIA, Feb 1955, p.116.

Australia

is willing to accept obligations in that part of the world [Southeast Asia]. But again I want to point out that it does not yet appear how far SEATO will have any military planning attached to it. Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia have, in the meantime, thought it proper to conduct discussions with each other on what is the more limited field of Malaya. 1

It appeared that Australia preferred to have any standing force associated with SEATO and so, at least indirectly, under US auspices.² This interpretation seemed to be justified when it was announced, almost concurrently, that Menzies was to visit the US, on his way back to Australia, to discuss Western strategy.³ However, before the Prime Minister arrived in the US, Dulles publicly revealed that the US was opposed to standing SEATO force.⁴

The New Zealand Government was less reticent about these activities. Immediately upon his return to Wellington on 24 March the Prime Minister, Mr Holland, told Parliament that, following suggestions by the UK, New Zealand had decided to contribute three frigates and a commando group⁵ to a strategic reserve to be based in Malaya. The reserve's functions would be to establish a 'defence perimeter' to the north of Australia, to fight the terrorists, and to defend Malaya.⁶ He admitted that the force was not 'associated with SEATO'.⁷ Almost no criticism of the decision was voiced in Parliament.

The Australian Government was more circumspect in its approach to the matter. This may have been partly due to the indications that the ALP would be vociferously hostile to a significant Australian military contribution to Malaya,⁸ particularly since in

1
Ibid., p.117.

2
See statement by Casey, 7 Feb 1955, CNIA, Feb 1955, p.118.

3
SMH, 9 Feb.

4
Dulles statement of 23 Feb at inaugural SEATO meeting. See p.10, supra, note 3.

5
RNZAF units were already in Malaya.

6
NZPD, vol.305, 24 March 1955, pp.10-26.

7
Ibid., 29 March 1955, p.40.

8
See statement by Calwell, then Deputy Leader of the ALP, CPD,HR, vol.4, 10 Aug 1954, p.129.

early March the party's biennial conference at Hobart had declared that 'Labor policy is to oppose the use of Armed Forces in Malaya'.¹ Also influential, no doubt, was the Government's determination to coordinate Australian policy with that of the US.

On 25 March Menzies returned to Australia after a week of discussions in the US. On 1 April, following a two-day Cabinet review, he issued a statement on defence.² He emphasised that the Government viewed China as the major threat to Southeast Asian and Australian security and felt that 'if there is to be a war for our existence it should be carried out as far from our shores as possible'. With this in mind, he argued,

if Malaya is vital to our defence, more vital properly understood than some points on the Australian coast, then we must make Malayan defence in a real sense our business.... Australia will participate in the establishment in Malaya, as a very important part of the Manila Treaty area...a strategic reserve.

Australia's contribution to that reserve would be two destroyers or frigates and an annual visit by an aircraft carrier, an infantry battalion, and one fighter and two bomber squadrons.

On 20 April in a statement to Parliament,³ Menzies elaborated on the Government's plans. Having set out the principles and objectives of Australian foreign policy he reiterated the argument that 'we [in Australia should] commit ourselves with our great friends and allies to mutual action and reciprocal obligations', and explained that 'troops in Malaya will represent a true defence in depth for Australia itself'. The Prime Minister revealed that the SEATO Secretariat had been informed of the Australian decision to contribute to the strategic reserve and had welcomed the decision. He continued that at the Commonwealth Conference he had said that 'Australian opinion would wish some adequate confidence that British forces would have support from the USA'. He had gone to the US to seek assurances of such support and President Eisenhower and Mr Dulles, the Secretary of State, had agreed on a

¹ Labor's Plan For World Peace: Declarations and Decisions of the Hobart Conference (ALP, 1955).

² CNIA, April 1955, pp.278-80.

³ CPD,HR, vol.6, 20 April 1955, pp.44-54.

statement which Menzies read in full. Its most important section reads:

I raised the question whether in the event of Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand undertaking to establish substantial forces in Malaya, we could be assured that the United States would be prepared to give us effective cooperation. I was informed that though the tactical employment of forces was a matter which would have to be worked out in detail on the Services level, the United States considered that such effective cooperation was implicit in the Manila Pact.

The force would form the nucleus of 'substantially greater forces', probably of the order of two divisions, which Australia would contribute to the Southeast Asian theatre in the event of a 'hot' war'.

On 27 April 1955 Dr Evatt¹ opened the Parliamentary debate on Menzies' statement. In accordance with Labor's policy he opposed the despatch of Australian troops to Malaya. Labor's objections were extensive and included contentions that the decision would exacerbate the Emergency,² injure Australia's image in Asia,³ incur Malayan disapproval,⁴ and be strategically disadvantageous for, as in 1942, the Australian forces could be isolated. Perhaps most telling was the criticism that the Government had not clearly defined the role which the reserve would play but had merely by implication contended that it was related to SEATO.⁵

Unlike the New Zealand Government, the Australian Government had not explained the purpose of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. The Prime Minister had made passing reference to the issue on 20 April saying,

I have been asked whether this reserve is to be employed in anti-Communist operations. Following my discussions in London, the 'ANZAM' Defence Committee was directed to produce a draft for the consideration of the three Governments. This is now awaited. 6

If such a draft was ever produced its findings were not made public.

1
Then Leader of the Opposition.

2
CPD,HR, vol.6, 27 April 1955, p.197 (Evatt).

3
Ibid., p.200 (Evatt); *ibid.*, 3 May, p.351.

4
Ibid., 28 April, p.293 (Clyde Cameron), p.282 (Costa), 5 May, p.507 ff (Ward).

5
Ibid., 27 April 1955, p.202 (Evatt).

6
Ibid., 20 April, p.51.

On 16 June, after a Cabinet meeting, Menzies did reveal, however, that Australian forces 'will, like the United Kingdom and New Zealand components of the strategic reserve, be available for use in operations against Communist terrorists'.¹ But, as Sir Alan Watt comments, 'for the rest Government statements have been ambiguous if not contradictory'.² The Government continued to imply that the forces were part of a SEATO reserve, but was anxious to dissociate itself from the opinion of a visiting British Service Chief that 'they could be used anywhere in Southeast Asia, not only against the terrorists in Malaya'.³

The contradictory nature of the Government's statements on the subject is clearly revealed by examining two answers to Parliamentary questions given by Francis. On 31 August 1955 he was asked whether the Australian forces could be used anywhere in Southeast Asia. He replied that the function of the approximately 1400 Australian servicemen was 'to assist in dealing with Communist terrorists in Malaya'.⁴ Eight days later, asked whether the Australian forces would return to Australia at the end of the Emergency, the Minister replied that although they had been made available to fight the terrorists, 'the primary purpose of our sending forces to Malaya is to contribute our share to the British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve'.⁵

The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, as Menzies later emphasised,⁶ was not based in Malaya merely to combat the guerrillas, 'they went there...as a contribution to the defence of the South-East Asian area'.⁷ In other words they were there for SEATO purposes if not under SEATO auspices.⁸ But Australia could not specifically designate the reserve a SEATO force, largely due to the antipathy

¹
CNIA, June 1955, p.419.

²
Watt: op.cit., pp.55-6. The fact that Sir Alan Watt was once Permanent Secretary to the Department of External Affairs and in 1955 Australian Commissioner-General in Southeast Asia, based in Singapore, lends authority to his account.

³
Statement by Major-General Churchill, Age, 5 July 1955; rebuttal by McBride, SMH, 6 July 1955.

⁴
CPD,HR, vol.7, 31 Aug 1955, p.201.

⁵
Ibid., vol.7, 7 Sept 1955, p.478.

⁶
Ibid., vol.40, 25 Sept 1963, p.1338.

⁷
Ibid..

⁸
See Chapter Three, infra, p.67 ff.

expressed to that organisation in Malaya.¹ Yet in order to gain support for its policy within Australia and to explain its own conception of the reserve's functions, the Menzies Government by implication linked the reserve and SEATO; it did so imprecisely in order to avoid embarrassing the Malayan Government.

On 31 August 1957 Malaya became independent. The ruling Alliance Government had already announced that it would not join SEATO,² but it concluded a bilateral defence treaty with the UK. The treaty permitted the British forces to remain in Malaya but was not specific as to whether they would be allowed to operate freely throughout the region.³ However, as Watt points out, the treaty did not exclude such operations.⁴ On 19 September 1957 Menzies expressed Australian approval of the treaty which would allow the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to remain in Malaya to combat the guerrillas, defend Malaya and be 'constantly related to SEATO defence'.⁵ Three months later Casey revealed that Australia intended to associate herself with the treaty by exchange of notes with Kuala Lumpur.⁶

Soon after its arrival in Malaya the Australian battalion was involved in operations against the guerrillas, and in 1958 it was joined by one bomber and two fighter squadrons of the RAAF.⁷ On 31 July 1960 the Emergency was officially ended and the Australian infantry battalion moved to the permanent base for the 28th Commonwealth Brigade near Malacca. On 1 September 1960 Townley

1

Utusan Melayu, 5 July and 15 Nov 1955 in Weekly Digest of the Non-English Press (WDNEP) 27/55 and 46/55; statements by Inche Saenu bin Abdul Rahman, Secretary-General of the United Malays National Organisation, SMH, 16 Sept 1955; Utusan Zaman, Malaya Merdeka, 18 Sept 1955, WDNEP, 38/55; statement by the People's Action Party, WDNEP, 46/55.

2

L.Kulasingham: 'Recent Growth of Australia's Interests in Malaya' (B.A.Thesis, Adelaide University, 1958) pp.42-4.

3

The treaty was concluded on 12 October 1957. See Appendix One for text, and Chapter Three, infra, for more detailed investigation.

4

Watt: op.cit., pp.58-60.

5

CPD,HR, vol.16, 19 Sept 1957, pp.794-801.

6

Ibid., vol.17, 5 Dec 1957, p.2919. See Appendix Two for text of the notes.

7

Ibid., vol.18, 12 Feb 1958, p.12 (Governor-General's speech).

revealed that the Australian contingent in Malaya consisted of two RAN destroyers with 500 crew members, an infantry battalion of 1,240 men, and one Canberra and two Sabre squadrons with 800 RAAF personnel at the Butterworth base. He said that those forces were there to fight the guerrillas and to meet an 'emergency'.¹ In 1962 it became apparent what Townley included within the term. In response to a request from Thailand, following Pathet Lao successes in Laos, and in concert with US forces, Commonwealth forces were sent to Thailand. The Malayan Government would not allow the Australian contingent, a squadron of Sabres, to operate from Malaya in fulfilment of Australia's SEATO obligations,² so the RAAF force was redeployed in Singapore and then sent to Ubon.³

Australia's contribution to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve epitomised Australian defence strategy in the 1950s. Canberra envisaged communism moving in 'a southeasterly direction' towards Australia by a series of limited wars of aggression either on the Korean or Malayan pattern. China was seen as being the controlling power behind this communist aggression and any strengthening of communist (or sometimes left wing) parties in Southeast Asia ipso facto an extension of Chinese influence. Australia sought to counter this perceived threat by establishing an outer defence perimeter in Southeast Asia and by committing her more powerful allies, particularly the US and the UK, to its preservation. By the mid-1950s the US was regarded as Australia's most important ally: ANZUS represented the US commitment to the defence of Australia, SEATO the US commitment to Australia's forward defence perimeter. Australia's relationship with the UK existed within that framework and centred on the Malayan area. The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, it was hoped in Australia, would encourage a continuing British presence in the region, provide a mobile force for use in Southeast Asia, possibly in cooperation with the US, and demonstrate Australia's worth as an ally of the major Western powers.

Australia's activities and intentions in Southeast Asia were of two kinds: she was prepared to help defend states against aggression, as in the case of South Korea, and to defend governments against revolts, particularly when these were seen as being communist

¹
Ibid., vol.28, 1 Sept 1960, p.773.

²
Times, 21 May 1962.

³
Ibid., 29 May. See Donald E. Neuchterlein: Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, p.182 ff.

inspired, as in the case of Malaya. These long-term strategic considerations, coupled with Australia's small defence forces and her heavy reliance on her allies, could involve considerable difficulties. It was always possible that the US and the UK with their extensive interests elsewhere might devote less attention to events in Southeast Asia than Australia thought desirable, and indeed might liquidate their commitments in the region. Conversely, Australia, by virtue of her subordinate position within the alliances, might be drawn into commitments and activities not immediately in her best interests or be forced to abandon interests which she considered important owing to lack of support from her 'powerful friends'.¹ Again, military commitments to the states of Southeast Asia could involve difficulties owing to the fluid political conditions existing in the area. While it might be accepted that a government may request aid to assist in resisting aggression, in Southeast Asia in particular it might well prove difficult to decide if it has the authority to make such a request. The distinction between 'indirect aggression' and indigenous revolt (be it communist or not), is often difficult to establish. Even with regard to the Malayan Emergency these problems are not easily resolved. The guerrillas were not the manifestation of external aggression (unless the export of ideas be so regarded) and yet their suppression by the colonial power might be deserving of support, largely because of the pluralistic nature of Malayan society. The guerrillas were almost entirely Chinese and their revolt largely an expression, overseas, of the nationalism of the New China. Their success would have been incompatible with the harmonious development of an independent and multi-racial Malaya. That the Australian support for their suppression was explained in terms of communist aggression only demonstrated the possibilities of the West incorrectly interpreting apparently similar revolts which might be indigenous and popular.

The defeat of the Malayan insurgents by the late 1950s did not mark the end of the ambitions of the left wing Chinese in the area. In 1959 Singapore achieved internal self-government and it was not clear whether Chinese similarly oriented to the Malayan insurgents would, perhaps by constitutional means, assume power in the city state. Largely as a consequence of this possibility the Federation of Malaysia was created. Australia's policy towards the creation of that Federation and its subsequent development, reflected the difficulties inherent in the strategies which Canberra had developed in the 1950s.

1

See Hanno Weisbrod: 'Sir Garfield Barwick and Dutch New Guinea', Australian Quarterly, June 1967, pp.24-36, and Chapter Four, infra, pp.108-14, for the application of this possibility.

CHAPTER TWO

The Malaysia Plan

On 16 September 1963 the Federation of Malaya joined with the British colonies of Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah¹ to form the Federation of Malaysia. The most obvious factor which these territories had in common was the heritage of British imperialism, involving various shared and common institutions. In the long run a second common denominator was perhaps more important: the existence within each state of substantial Chinese communities, proportionately larger than in any other Southeast Asian country. Each state was socially pluralist: the resultant Federation was a jigsaw of racial diversity. Australia's policy towards Malaysia cannot adequately be analysed without an understanding of the rationale behind the creation of Malaysia, the reasons for its internal tensions and the evolution of its dispute with Indonesia.

Table 1: The Chinese in Southeast Asia, 1960*

Total population (000s)	Chinese population (000s)	Chinese percentage ^a
Burma	350	1.7
Thailand	2,670	9.0
N. Vietnam	55	0.4
S. Vietnam	800	5.7
Cambodia	350	6.5
Laos	35	2.0
Malaya	2,552	36.9
Singapore	1,230	75.2
Sarawak	236	31.1
Sabah	104	23.0
Brunei	21	26.0
Indonesia	2,690	3.0
Philippines	181	0.5
TOTAL	11,274	5.3

^aCensus figures underlined, others are estimates

*Source, Victor Purcell: The Chinese in South East Asia (OUP, London, 1965) p.3.

British involvement in Malaya began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the establishment of the

¹

Sabah was known as North Borneo until it was incorporated in Malaysia. For simplicity the term Sabah has been used throughout except in references.

Straits Settlements at Penang, Malacca and Singapore. The small native populations of these trading stations were rapidly outnumbered by Chinese immigrants, most seeking their fortunes in commerce. The remainder of the peninsula was organised as Islamic Sultanates, populated almost exclusively by Malays and feudal in character.¹ Only in the 1870s did the British intervene in the affairs of these states, justifying their intervention by referring to the prevailing conditions of near-anarchy which threatened British trading interests.² During the following forty years British influence was extended throughout the peninsula by the establishment of indirect rule which involved the appointment of a British Adviser to each Sultan. The significance of this system was that while the Adviser wielded effective power the legality of the Sultans' sovereignty was maintained. The extension of British influence to the Malay states brought with it, as to the Straits Settlements, the influx of non-Malay Asian immigrants, predominantly Chinese. It was largely these immigrants who developed the primary industries of Malaya, notably rubber planting and tin-mining. By the second decade of the twentieth century the essential characteristics of modern Malayan society had been established: Malays were not a majority of the population; among Asians it was non-Malays who dominated the monetary economy; and the urban areas were predominantly non-Malay. But for the British, 'Malaya was a... "Malay country" governed in trust for its people',³ the Malays.

¹ Radin Soenarno: 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-45', JSEAH, March 1960, p.1.

² See C. Northcote Parkinson: British Intervention in Malaya 1867-1877 (Singapore, University of Malaya Press, 1960); C.D. Cowan: Nineteenth Century Malaya (OUP, London, 1961). Perhaps an equally important factor is indicated in the following passage from Parkinson, p.255:

...the soldiers of 1875 went out in search of armed conflict. At that time however there had been no real war since that in the Crimea....Fortunate were they who could boast of their deeds during the Indian Mutiny. At the least hint of a campaign the less fortunate would rush to the scene from all points of the compass, sword in hand and eager for decorations.

³ Victor Purcell: Malaya: Communist or Free? (Gollancz, London, 1954) p.165. See also R.N. Jackson: Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya (Govt. Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

Table 2: Malaya and Singapore, Population Growth and Racial

Year	Territory	Composition 1921-57*			Total (000s)
		Indigenous%	Chinese%	Others%	
1921	Malaya	54.0	29.4	16.6	2,906
	Singapore	12.9	75.2	11.9	420
1931	Malaya	49.2	33.9	16.9	3,787
	Singapore	11.8	74.9	13.3	559
1947	Malaya	49.5	38.4	12.1	4,908
	Singapore	12.3	78.6	9.1	739
1957	Malaya	49.8	37.2	13.0	6,278
	Singapore	13.4	73.9	12.7	1,446

* From T.G.McGee: 'Population: A Preliminary Analysis', Wang Gungwu (ed): Malaysia, A Survey (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1964) p.68.

Before the invasion of the Japanese, communal tensions were not much in evidence in Malaya. This may be largely attributed to the mutually non-intrusive attitude on the part of the two major communities, the Chinese and the Malays. The Japanese occupation, from 1942-5, served to change this situation: 'pre-war communal relations were completely altered....The smouldering racial prejudices and fears now rose to the surface'.¹ During the occupation it was primarily the Chinese who formed the resistance movement, largely Malays the collaborators.²

The net effect of the Japanese invasion and occupation of Malaya was a disillusionment with British power, a general stirring of Malay political consciousness, the articulation of communal antipathy, the improvement of the Communist Party organisation.³

Each of these factors was to prove significant in the post-war development of Malaya, but their origins are to be found further in the past.

The first four decades of the twentieth century had witnessed the origins of modern Malay nationalism. Until the mid-1920s Malay national consciousness was represented largely by an Islamic revival, after that time it became increasingly political in character. By the late 1930s infant political organisations existed whose chief concern was the maintenance of the Malays'

1

Kernal Singh Sandhu: 'Communalism: The Primary Threat to Malayan Unity', Asian Survey, Aug 1962, p.35.

2

See K.J.Ratnam: Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya (University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1965) p.17 ff.

3

Norman J.Parmer: 'Malaya and Singapore', in George M.Kahin (ed): Government and Politics of Southeast Asia, (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1958) p.350.

position as heirs-apparent to British power.¹ But in contrast to the other contemporary nationalist movements of Southeast Asia, that in Malaya sought to uphold the feudal social structure.² Within this movement a minority, numbering among its leaders Ibrahim bin Yaacob and Dr Burhanuddin, was more left-wing in character and took much of its inspiration from the Indonesian nationalist movement.³ The influence of this group was later to grow. Simultaneously the Malays also became increasingly conscious of the relatively greater economic development among the other communities,⁴ until by the post-war years among the Malays the feeling was growing that 'they used to be poor men in a poor country, and now they were poor men in a rich country'.⁵

Chinese development was parallel but dissimilar. As Purcell points out, the 'object of the British in the first place was to attract the Chinese,...profit by their industry, and to interfere with them as little as possible'.⁶ The Chinese were left to their own devices and in consequence with regard to 'Chinese nationalism in pre-war Malaya one is struck by the complete domination of the community's political life by external issues'.⁷ Another observer, an overseas Chinese himself, has put this point much more strongly: 'However many years they have stayed in the South Seas the China-born Chinese, and many of the overseas born too, keep their eyes fixed on China and their hearts set on home'.⁸ Such vehemence may be treated with reserve, particularly in view of Gosling's study which reveals Hokkiens clearly being assimilated in Trengganu. But significantly even these Hokkiens accepted racial and cultural nationalism in the

1

Soenarno: *op.cit.*, William R.Roff: 'The Origins of Malay Nationalism 1900-41', (Ph.D. Thesis, ANU 1965).

2

Soenarno: *op.cit.*, p.26. The contrast with the intentions of the Indonesian nationalists is particularly striking.

3

Ibid., p.12; Roff: *op.cit.*.

4

Ratnam: *op.cit.*, p.12.

5

L.A.Mills: Malaya: A Political and Economic Appraisal (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1958) p.5.

6

V.Purcell: The Chinese in Malaya (OUP, London, 1948) p.143.

7

Ratnam: *op.cit.*, p.12.

8

Ju-K'ang T'ien: The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure, Monographs on Social Anthropology, No.12, L.S.E., 1953, p.81.

post war years and their Chinese consciousness reasserted itself.¹

Before World War II the Chinese might have been legitimately described as transients in Malaya and their political interests, where they existed, were centred on China. In 1912 Sun Yat-sen established branches of the Tung Meng Hui in Malaya and after 1927 the Kuomintang (KMT) was influential among the Malayan Chinese.² Further, by the 1930s it was apparent that the Chinese Communist Party was also gaining Malayan adherents to its cause.³ The increasing tendency for overseas Chinese to become involved in China's politics may be attributed to three major factors following the establishment of the Chinese Republic: (1) the influence of Sun Yat-sen's doctrine of the unity of the 'yellow race', the principle of jus sanguinis; (2) the activities of the KMT in setting up overseas branches and a Ministry for Overseas Chinese and perhaps even regarding parts of Nanyang⁴ as terra irrendenta; and (3) the Chinese language education system, simplified in 1917 with the introduction of Kuo Yu and China oriented, which was producing foreigners in Malaya. The Chinese were creating in Malaya an imperio in imperium. Before the war Chinese interest in politics, albeit in the politics of China, was awakened; the post war years were to find the Chinese increasingly interested in local affairs.

On their return in 1945, the British sought to rationalise the rather clumsy administrative machinery of Malaya and in 1946 introduced proposals for a Malayan Union, which would reduce the federal characteristics, create a single sovereignty and greatly simplify citizenship requirements for non-Malays.⁵ These proposals struck at the very heart of nascent Malay nationalism by threatening

1 L.A.P.Gosling: 'Migration and Assimilation of Rural Chinese in Trengganu', Ch. XI. J.Bastin and R.Roolvink (eds): Malayan and Indonesian Studies (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964).

2 Png Poh Seng: 'The Kuomintang in Malaya', JSEAH, March 1961, pp.1-32.

3 Purcell: Chinese in Malaya, p.215 ff.

4 Nanyang means literally 'South Seas' but refers generally to the states of Southeast Asia, particularly to the areas containing Chinese.

5 Malayan Constitutional Proposals (London, HMSO, 1948); UKPD,HC, vol.414, 10 Oct 1945, col.254; V.Purcell: 'A Malayan Union: The Proposed New Constitution', Pacific Affairs, Sept 1946, pp.279-85; M.Clark: 'The Malayan Alliance and its Accommodation of Communal Pressures', (Unpub.M.A. Thesis, Uni. Malaya 1964) pp.14-16; Farmer: *op.cit.*; p.255 ff; D.E.Moore: 'UMNO and the 1959 Elections' (Unpub. Ph.D., Uni. of California 1960) pp.26-7.

the special position of the Malays: the Malays organised and protested with such vehemence that the British withdrew the scheme and in 1948 instituted the Federation of Malaya. The Malays had made their point and remained politically organised. The British had failed to impose political equality on the races of Malaya.

If in the pre-war period there was any justification for the British regarding Malaya as a Malay country and its Chinese population as aliens, this posture became more and more unreal in the post-war years. The Chinese were increasingly local born, increasingly permanent residents. The anticipated transfer of British power to the local community soon provoked communal rivalry, each community striving to establish the legitimacy of its claim for its share of that power. But 'the British made no serious effort to absorb the immigrants into the social system or to build up a constructive social system....The cleavages in the society [were] so deep...that practically every issue acquire[d] communal implications'.¹

The attraction of China remained strong among the Chinese, an attraction perhaps largely attributable to the continuation of the Chinese language education system, still the most widespread system among the Chinese,² despite the efforts of the post-independence Malayan Government to implement Malay-language education.³ Assimilation of the Chinese by intermarriage remained insignificant because of the deep entrenchment of Islam in the Malay community. Clearly 'the community problem could not be solved by assimilation, and the only solution was a modus vivendi between races'.⁴ Such a modus vivendi was not aided by the communist insurgency which broke out in 1948 and lasted sporadically until 1960. The guerrillas, remnants of the anti-Japanese resistance movement, were almost exclusively Chinese.⁵

1
R.S.Milne: 'Politics and Government', Ch.21, Wang Gungwu: Malaysia, p.328.

2
Malaysia: Official Year Book 1963, p.532.

3
Wolfgang Franke: 'Chinese into Malaysians', FEER, 12 March 1965, pp.459-61; Douglas P.Murray: 'Chinese Education in South-East Asia', China Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1964, pp.67-96.

4
V.Purcell: 'The Chinese in Malaysia', Ch.13, Wang Gungwu: op.cit., p.193.

5
For a brief survey see Anthony Short: 'Communism and the Emergency', Ch.10, Wang Gungwu: op.cit.. See also Clutterbuck: The Long, Long War, and Edgar O'Ballance: Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-60 (Faber, London, 1966).

The differences between the two major communities were to be found in almost every aspect of their existence. The Malays had changed little since British intervention, remaining largely rural dwellers living by subsistence farming or fishing. The Chinese were predominantly urban dwellers who, together with the Indians, dominated the monetary economy. This was reflected in the races' areas of settlement. As may be seen from Tables 3, 4 and 5 the

Table 3: Malaya: Percentage of Total Population
of Each Community Living in Urban Areas, 1957.*

Size of community	Malay		Chinese	
	1000+	10,000+	1000+	10,000+
Federation	19.3	11.2	73.0	44.7
Johore	20.2	13.6	64.9	29.6
Kedah	11.2	6.3	61.8	34.5
Kelantan	19.9	7.8	66.9	39.9
Malacca	8.8	6.5	52.2	44.0
Negri Sembilan	14.0	5.8	51.6	28.0
Pahang	18.2	8.7	76.4	43.5
Penang	30.4	24.9	79.1	70.4
Perak	17.4	9.3	79.7	37.6
Perlis	5.3	-	25.4	-
Selangor	30.2	21.4	84.0	57.2
Trengganu	29.6	15.8	82.6	57.1

*1957 Population Census, Report No.14., Tables 2.11, 2.12, p.11.

Table 4: Racial Composition of Malaya by States,
1957* (000s)

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Total
Johore	445	392	71	928
Kedah	476	144	67	702
Kelantan	463	29	6	506
Malacca	143	121	23	291
Negri Sembilan	151	150	54	364
Pahang	179	108	22	313
Penang	165	327	69	572
Perak	485	539	178	1,221
Perlis	71	16	2	91
Selangor	291	489	201	1,013
Trengganu	256	18	3	278
TOTAL	3,727	2,333	696	6,279

* Ratnam: op.cit., p.4. (Discrepancies due to rounding)

Table 5: Racial Composition of the Malayan Urban Population (000s)*

Year	Malay	Chinese	Other	Total
1947	275	812	215	1301
1957	604	1704	360	2680
% increase	119.6	109.8	67.4	104.3

* Hamzah-Sendut: 'Urbanisation', Wang Gungwu: Malaysia, p.89.

Chinese are dominant in the large towns and the more developed states of the west coast, the Malays in the more underdeveloped states of the east and north and the rural areas elsewhere.¹ The races' economic activities are also reflected in the communal distribution of the national income, an examination of which reveals the Chinese receiving the largest share. Despite efforts on the part of the Malayan Government, itself Malay dominated, to

Table 6: Approximate Annual Income in Malaya by Race, 1947 and 1957.*

(\$M.)		Malays	Chinese	Indians
per capita	1947	258	656	560
	1957	367	837	669
per adult male	1947	979	2090	1296
	1957	1463	3223	2013

* Silcock and Fisk (eds): op.cit., p.279.

alter this position (of poorer rural Malays), the situation has persisted.² From this situation spring the social and political attitudes of the two communities.

The Malays have continued to regard Malaya as theirs and insisted on retaining political control. Since independence in 1957 this control has been ensured by three principal devices, which are designed to bring about a political supremacy greater than Malay numerical superiority would warrant. First, Article 116 of the Constitution³ permits the Electoral Commission to weight constituencies, having regard to, among other things, their communal

1

To take a further example: 'During the 1960-1 session the University had 2,295 students of whom 1,563 were Chinese, 230 Malays, 428 Indians and Ceylonese and 74 "others" ', Ratnam: op.cit., p.106.

2

From 1947 to 1957 the Malay average income dropped from 47% to 44% of that of the Chinese; in the same period Malaya's rural population rose by 4,000 but its non-Malay component declined by 364,000 (perhaps largely due to the resettlement policies), T.H. Silcock and E.K.Fisk (eds): The Political Economy of Independent Malaya (ANU Press, Canberra, 1963) p.279.

3

Federation of Malaya, Constitution (Kuala Lumpur, 1957).

composition, by as much as 15 per cent above (in urban areas) or below the norm. The application of this doctrine has led to extensive rural over-representation.¹ Secondly, qualifications for citizenship, and so the franchise, have been designed to restrict the voting rights of non-Malays, although in the long run all will qualify. Finally, the Malays have been given 'special rights', the legitimacy of which is recognised by the Constitution. Until 1952 only Malays were recruited into the civil service; at that time General Templar introduced the policy of recruiting non-Malays in the ratio of one in five. This policy persists. Article 89 of the Constitution reserves certain land to the Malays; article 153 grants them special business licences, scholarships and public service appointments; the armed forces and police force are almost exclusively Malay. Under these conditions the Government is obliged to devote much of its energies to the interests of the Malays. Despite this policy 'it seems doubtful whether the Malays have yet gained any improvement in their economic position, relatively to the Chinese or absolutely'.²

If the Malays feared becoming an underprivileged minority in what they regarded as their own country, the situation seemed somewhat different to the Chinese. The Chinese population is predominantly young, urban dwelling and Chinese educated. The Malayan Government admits to an unemployment rate of six per cent overall and twenty seven per cent among the young urban population.³ The latter figure would be predominantly Chinese. Further, while the Chinese community as a whole may be relatively prosperous, 'only a small proportion of the Chinese...possess this economic power and the majority are as poor...as the Malays'.⁴ Table 7 presents the Malays in a more favourable light. And this does not allow for income in kind, which may be substantial for the Malays but less so for the cash farming and urban dwelling Chinese. In

1

In 1964 Bungsar had 58,261 voters; 49 other constituencies had less than 25,000.

2

T.H.Silcock: 'Communal and Party Structure', Ch.1, T.H.Silcock and E.K.Fisk (eds): *op.cit.*, p.7. See also E.K.Fisk: 'Rural Development Problems in Malaya', Australian Outlook, Dec 1962, pp.246-59.

3

The First Malaysia Plan 1966-70 (Govt. Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1966) p.79.

4

Purcell: Malaya: Communist or Free? pp.168-9.

Table 7: Distribution of Individual Incomes Under \$12,000 p.a.
Between Races in Malaya 1957 (\$M.)*

<u>per capita</u>	<u>Malays</u>		<u>Chinese</u>		<u>Indians</u>	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	482	307	561	473	513	499

* Silcock and Fisk (eds): op.cit., p.279.

this situation the younger urban Chinese tend to be facing unemployment, discriminated against because of language and race, and possibly Peking oriented. The rationale for Chinese hostility to Malay rights and Malay as the official language is apparent. It was this body of urban Chinese particularly that formed the

Table 8: Literacy Rates 10 years of Age and Over, by
Community and Language, 1957, in Percentages.*

	Malay	English	Any language
All persons			
Malay	46	5	47
Chinese	3	11	53
Indian	5	16	57
Other	14	58	78
All	25	10	51
Males only			
Malay	64	7	65
Chinese	4	14	70
Indian	6	21	70
Other	15	62	85
All	33	13	68

* 1957 Population Census Report, No.14, pp.92-96.

disaffected left wing groups in Malaya, and which supported the left wing political parties.

Briefly Malay society could be characterised as traditional and rural, Chinese as urban and capitalist. But if the non-Malays provided the barons of industry and towkays, they also provided the radical urban masses. It was to such a society, which had achieved a veneer of intercommunal cooperation, that the British conceded political power in 1957. Whether a common nationalism could be engendered amid such diversity was open to question.

The political evolution of post-war Malaya has been dominated by communalism. Voting behaviour and political affiliations follow primarily a communal and only secondarily an economic or ideological pattern. All significant political parties are de facto communal. 'In Malaya...to form a completely non-communal party is suicidal. Yet no completely communal party...could be certain of

winning'.¹

The dominant political organisation in post-war Malaya has been the Alliance. A variant on the communal theme, the Alliance is an electoral arrangement between three communal parties who cooperate and select candidates for each constituency largely on the basis of its racial composition. The dominant partner is the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) whose formation 'was directly attributable to the violent reaction of the Malay community to the Malayan Union'.² Formed 1 March 1946, UMNO was largely responsible for the rejection of that Union and in 1951 it refused to accept the demand of its leader, Dato Onn, that it admit non-Malays to its ranks. Dato Onn resigned, formed the non-communal Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) and passed into the political wilderness as it became apparent that a non-communal party could attract little support.³ UMNO had rejected multi-racial membership and

it visualised that when independence came, power should be handed over to the Malays....At the same time it did not rule out entirely the importance of cooperation between the Malays and the non-Malays, so long as the non-Malays did not interfere with the rights and privileges of the Malays. 4

While UMNO accepted the desirability of there being cooperation between the communities with regard to political power, an essential aspect of its philosophy was that since the British had taken power from the Malays, then it was to the Malays that it should be returned.⁵

The first indication that UMNO was prepared to cooperate with organisations representing the other communities was given in 1952 when, without the knowledge of the national headquarters, the Selangor branches of UMNO and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) coalesced in the Kuala Lumpur local elections and, combined,

1
R.S.Milne: 'Malaysia-Internal Stresses and Strains', Australia's Neighbours, Jan-Feb 1964, p.1. See also Lucien W.Pye: 'The Politics of South East Asia', Part III, Gabriel A.Almond and James S.Coleman (eds): The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton University Press, 1960).

2
Moore: *op.cit.*, p.27.

3
Ishak bin Tadin: 'Dato Onn 1946-51', JSEFAH, March 1960, pp.56-88.

4
Ibid., p.85.

5
Clark: *op.cit.*, p.32,

defeated the IMP.¹ On 17 March 1953 the Alliance was formalised at the national level: it originated as, and to a degree remained, 'a piece of election winning machinery'.² By the early 1960s the Alliance, to which in 1954 had been added the weak Malayan Indian Congress, was still winning elections. Essentially Malay led, its existence depended on the willingness of the Chinese to accept a subordinate political position. There was some feeling in the Chinese community that 'the MCA will support the common view of the Alliance. Unfortunately the views of the Alliance and the demands of the Chinese are still greatly divided'.³ In 1959 the leadership of the MCA was of the opinion that Chinese influence within the Alliance was insufficient; it insisted on greater MCA representation among Alliance constituencies, UMNO refused and the MCA leadership resigned. The successors to MCA leadership were more acquiescent and Malay dominance was re-established.⁴

The Alliance is an intercommunal, not a non-communal party: 'the strength of communalism is the very basis of our existence' admitted a senior MCA official.⁵ Its electoral support rests on its communal appeal, but at the higher levels, for example in Cabinet decisions, the Alliance must be careful to balance the diverse communal interests. This need is exacerbated by the existence of more openly communal parties whose appeal can from either end of the Malay-Chinese continuum contest the Alliance's support.

In the 1955 elections the Alliance won 51 of the 52 seats, giving it an overall majority in the Legislative Council (there being 48 official representatives). The overwhelming Malay majority in the electorate and the overriding issue of independence worked to its advantage. By 1959 the non-Malay component of the electorate had risen to 43 per cent, while the attainment of independence brought divisive tendencies between the communities more to the fore.

1
Ibid., p.33 ff; Francis G. Carnell: 'Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya', Pacific Affairs, Sept 1954, pp.216-35.

2
Clark: op.cit., p.51.

3
Editorial, China Press, 10 April 1957.

4
Clark: op.cit., p.79 ff. See correspondence between MCA leaders in Malaysian Mirror, 12 June 1965.

5
Ibid., p.3, for account of interview in 1959 with Cheah Theam Swee, Sec-Gen. of MCA.

The Alliance percentage of the total vote fell from 81.4 to 51.1 and opposition parties gained in strength. Of these parties the most significant in terms of seats won was the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP).¹ Advocating a theocratic Islamic state and greater privileges for the Malays, the PMIP's major support was in Trengganu and Kelantan; and it increasingly developed pro-Indonesian tendencies. Its communally-based challenge to UMNO's support among the Malays ensured that the Government could not afford to disregard Malay communal interests. At the other end of the communal spectrum stood the People's Progressive Party (PPP)² with its support centred on the non-Malay urban areas of Perak. The growth of the PPP may be largely attributed to its successful exploitation of

Table 9: Federal Election Results, Malaya 1955 and 1959*

Party	1955		1959	
	Percent of vote	No. of seats	Percent of vote	No. of seats
Alliance	81.4	51	51.1	74
PMIP	4.0	1	21.7	13
S.F.	0.4	-	12.8	8
PPP	0.1	-	6.3	4
Other	<u>14.1</u>	-	<u>8.1</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	100	<u>52</u>	100	104

* R.Vasil: 'The 1964 General Elections in Malaya', International Studies, July 1965, pp.57-61.

Chinese sentiment, particularly resentment at the implementation of the Malay-language education system. Thus the PPP campaigned for complete communal equality (a communal position in Malayan terms) and a multi-lingual system.

The third significant opposition party was the Socialist Front, an amalgam of the Labour Party of Malaya and the Party Ra'ayat. Although the Socialist Front was organised like the Alliance, the dominant element was not Malay but Chinese - the Labour Party. Between 1955 and 1959 the Labour Party's membership came more and more from the Chinese-educated, its policies became more radical and consequently the party became more powerful among the urban Chinese. Accused by the Government of being a communist front,³

1

D.E.Moore: op.cit., p.57 ff; Ratnam op.cit.; also K.J.Ratnam and R.S.Milne (eds): The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964 (Blackwell, University of Malaya, 1967).

2

Moore: op.cit., p.265 ff; Ratnam op.cit.; Ratnam and Milne: op.cit..

3

For example, 'The Communist Threat to the Federation of Malaya', Legislative Council Paper, No.23 of 1959 (Kuala Lumpur, 1959).

the Labour Party was by 1959 attracting Chinese from the MCA and its power in this respect appeared to be increasing. The Party Ra'ayat, though (like the Labour Party) ostensibly non-communal, was a left wing Malay Party, led by Ahmad Boestamam and looking to Indonesian radicalism for inspiration. Its support, however, was negligible.

By the early 1960s Malayan politics had become, if anything, more clearly communal, an evolution exacerbated by the removal of British power. It appeared that the Alliance represented an intercommunal arrangement whereby the Malays dominated politically, and the non-Malays, acquiescent in this dominance, concentrated on economic activities. However, growing numbers of urban Chinese and rural Malays were unwilling to accept this position and a Malayan nation remained uncreated. The Malayan polity rested on a flimsy structure.

Outside this political structure lay the island of Singapore. Predominantly Chinese,¹ largely urban, and containing the British naval, air and military bases, Singapore was not included in either the Malayan Union or the Federation in order to make these plans more acceptable to the Malays who thus retained their plurality of the population. The separate political existence led to separate political development. With Chinese composing 75.1 per cent of the population, communal issues did not assume the importance in Singapore that they did in the Federation. In fact the early moves towards representative institutions indicated a general apathy on the part of the electorate, particularly among the Chinese.² The 1955 elections brought in David Marshall, a Eurasian, as Chief Minister. In 1956 he resigned in protest after failing to get from the British a grant of internal self-government, the negotiations foundering on the issue of control of internal security, which the British were unwilling to relinquish.³ The following year Marshall's successor, Lim Yew Hock, overcame this obstacle. It was agreed that an Internal Security Council (ISC) would be set up with Singapore and British Governments each having three representatives and the Federation Government one. With the UK retaining control of defence and external affairs, Singapore was to attain internal self-government in 1959.⁴

1
See Table 2, supra.

2
Francis G. Carnell: 'Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya'.

3
SLA, Debs, 29 Aug 1956, col. 3 ff, 5 Sept 1956, col. 38 ff; Farmer: op.cit., p. 264 ff.

4
SLA, Debs, 27 April 1957, col. 1715 ff.

The reasons for the importance of the internal security issue are to be found in Singapore's turbulent society. Even by 1961 half of Singapore's students were being educated in Chinese:¹ radicals, they had a greater effect on Singapore's politics than their co-linguists could have in Malaya. It was in Singapore that the Malayan Communist Party was thought to have its headquarters, in Singapore where radical students and militant unionists rioted, and in Singapore where Chinese chauvinism² could most easily exert its influence. Thus of Nanyang University, founded as a private institution to further Chinese tertiary education, a visiting professor could write that 'a large segment of the student body is strongly orientated toward Peking and...the writer was impressed by Peking's effective exploitation of traditional Chinese cultural chauvinism'.³ The threat of radical Chinese or communist control of Singapore appeared real.

In 1959 the first government to function under the new constitution was elected and the first dominant force in Singapore politics emerged, the People's Action Party (PAP) which won 43 of the 51 seats. The PAP formed what was expected to be an extremely left wing Government,⁴ for, as with any Singaporean party, to gain power it had to capture a large share of the Chinese vote. In fact the PAP was an alliance between two groups: the English educated Chinese, best represented by the party's leader, Lee Kuan Yew, who were democratic socialists and leaders of the party, and the more chauvinistic Chinese educated who formed an indeterminate proportion of its mass support. The latter were concentrated largely in the Trade Unions, the Chinese language education system and the local branches of the PAP. The volatile Lim Chin Siong appeared to be their leader. Attempts by the second group to capture control of the party had failed, but while their degree of influence by 1959

¹ Ministry of Education, Annual Report 1961 (Singapore, 1962).

² Chauvinism has been used throughout this work to denote the sectional, racial and cultural nationalism of Chinese-educated Chinese of the Malaysian region. Though perhaps unsatisfactory the term has wide currency and in the absence of a more suitable word has been adopted.

³ J.M. van der Kroef: 'The Sino-Indonesian Partnership', Orbis, Summer 1964, p.344.

⁴ Michael Leifer: 'Politics in Singapore: The First Term of the People's Action Party 1959-63', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, May 1964, pp.107-19.

was unknown, Lee had demanded the release from detention of eight of the extremists as a condition for taking power.¹

By the early 1960s a stable political situation did not exist in either Singapore or Malaya, for in both states there were groups outside the political spectrum whose strength appeared to be increasing. In 1961 a plan was conceived which at once brought those simmering conflicts to the boil and engendered its own particular difficulties, which took time to develop.

On 27 May 1961 the prospect of merger between Malaya and Singapore first became practical politics when Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malayan Prime Minister, announced in Singapore:

Malaya today as a nation realises that she cannot stand alone and in isolation. Sooner or later she should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak. 2

The significance of this statement was that it represented a complete reversal of the previous attitude of the Malayan Government.

Although in the early 1950s the Tunku had been prepared to consider merger with Singapore a possible future course of action,³ by the time of Malayan independence he did not think there was 'any possibility of merger',⁴ although opposition parties including the Labour Party and the PPP, and even the MCA, were receptive to the idea. The reason for Malay opposition (and it was Malays who held the determinative position) is not difficult to discern. As the Tunku later admitted:

many Malays in the Federation are suspicious of merger with Singapore because they fear that they would be swamped by the Singapore Chinese. They also fear that the political methods of the Singapore Chinese will spread to the Federation....This fear is not without foundation. I myself appreciate it. 5

In the Federation, Malays were the dominant community numerically; the addition of Singapore would give this position to the Chinese. Further, the Malays were aware that the Singapore Chinese were unlikely to be as amenable as the MCA to the acceptance of Malay political dominance. These fears, as the following years were to

1

Lee Kuan Yew: Battle For Merger (Govt. Printing Office, Singapore, 1962). p.23.

2

ST, 28 May 1961.

3

Ibid., 24 Jan 1956.

4

Ibid., 18 Jan 1959.

5

Ibid., 5 Nov 1961.

show, were not without foundation . Why then did the Tunku change his mind?

If the Government of Malaya opposed merger, the reverse was the case in Singapore. The press was almost unanimously in favour of merger¹ and every political party on the island, including UMNO's Singapore branch, included merger in its platform. In 1954 the Rendell Report on Singapore's constitutional status had rejected separate Singapore citizenship because 'the colony must ultimately be politically united with the Federation'.² This assumption was widespread and under both Marshall and his successor, Lim Yew Hock, Singapore had sought only 'internal self-government and not independence',³ merger being the ultimate aim.

The PAP was similarly committed to merger. At its inaugural meeting on 20 November 1954, the party was reported as seeking to 'end colonialism and establish an independent national state of Malaya, comprising the territories now known as the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore'.⁴ This stand was reaffirmed in 1956⁵ and in 1957 the party only accepted the constitutional proposals as 'a half way house to full independence with merger with the Federation of Malaya'.⁶ Before coming to power in 1959, the PAP had made clear the policy it intended to pursue in a statement, The New Phase After Merdeka.⁷ It argued that 'Singapore cannot become independent by itself' and so must seek merger in 'an independent, democratic, non-communist, socialist Malaya'. The opposition of the Federation Government to this scheme had to be overcome: 'It must be demonstrated...that the one million Chinese in Singapore are ready...to be absorbed as one Malayan people'. In view of this, the PAP emphasised on assuming power

1 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press (Singapore), 4/56, Chung Sing Jit Pao, 26 Jan 1956; 5/56, Sing Chen Jit Poh, 2 Feb 1956; 8/56 Utusan Melayu, 22 and 24 Feb 1956; 9/56, Nanyang Siang Pau, 3 March 1956.

2 Report of the Constitutional Commission (Singapore, 1954).

3 SLA, Debs, vol.2 no.20, 5 March 1957, col.1457. See also cols.1457-88 and ibid., vol.3 no.1, 9 April 1958, col.3.

4 ST, 21 Nov 1954.

5 Ibid., 9 July 1956.

6 SLA, Debs, vol.2 no.24, 27 April 1957, col.1765 (Lee Kuan Yew).

7 Lee: Battle For Merger, Appendix 6.

that it would 'take firm action to prevent any irresponsible activities or individuals to negate this paramount interest'.¹ Whether the Chinese educated supporters of the PAP envisaged a similar scale of priorities had yet to be put to the test.

On coming to power, the PAP sought to assuage the fears of the Alliance leadership by making Singapore a more attractive partner for merger. The state was given a veneer of Malayan culture: a Malay was made head of state, Malay the national language and the Malays given certain privileges (but not special rights); the PAP was 'trying to develop a Malayan culture, if you like by pressure cooking'.² Cooperation with the Federation was sought in terms of a common market,³ and \$M10,000 was voted to help support the Malayan contribution to the UN peace keeping force in the Congo.⁴ For all this, little progress towards merger was made and there was some truth in the Singapore People's Alliance's⁵ jibe that 'Singapore, under the PAP, and the Federation under the Alliance, have become political and economic rivals'.⁶ The PAP policy of making merger attractive was failing: the reasons for the Tunku's volte face are to be found elsewhere.

During its first year of office the PAP had pursued moderate policies and its achievements had been modest; there were suggestions that its support might be declining.⁷ In June 1960 the first possible indications that the latter might be the case occurred when Ong Eng Guan, a popular, flamboyant, ex-PAP mayor of Singapore, proposed sixteen resolutions at a party conference.⁸ The resolutions

¹ SLA, Debs, vol.11 no.1, 1 July 1959, col.14.

² Rajaratnam: Malayan Culture in the Making, 25 July 1960, p.5. See also SLA, Debs, vol.13 no.1, 20 July 1960, cols.4-24 (Speech of Yang di-Pertuan Negara).

³ Ibid., vol.14 no.20, 24 May 1961, col.1460.

⁴ Ibid., vol.14 no.16, 22 March 1961, col.1194.

⁵ A right wing party, pro-merger, led by Lim Yew Hock.

⁶ The People, Sept 1960.

⁷ Leifer: op.cit., p.103.

⁸ ST, 21 June 1960.

were directly contrary to the party's policy, particularly insofar as the PAP was striving to assure the Malayan Government of its honourable intentions. These resolutions were of a nature to attract the type of anti-colonial and pro-communist support on which the PAP had relied in its formative years. 1

On 3 August the Assembly convened and found Ong and two supporters sitting with the opposition. The whole issue was then aired.² Ong complained that

in the policy speech nothing has been said about colonialism, about Malayanisation, about the detainees, about the social revolution....The Government is not interested in these things any more. 3

Lee presented the Government's contention:

We are not going to promise independence for Singapore for the immediate future, first because we believe it is a fraud on the people to claim that Singapore can be independent alone, because it is not viable. 4

Both Rajaratnam⁵ and Toh Chin Chye⁶ re-emphasised that the Government would subordinate all else to the aim of merger.

By December, Ong had increased the ferocity of his attacks on the Government to an extent where he accused Lee Kuan Yew of nepotism. The Government introduced a motion of censure⁷ and, when Ong resigned, set up a Commission of Enquiry which duly vindicated Lee. But Ong was now preparing to contest the seat which he had vacated, in a by-election which both he and the Government viewed as a vote of confidence, Goh Keng Swee confidently asserting that 'if Ong Eng Guan was responsible for the mass support of the party [PAP] then his expulsion from the party would have seen the withdrawal of that mass support'.⁸ On 29 April 1961 the by-election was held at Hong Lim, and Ong decisively defeated the PAP candidate by 4,927 votes.⁹

1
Leifer: op.cit., p.107.

2
SLA, Debs, vol.13 no.2, Aug 1960, col.57 ff.

3
Ibid., col.103.

4
Ibid., col.61.

5
Ibid., no 4, 5 Aug 1960, col.277.

6
Ibid., no 9, 21 Sept 1960, col.699 ff.

7
Ibid., vol.14 no 9, 19 Dec 1960, col.776.

8
Ibid., no 14, 1 March 1961, col.1130.

9
Times, 1 May 1961. Ong received 7,747 votes to 2,820 to the PAP candidate.

It is in the result of the Hong Lim election that the reason for the Tunku's change of mind may be found. As recently as 1 January 1961 Toh Chin Chye had proposed merger to include the Borneo states¹ but on 30 January the Tunku repeated it would have to 'wait some time',² an opinion he again expressed on 4 May.³ It appears that by the latter date Kuala Lumpur was assessing the effects of Hong Lim, concluding that 'the PAP appeared to be crumbling under extreme left wing pressures'.⁴ The Alliance Government thought that the moderate element of the PAP was losing control to the radicals and communists; with Singapore due to attain independence in 1963 it appeared that the latter would form the government and so constitute a threat to Malayan security. Rather than this, the Tunku proposed to control Singapore as the lesser of two evils. This reasoning begged a number of questions, only one of which it is propitious to examine at this stage: did the Hong Lim result amount to a victory for the PAP left? Ong, though radical, could hardly be grouped with the communist ex-detainees and possessed a considerable personal following in the Hokkien speaking constituency. Two years later under less favourable circumstances he easily defeated the candidates of both the PAP and its, by then, splintered left wing. In any case, apart from Lim Chin Siong's oblique criticism of the party leadership in his call for left wing unity,⁵ the PAP radicals appear to have given Ong little support. Nonetheless from Kuala Lumpur the devil that was known appeared to be losing power. The Tunku later made no secret of his reasoning:

we can all see the threat of the communists. If I did not see this danger I would not be bothered with Singapore. 6

...if it goes communist it would...try to overrun the whole of Malaya....Therefore to prevent this most unhappy and disastrous state of affairs occurring, the only course open to us would be to accept Singapore as a member of the Federation of Malaya. 7

¹
ST, 2 Jan 1961.

²
Ibid., 30 Jan 1961.

³
Ibid., 5 May 1961. See also Lee: Battle For Merger, p.36.

⁴
William P.Maddox: 'Singapore: Problem Child', Foreign Affairs, April 1962, p.485.

⁵
Leo: Battle For Merger, p.35.

⁶
Straits Budget, 21 March 1962.

⁷
Malayan Times, 25 Sept 1962.

The logic was at once both anti-communist and anti-Chinese. Some commentators have attributed considerable significance to the visits of Sandys, Profumo and Mountbatten to the area, and suggested that the British helped persuade the Tunku,¹ but he rejected merger twice shortly after. The change in fortunes of the PAP seems to have been decisive. The Straits Times contended that 'if there has been progress towards merger it is the result of the Singapore Government's unwavering adherence to a Malayan outlook'.² This factor was influential only negatively, Kuala Lumpur being aware of the significance of its absence. It was fear, not attraction, that sparked the plan. The PAP quickly saw this and, having for two years stressed the Malayan outlook of Singapore, it henceforth dwelt largely on the dangers entailed in the alternative: a communist Chinese Singapore.

If the Hong Lim result did not indicate a major split in the PAP, the Tunku's proposal soon occasioned one. On 2 June Lim Chin Siong together with five other leading Trade Unionists made their support for the PAP (at the coming by-election at Anson) dependent on a number of issues, the major one being that the PAP seek the abolition of the ISC.³ A week later the PAP leadership announced its acceptance of the Tunku's proposal, as long as Singapore retained local autonomy in labour and education; Kuala Lumpur could control security.⁴ Even at that stage, with the proposed terms so vague, Lim expressed hostility.⁵ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Lim was most concerned with the control of Singapore's security and probably did not want merger. By 11 July the possibility of a split within the PAP loomed larger when Devan Nair warned that the leadership was prepared to break from the dissidents.⁶ At this time the Anson by-election campaign was on. The leadership of the PAP stressed merger, the unionists, anti-colonialism and local control of security. On the eve of the election eight PAP Assembly-men wrote to the Straits Times supporting

1 G. Modelski: 'Indonesia and the Malaysia Issue', The Year Book of World Affairs 1964 (Stevens, London, 1964) p.131; Singhal: *op.cit.*, p.19; G.P.Means: 'Malaysia: A New Federation in Southeast Asia', Pacific Affairs, Summer 1963, p.141.

2

ST, 5 June 1961.

3

Ibid., 3 June 1961.

4

Ibid., 10 June 1961 (Toh Chin Chye).

5

Ibid., 13 June 1961.

6

Ibid., 12 July 1961.

Lim's position.¹ The by-election was clearly to be a vote of confidence.

On 15 July David Marshall, by then leader of the Workers Party, with the support of Lim's group, won a narrow victory over the PAP candidate.² Anson, rather than Hong Lim, probably reflected the alignment of political strength in Singapore: less clearly 'Chinese' in character, less influenced by personal following, the constituency's support for Marshall reflected its support for Lim. (Two years later Marshall alone mustered but four hundred out of eight and a half thousand votes). The fears engendered by Hong Lim were being realised: the radicals were in the ascendancy.

On 20 July 1961 at a special meeting of the Legislative Assembly, Lee asked for a vote of confidence and thirteen PAP members abstained.³ On 26 July, together with Lim's supporters, these thirteen formed the Barisan Socialis.⁴ At that stage their support lay chiefly in the Trade Unions, the Chinese language education system, Nanyang University in particular, and among the PAP militants at the branch level (37 of 51 PAP branches defected). The debate on 20-21 July showed most of the defecting Assemblymen to be Chinese speaking, and their complaint to be the lack of 'intra-party democracy'. They wanted a meeting of the branches to decide party policy and attacked British imperialism and external control of security. But it would be too simple to brand the Barisan as communist, although the party's headquarters admitted that there were communists within the party.⁵ Even Lee, at that stage eager, for the benefit of Kuala Lumpur, to magnify the communist threat, conceded that many of the Barisan were not communists.⁶ The Barisan was essentially a Chinese party, a rallying point for the radical, the disaffected, the chauvinist and communist alike: it would clearly find supporters in Singapore.

¹ Ibid., 14 July 1961.

² Ibid., 16 July 1961. Marshall polled 3,598, the PAP 3,052 and the Alliance 1,482.

³ SLA, Debs, vol. 14 no. 23, 20-21 July 1961, col. 1664 ff.

⁴ ST, 27 July 1961.

⁵ Interviews with Lee Siew Choh and Chye Thia Poh, at Barisan H.C., Victoria Street, Singapore, March 1966.

⁶ Lee: Battle For Merger, pp. 63-4.

On 29 August 1961 the Barisan issued a statement setting out its policy towards merger, after it had become clear that the PAP was prepared to accept limited autonomy and federal under-representation.¹ Dr Lee Siew Choh, the Barisan Chairman, said that the party sought complete merger with the Federation as the twelfth state and automatic Malayan citizenship for Singapore citizens.² A week later Lim made similar proposals.³ Lee was quick to attack these terms pointing out that merger as the twelfth state would lose for 50 per cent of Singapore citizens their citizenship, Federation requirements for non-Malays being more stringent than Singapore's. In addition, Lee warned, such a merger would involve the application in Singapore of Malay special rights and Malaya's education system, and might lose Singapore its free port status.⁴ Two explanations for the Barisan's posture seem possible. First the party may genuinely have preferred a complete merger, calculating thereby to extend the influence of the Barisan, the Chinese or the communists. But there was no possibility of Kuala Lumpur accepting these proposals because they would have brought the very situation which the Alliance wished to avoid. A large increase in Chinese voters would have resulted and Malay political domination would have been threatened.⁵ The second possibility, argued by Lee, was that the Barisan's proposals were designed to wreck the scheme so that the party could gain control of an independent Singapore.⁶ This seems a likely explanation for Lim's policies but hardly for the Barisan's support, which was extensive. In September 1961 Lee calculated that in a straight fight with the Barisan the PAP would win thirty seats of the fifty one but that in a split contest anything might happen.⁷ The PAP would not therefore concede the Barisan demand for an election on the issue of merger; instead a referendum was promised.⁸

¹
ST, 25 Aug 1961.

²
Ibid., 30 Aug 1961.

³
Ibid., 8 Sept 1961.

⁴
Lee: Battle For Merger, p.76 ff.

⁵
See Milton E. Osborne: Singapore and Malaysia, Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper No.53, July 1964, p.21.

⁶
Lee: Battle For Merger, p.76 ff.

⁷
ST, 25 Sept 1961.

⁸
Ibid., 22 Sept 1961 (Goh Keng Swee).

While Singapore's political struggle took shape the Government negotiated with Kuala Lumpur. On 23 August 1961 the first talks were held following which a communique was issued which included the following:

Among matters discussed was the question of Federation responsibility for defence, external affairs and security. The Singapore Prime Minister laid particular stress on the necessity of Singapore's retaining local autonomy, especially on matters of education and labour. Both Prime Ministers have agreed in principle on these proposals. 1

On 14 September a working party was set up to examine these proposals in greater detail, and on 11 November in an exchange of letters the two Prime Ministers agreed to its recommendations as the basic terms for merger. On 15 November these terms were published in Singapore in what became known as the Heads of Agreement.² Broadly, they allowed that 1) the federal government would control security, external affairs and defence; 2) Singapore would remain a free port, not implement 'Malay rights', and retain autonomy in labour and education; 3) Singapore citizens would become Federation nationals, entitled to vote only in Singapore; and 4) in view of its limited autonomy, Singapore would receive only 15 seats in the federal parliament. The overall concept was clear: Malaya was to control Singapore's security but isolate herself as far as possible from the turbulent politics of the city state. On 6 December the Singapore Legislative Assembly declared its approval of these terms after a debate marked by virulent Barisan hostility to Singapore's under-representation and restrictions on citizenship.³

In Malaya the parliamentary dominance of the Alliance ensured a relatively untroubled passage for the merger proposals. On 16 October 1961 the Tunku asked for, and received, parliamentary approval of his policy, which ruled out complete merger due to fear of Singapore's Chinese who were considered to be inclined towards 'Chinese chauvinism'.⁴ It was revealed that on 3 October the British Prime Minister had approved the scheme and that later the Tunku would visit London for discussions. During the debate mild but unanimous hostility to the merger proposals was expressed by the opposition parties: the PPP and the Socialist Front

1
Memorandum Setting out Heads of Agreement For a Merger...
(Heads of Agreement), (Singapore, Cmd. 33 of 1961) p.1.

2
Ibid..

3
SLA, Debs, vol.15 no.16, 6 Dec 1961.

4
MPD, HR, 16 Oct 1961, p.1590 ff.

demanding, like the Barisan, complete merger, the PMIP opposing any addition of non-Malays to the Federation.¹

Between 20 and 22 November 1961 the Tunku visited London for talks with the British Government. At their conclusion, a communique was issued which included the following:

the British and Malayan Governments are convinced that this [Malaysia] is a desirable aim.... Before coming to any formal conclusion it is necessary to ascertain the views of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak. It has accordingly been decided to set up a commission to carry out this task and to make recommendations....In the light of the commission's report the two Governments will decide what further steps should be taken. 2

It was to these Borneo states that attention now shifted.

The Borneo territories which the Tunku proposed be included in the merger scheme were the British protected Sultanate of Brunei and the crown colonies of Sabah and Sarawak. The two colonies had only come under direct British control after the Japanese war and by 1961 they were still politically primitive. Sparsely populated, racially and linguistically even more heterogeneous than Malaya, and economically less developed, Sabah and Sarawak were experiencing the leisurely paternalism of British rule: independence remained for the distant future. Since 1953 some moves had been made towards integrating the administration of the three states, and on 7 February 1958 the British had tentatively suggested a Bornean Federation.³ Little enthusiasm on the part of the local people was in evidence, many feeling that further development was necessary before independence could be contemplated.⁴

The explanation of the Tunku's desire to include these territories is to be found in an examination of the communal composition of their populations. As in Singapore and Malaya a substantial part of the populations are Chinese who would form the largest single community if the states were combined. The Chinese

¹ Ibid., 17 Oct, 18 Oct 1961.

² Report of the Commission of Enquiry, North Borneo and Sarawak, 1962 (London, HMSO, Cmd, 1794) p.1.

³ Sarawak by the Week, (SKW) 6/58, 2-8 Feb 1958.

⁴ Sarawak, Council Negri Debates, (SCN, Debs) 9 May 1958, cols.69-79, and 12 Sept 1958, col.29-40.

Table 10 Sarawak 1962 Population by Race*

<u>Race</u>	<u>000s</u>	<u>per cent</u>
Chinese	244.4	31.5
Sea Dayak (Iban)	241.5	31.1
Malay	136.2	17.5
Land Dayak	60.9	7.8
Melanau	46.0	5.9
Other native	39.3	5.1
Other non-native	6.9	0.9
European	1.7	0.2
Total	776.9	100.0

* Sarawak Annual Report, 1962 p.11.

in Borneo are, as in Malaya, largely urban dwellers and the large towns of the area are predominantly Chinese.¹ In Sarawak,

In the education field they had their own system while in the economic field they were well ahead of the native races. Their language, customs traditions and culture were distinct....Their feelings, especially those of the Chinese educated, were more projected towards China than Sarawak. 2

Table 11: Sabah 1960, Population by Race*

<u>Race</u>	<u>000s</u>	<u>per cent</u>
Kadazan	145.2	32.0
Murut	22.1	4.9
Bajau	59.7	13.1
Other native	79.4	17.5
Chinese	104.5	23.0
European	1.9	0.4
Other	41.5	9.1
Total	454.421	100.0

* Sabah: Annual Report 1963, p.7.

Under the Rajah Brooke regime, which preceded British rule, the Chinese community of Sarawak 'was existing as "a state within a state" '.³ By 1961 there was little indication that this situation had changed significantly and 82 per cent of Chinese were being

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Of the 236,000 Chinese in Sarawak in 1961, 76,000 lived in or near Kuching, 52,000 near Sibu, 10,500 near Miri: 57 per cent were concentrated around the 3 larger towns, Sarawak, Annual Report, 1961, p.77. In Sabah of 104,542, 26,500 lived near Sandakan, 20,000 near Jesselton, 15,000 near Tawau: this represents 60 per cent of the total, North Borneo, Report of the Census... by L.W.Jones (Jesselton, 1960).

2

Liang Kim Bang: Sarawak, 1941-1957, (No.5: Singapore Studies on Borneo and Malaya, Uni. of Singapore, 1964) p.3.

3

Ibid., p.32; Tom Harrisson (ed): The Peoples of Sarawak (Kuching, Govt.Printing Office, 1959) p.134.

educated in the Chinese language.¹ The Chinese were the most advanced race, growing most rapidly and China-oriented;² in many ways they were beginning to dominate Sarawak. But the Chinese were not universally more advanced. There existed a substantial number of rural Chinese, particularly in the First Division, and . . . 'it is immediately apparent that the economic position of the Chinese in rural areas is almost identical with that of the Malays and Dayaks'.³ Similarly many of the urban Chinese were far from prosperous. The basis for a disaffected Chinese minority, similar to that in Malaya, clearly existed.

Of the other communities, it is perhaps their heterogeneity that is most striking. The Malays were in many ways unlike those of the peninsula and it was to Brunei, whose Sultan had in the past ruled north-western Borneo, that their allegiance was often cast.⁴ The natives were the most backward of all the communities; largely rural dwellers and illiterate, they were conscious of their relative backwardness, envious of the wealth of the Chinese community and resentful of the Malays for the political power they had held.⁵ As in Malaya the removal of British power could throw these communal divisions into sharper relief.

The reasoning behind the Tunku's proposal to include the Borneo territories was essentially communal: a straight merger between Malaya and Singapore would make the Chinese the largest single community; the inclusion of the Borneo territories would give this preponderant position to the indigenous peoples. An unspoken rider to this argument was that the Bornean natives would accept the peninsular Malay leadership. Although this assumption may not have been well founded, it is possible that only by so arguing could the Alliance leadership convince the more communally minded members of UMNO to accept Singapore's entry into the proposed federation.⁶

¹ Sarawak, Annual Report, 1961.

² Richard Outram: 'The Sarawak Chinese', Ch.10, Tom Harrisson: op.cit., p.128; Ju-K'ang T'ien: op.cit.; L.W.Jones: Sarawak: Report on the Census of Population taken 15 June 1960, pp.46 and 79.

³ Ju-K'ang T'ien: op.cit., p.21.

⁴ John Groatley: 'The Malays', Tom Harrisson: op.cit., pp.110-1.

⁵ A.J.N.Richards: 'The Ibans', Tom Harrisson: op.cit., p.22.

⁶ Robert O. Tilman: 'Malaysia: The Problems of Federation', The Western Political Quarterly, Dec 1963, p.903.

At the time of the Tunku's proposal there existed in the Borneo states three political parties. The oldest, the Party Ra'ayat, was a Malay party in Brunei. The other two parties were in Sarawak, reflecting the fact that that state, which by 1957 was almost fully covered by representative local councils, was more politically advanced than Sabah. The Sarawak United Peoples Party (SUPP) was founded in 1959. Ostensibly multi-racial, SUPP was increasingly dominated by the Chinese. During the late 1950s the Sarawak Government had warned of the existence of a communist movement in the state.¹ In 1961, when it refused to register the Farmers' Association, which it accused of being designed to propagate communism among Chinese smallholders, the Government accused SUPP of being heavily infiltrated by the communists.² In any event by May 1961 SUPP was largely Chinese and radical in character. The Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS) was formed in 1960 and was predominantly a Malay party.

The Malaysia proposal brought a rapid acceleration of Bornean political development.³ The races of the states had had little experience in inter-communal or non-communal political cooperations: thus when political development came it was largely along communal lines.⁴ Previously mutually non-intrusive, the communities, perhaps to a greater degree than in Malaya, competed to stake their claim to a share in the position the British were to vacate. In Sarawak the natives feared that if independence came too quickly the economically more advanced Chinese would dominate the State's politics; the Chinese were afraid that independence would bring, as it had elsewhere in Southeast Asia, restrictions on their activities. The issue of Malaysia was considered in communal terms.⁵ During the year or so that followed the Tunku's proposal, political parties proliferated in Borneo; each party was communally based. The political structure was built on the pre-existing

1
SCN, Debs, 3 Dec 1957, col.3 ff.

2
Communism and the Farmers (Kuching, 1961); SCN, Debs, 7 Aug 1961, cols.9-11.

3
G.P.Means: 'Malaysia: A New Federation in South East Asia', Pacific Affairs, Summer 1963, p.146.

4
Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke: Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak (Kuching, 1947), para.5; Emily Sadka: 'Malaysia: The Political Background', Silcock and Fisk (eds): op.cit., p.45.

5
See Edwin Lee: 'Sarawak in the Early Sixties', in Liang Kim Bang: op.cit..

communal divisions, a process encouraged by the Alliance parties of Malaya. This was to have the effect in Sarawak of isolating the Chinese, among whom few supporters of an MCA-style Chinese party could be found.

As the North Borneo Annual Report pointed out, 'it was natural enough that the first reactions of articulate public opinion to the Malaysia proposal should be ones of suspicion and anxiety'.¹ On 9 July 1961 the Chairman of SUPP, Ong Koo Hui, the leader of the Brunei Party Ra'ayat, Azahari, and Sabah's leading political figure, Donald Stephens, met in Jesselton and expressed the opinion that the people of Borneo opposed the scheme.² Significantly this followed a visit by the Tunku to Borneo, during which his patronising attitude appears to have aroused hostility.³ From that time, however, the pro-Malaysia cause gathered strength. At a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Singapore at the end of July, the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) was set up to disseminate information favourable to Malaysia.⁴ Further, at that meeting Stephens became more favourable to Malaysia, though wanting independence before federation;⁵ two weeks later, after talks with the Tunku, he favoured Malaysia less equivocally⁶ and became Chairman of the MSCC. Similarly in Sarawak both PANAS⁷ and the native Sarawak National Party (SNAP)⁸ after initial opposition came to favour the scheme. But by the beginning of 1962 it seemed that Bornean opinion towards the scheme was still far from united.⁹

In February 1962 the Commission of Enquiry arrived in Borneo and collected information concerning opinion in the two states with regard to Malaysia. In August 1962 its findings were published. The basis of its conclusions was contained in the

¹ North Borneo, Annual Report, 1961, p.2.

² ST, 10 July 1961; see also Stephens' letter, *ibid.*, 18 July 1961.

³ See Straits Budget, 12 and 19 July 1961.

⁴ Report of the Commission of Enquiry, pp.98-105.

⁵ ST, 11 Aug 1961.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 Aug 1961.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 Aug 1961.

⁸ Sarawak by the Week, 30/63, 21-7 July 1963, p.2.

⁹ SCN, Debs, 9 Aug 1961, col.72 ff. Lee Kuan Yew thought it was hostile: SLA, Debs, vol.14 no.23, 20-1 July 1961, col.1672.

following section:

About one third of the population in each territory strongly favours early realisation of Malaysia without too much concern about terms and conditions. Another third, many of them favourable to the Malaysian project, ask, with varying degrees of emphasis, for conditions and safeguards varying in nature and extent....The remaining third are divided between those who insist on independence before Malaysia...and those who would strongly prefer to see British rule continue. If the conditions...could be met the second category...would generally support the proposals...[but] there will remain a hard core vocally and politically active, which will oppose Malaysia...this hard core might amount to 20 per cent of the population of Sarawak and somewhat less in North Borneo. 1

In the light of subsequent events it is necessary to try to assess the validity and implications of these conclusions.

It is important to examine the information available to Borneans on the subject of Malaysia. It appears that the only media expressing outright hostility to Malaysia were in the Chinese language, particularly in Sarawak.² Although it has been suggested that local British officials may have privately opposed Malaysia, all official information approved the concept, with limited reservations, and received widespread circulation.³ In addition the MSCC was taking a similar line in its efforts to 'promote and expedite the realisation of Malaysia'.⁴ The Governments were also anxious to emphasise the lack of attractive alternatives:

If [a Sarawakian] finds the idea of Sarawak joining Malaysia still too novel he should stop to ask himself a second question, 'What is the alternative?'This opportunity to attain independence by joining Malaysia is unlikely to recur and Sarawak may be left with no other alternative than a perilous existence as a small defenceless country in a large and predatory world. 5

The British-controlled Bornean Governments clearly favoured of the scheme. Again, in assessing the findings of the Commission,

1

Report of the Commission of Enquiry, pp.41-2.

2

Extracts from the Chinese and Malay Press in Sarawak (ECMPS), Min Chong Pau (Sibu): 9,10,12,13,17 and 20 Feb 1962; Sin Wen Pau: 9,17 and 20 Feb 1962.

3

Malaysia and Sarawak (Kuching, Jan 1962); North Borneo and Malaysia (Jesselton, Feb 1962).

4

Report of the Commission of Enquiry, p.98.

5

Malaysia and Sarawak, p.6.

which consisted of two Malayan and two British members and a British Chairman, it is to be noted that it was hardly a disinterested body. It operated in part on the assumptions that Malaysia was first a good idea and secondly all but inevitable. Further, 'the objectivity of the Commission was somewhat compromised by the inclusion of two Malayan members...who appeared to have a standing brief for their government and took their positions on the memorandum of the MSCC, whether or not the balance of opinion as reported justified such a stand'.¹ The conclusions of the two Malaysians, which differed from those of the British, were indeed markedly more favourable. Finally, it must be appreciated that by early 1962 Bornean political views and affiliations were determined primarily by communal considerations which, added to the degree of political naivete among the people, gave traditional leaders a position of crucial importance. These leaders, politically inexperienced themselves, were open to British and Malayan representations, whose effectiveness is perhaps best indicated by the rapid change of Bornean opinion in late 1961.

With regard to the group that favoured Malaysia with little reservation, it would seem that the Commission over-estimated their strength.² It reported that this group consisted almost wholly of Malays and a few Melanaus, yet combined they amounted to only some 12 per cent of the population. In addition many Malays, particularly in the area near Brunei, looked rather to a revived northern Borneo federation under the Sultan of Brunei, and so opposed Malaysia.

The second group, which expressed hostility to Malaysia and wanted independence first, may have formed a majority in mid-1961; by 1962 it was composed almost solely of Chinese and Brunei-oriented Malays. Among the Chinese the kind of opposition varied from what the Commission called the 'hard core' (perhaps best represented by the SUPP Binalong Branch which condemned those 'who are anti-people, anti-people's collective leadership and puppets of the colonialists'³) to the Miri Chinese Chamber of Commerce which feared the extension to Sarawak of Malaya's restrictions on the Chinese.⁴ The Chinese were rapidly becoming the dominant community

1
Sadka: op.cit., p.50.

2
Report of the Commission of Enquiry, pp.15-6. A reading of the Report certainly gives this impression which was, in the author's case, substantiated by an interview with a senior Malaysian official, Kuala Lumpur, April 1966.

3
Extracts from the Chinese and Malay Press in Sarawak, 44/62, Min Chong Pau (Sibu), 23 Feb 1962.

4
Ibid., 43/62, China Daily News, 22 Feb 1962.

in Sarawak and would so become in Sabah: Malaysia would deprive them of that position.¹ Further, in Sarawak in particular, communism had made considerable inroads into the Chinese community: the left wing Chinese that Malaysia was designed to restrict in Singapore, formed possibly an even larger proportion of Sarawak's Chinese population than that of Singapore.² Chinese opposition to the scheme was extensive.

The third group to which the Commission referred may be divided into two sections: 1) those who favoured the continuation of British control, and 2) those who would accept Malaysia providing adequate safeguards for Bornean interests were included in the federal arrangements. When it became clear to those in section 1) that their objective was unattainable, most merged with section 2). It is this group that is perhaps deserving of most attention, including as it did the majority of the natives of both states, for it was the natives that electorally held the determinative position³ and could be expected to dominate any representative government in the immediate future. The natives approved unenthusiastically of Malaysia and the two future Chief Ministers initially opposed the scheme.⁴ The support of the natives was conditional and only if their conditions were met could it be argued that Malaysia had majority support in either state. Only to the extent that Malaya nourished this good-will would Malaysia rest on firm foundations in Borneo. The natives would not be unconditional supporters of Malay political hegemony. In 1962 the British and perhaps to a lesser extent the Malayan Governments were aware of this situation and following the report of the Commission set up an Inter-Governmental Committee to determine the Bornean terms of entry.⁵ There seemed every likelihood of an equitable constitutional arrangement being established, but the method of its implementation would be equally important.

In Singapore the 'battle for merger' continued. From January to September the referendum issue dominated the state's politics. By January it had become clear that the Barisan was unable to gain

1 Report of the Commission of Enquiry, pp.6 and 35.

2 As the relative electoral strengths of SUPP and the Barisan indicated.

3 Due, as in Malaya, to their more (politically) effective geographic distribution coupled with numerical superiority.

4 Ningkan, leader of SNAP, and Donald Stephens.

5 Malaysia: Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee 1962 (London, HMSO, Cmnd. 1954, Feb 1963).

enough defections from the PAP in the Assembly to form a majority¹ (even though in July a further defection occurred²). The Barisan would have to defeat the PAP at the polls, at that stage a likely possibility. On 9 July 1962 Lee introduced the final reading of the Referendum Bill. The bill proposed that the voters of Singapore choose between three alternative merger terms: 1) those set out in the Heads of Agreement; 2) unconditional merger like Penang (which Lee contended that the Barisan sought); or 3) on terms no less favourable than those obtained by the Borneo territories.³ In a long, hostile speech Dr Lee Siow Choh set out the Barisan's argument.⁴ He contended that the PAP should hold an election on the issue or at least offer the voters a chance to reject merger in the referendum. The PAP, said Dr Lee, had no clear mandate for merger and had been rejected at Anson when seeking endorsement for the plan. (This was probably not far from the truth: it seems unlikely that the PAP's support in 1959 was due to its policy of merger with the Federation.) The Barisan sought full merger with Malaya with common citizenship and proportional representation: if this were not offered as an alternative, the party would campaign for blank ballots. On 11 July Bani moved that the Barisan proposals be included as a fourth alternative.⁵ The PAP proposals were passed 29 votes to 17.⁶

The opposition parties⁷ then formed a Council of Joint Action and took their case to the UN Special Committee of Twenty four (on colonialism) contending that the referendum did not accord with the rights of self-determination of peoples. Lee Kuan Yew, en route for London, appeared before the Committee and defended his position. The Committee passed a resolution that the petition ought 'not be taken cognizance of'.⁸

On 1 September 1962 the Singapore referendum was held, after the Barisan had announced that 'the united opposition has no choice but to call on the people of Singapore to cast blank votes as a protest against this undemocratic one-sided merger'.⁹ In the event

¹ SLA, Debs, vol. 16 no. 7, 24 Jan 1962, col. 581 ff.

² Ibid., vol. 19 no. 5, 13 July 1962, cols. 482-628.

³ SLA, Debs, vol. 19 no. 1, 9 July 1962, col. 26 ff.

⁴ Ibid., col. 41 ff.

⁵ Ibid., 11 July 1962, col. 274 ff.

⁶ Ibid., cols. 390-4.

⁷ That is, those opposed to the referendum terms.

⁸ UN Documents A/AC 109/Pet. 18 of 18 July 1962, and A/AC 109/Pet. 18 add 1 of 26 July 1962.

⁹ The Flebian, 18 July 1962.

71 per cent of the votes were cast for alternative 1), and 25 per cent were blank.¹ Whether this accurately reflected Singapore opinion on the subject is difficult to gauge, for the PAP had made extensive use of its considerable abilities and opportunities for political management.²

Various aspects of the referendum campaign are deserving of mention. After a visit to London, Lee announced on 14 August that all Singapore citizens would become Federal citizens under an agreed change to the Heads of Agreement.³ This blunted one of the Barisan's fiercest attacks, but appears to have been a change in name only. Again, the PAP made no secret of its use of much of the mass media which it controlled as the government of the day.⁴ Finally it must be emphasised that the voters were not given an opportunity to vote against merger, and that the PAP had provided that blank ballots should be cast for one of the alternatives by the Legislative Assembly, in fact by the PAP itself. The effect of the Tunku's warnings both in and to Singapore that the Barisan should be rejected⁵ can only be guessed at. But for all that, the PAP had recorded an impressive majority: a performance it would have been unlikely to have repeated in an election at that time.

By late 1962 the creation of Malaysia was progressing apace. The British had accepted (if they had not initiated) the proposal⁶ and appear to have been determined to ensure that it rested on as firm a foundation as possible. For the Foreign Office and Colonial Office, federation in many ways appeared to be the standard method for small dependencies to achieve independence: the Nigerian, African, Caribbean and South Arabian Federations had yet to encounter grave difficulties. Intrinsicly it is difficult to apply the doctrine 'bigger means better' to the Malaysia scheme. To argue that a northern Borneo federation or an independent Singapore would not be 'viable'⁷ is to beg a number of questions, and is all

¹
ST, 3 Sept 1962.

²
See also Leifer: *op.cit.*, p.112.

³
ST, 15 Aug 1962.

⁴
E.g. 'We are proud we have used radio and television': SLA, Debs, 14 June 1963, col.1216 (Rajaratnam).

⁵
ST, 26 March and 16 April 1962.

⁶
ST, 12 Oct 1960: Malcolm MacDonald had suggested such schemes in the early 1950s. See also Borneo Bulletin, 6 Feb 1960.

⁷
The Malaysian Government does just this: Malaysia: Official Year Book 1963 (Kuala Lumpur, 1964) p.32.

but impossible to demonstrate. In the same way it might be contended that a Chinese chauvinist or communist Singapore would have presented less of a security risk to the Federation were it independent than if it were in the Federation. But the Malayan Government thought differently.

The Federation of Malaysia as it was developing seemed likely^{not} only to suppress the communists within its borders as its propounders intended¹, but also to discriminate against the Chinese. Opposition to the scheme generally came from two sources: Chinese and Malay. Its most dangerous opponents were the Chinese educated, radical in outlook, who opposed Malaysia for both ideological and radical reasons. Various parties representing these Chinese elements had met in Kuala Lumpur early in 1962 in an attempt to unify their opposition.² But despite other inter-party links,³ the Chinese parties remained essentially state based. Among the Malays it was again communal extremists who opposed the scheme. The PMIP opposed the entry of more non-Malays into Malaya and the Brunei Malays were more concerned to reassert Malay hegemony in Borneo. Given the existence of these two centres of opposition, each essentially communal, it was far from clear what proportion of the population concerned favoured Malaysia, particularly in Singapore and Sarawak.⁴ The State Governments were each subjected to internal pressures of various kinds: the Borneo states were anxious to retain their separate identity; the PAP had to avoid giving offence to moderate Chinese chauvinists, for it was for their votes that it was competing with the Barisan; the Alliance was always susceptible to extremist Malay demands.

Malaya since independence had faced the problems inherent in a pluralist society. Although there had been little evidence of the growth of non-communal cooperation or of Malayan nationalism, given the extent of communal divisions, the continued harmonious co-existence of the various communities was a considerable achievement. To add to the delicate but thus far stable political structure of Malaya the potentially turbulent states of Borneo and Singapore, seemed likely to engender difficulties. The parties

¹
MPD, HR, 11 Jan 1962, vol.III, no.25, pp.2647-8.

²
See Straits Budget, 31 Jan and 7 Feb 1962.

³
Extracts from the Chinese and Malay Press in Sarawak, Sin Wen Pau, 10 Nov 1962.

⁴
SCN, Debs, 26 Sept 1962, col. 17 ff.

to the plan were aware of this and recognised the need for compromise on all sides, for each estimated that it stood to gain sufficiently overall for it to waive pressing its case too firmly in the particular. For Britain the plan presented the opportunity to end colonial rule in Borneo and Singapore but to transfer its own control to a friendly Government which seemed unlikely to interfere with Britain's economic and military interests. The PAP saw in Malaysia the solution to Singapore's long term political and economic problems. The Borneo states could attain independence within a state, it was argued,¹ that would be more viable than the Borneo states independently or in federation, yet they would retain considerable local autonomy. Finally, for Malaya the plan offered the opportunity for it to control Singapore's political future and prevent developments unpalatable to Kuala Lumpur, and yet isolate itself from what it considered to be the turbulent and dangerous politics of the island. If each party would accept the attainment by the others of their principal objectives, Malaysia seemed likely, in late 1962, to provide a neat if intricate solution to the communal, political, economic and strategic problems of the area.

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See J.R. Angel: 'The Proposed Federation of North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak: The Development and Decline of British Borneo' (M.A. Thesis, Sydney University, 1965) for an extensive discussion of this subject.

CHAPTER THREE

Malaysia and Confrontation

The first armed opposition to the Malaysia project was experienced in December 1962 when an insurrection broke out in Brunei. The revolt was quickly suppressed, but not before the Indonesian Government had made its sympathy for the rebels apparent. By January 1963 this sympathy had evolved into open opposition to Malaysia, and the policy of confrontation was announced. During the nine months or so preceding the formation of Malaysia, the parties involved in the project were beset not only by the need to reconcile their differences but by the difficulties inherent in vigorous external opposition. The success of the Malaysia project appeared to be dependent upon the successful resolution of both these problems.

Like Malaya, Indonesia was a product of European imperialism and was created by Dutch hegemony throughout much of the archipelago. Indonesian nationalism and the movement for independence began largely in the interwar years and were nourished by the Japanese occupation 1942 to 1945. In 1945 the Indonesians were unwilling to accept the re-introduction of Dutch imperialism, the Dutch were equally determined to return. The ~~struggle~~ struggle which resulted was ended in 1949 with the creation of the independent Republic of Indonesia.¹ The new Republic at first adopted a constitutional form of government but it was apparent that political instability and administrative inefficiency were likely to become its permanent features. By the late 1950s those whom Feith calls the 'solidarity makers' were replacing the 'administrators'.² The need for the former may be appreciated. Although most Indonesians were Muslims and belonged to a common ethnic group, among the peoples of the three thousand islands set in as many miles of ocean, diversity was the rule, nationalism lacked a broad base, national unity was a problem and secessionist movements always a possibility. In 1948 a communist uprising had threatened the embryonic republic; throughout the 1950s the Darul Islam movement controlled parts of the archipelago and in 1958 rebellions broke

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See A.M. Taylor: Indonesian Independence and the United Nations (Stevens, London, 1960).

2

H. Feith: The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia (Cornell UP, 1962).

out in Sumatra and the Celebes. Djakarta's control of outlying provinces was often tenuous.

In some respects Indonesian foreign policy may be seen as a product of these factors. Their experiences with the Dutch, particularly after World War II, left Indonesians passionately anti-imperialist. Rapidly this was translated into the positive enthusiasm shown by the Indonesian Government for Afro-Asian cooperation. In 1955 Indonesia played host to the Bandung Conference and in September 1961 the non-aligned conference at Belgrade 'saw Sukarno emerge as a principal spokesman of the uncommitted world'.¹ Anxious to remove the stigma of being labelled 'a nation of coolies and a coolie among the nations',² by the 1960s Indonesia had become self-assertive. The existence of the various centrifugal forces also made Indonesia extremely sensitive to threats to its national unity, and indications that Western powers had aided the 1958 rebellions did nothing to check the increasing anti-Western orientation of the Government.³

But during the 1950s the West Irian dispute dominated Indonesian foreign policy.⁴ At the time of the granting of independence to Indonesia, the Netherlands retained control of the western part of New Guinea. The Indonesians regarded this as a temporary solution but it quickly became apparent that the Dutch had little intention of relinquishing West Irian (as the Indonesians referred to the territory) to Djakarta. Arguing that it was the successor state to the Netherlands East Indies and so possessed sovereignty over West Irian, Indonesia consistently, vocally and unsuccessfully pressed its claim.⁵ By 1957 having failed to get UN intervention in the dispute, Indonesia adopted more forceful measures: the issue had become a national crusade. In 1957 Dutch enterprises were nationalised and diplomatic relations with the Hague were broken.

1

H. Feith: 'Dynamics of Guided Democracy', Ch. 8, Ruth T. McVey (ed): Indonesia, (Yale University, New Haven, 1963), p. 254.

2

Independence Day Address by Sukarno, 17 August 1963, G. Modelski (ed): The New Emerging Forces, (ANU, Canberra, 1963), p. 107.

3

Ibid., p. 126.

4

J. D. Legge: 'Indonesia after West Irian', Australian Outlook, April 1963, p. 5.

5

Robert C. Bone, Jr: The Dynamics of the Western New Guinea (Irian Barat) Problem (Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1958); Justus M. van der Kroef: The West New Guinea Dispute (Institute for Pacific Relations, New York, 1958); H. Feith: The West New Guinea Conflict, Some Political and Ethical Aspects, Paper Presented to the New Guinea Society, Australia, 28 June 1961.

Djakarta began an intense and successful campaign for diplomatic support, particularly among Afro-Asian states, and increased her military strength, largely with Soviet aid.¹ By 1962, Indonesia had begun 'confrontation' against the Dutch in West Irian: guerrilla units were infiltrated into the island and a violent solution was threatened. Largely to avert a complete reversion to violence, the US mediated in the dispute, and in fact supported Indonesia. In August 1962, it was agreed that an interim UN administration would be set up in West Irian which would be taken over on 1 May 1963 by the Indonesians, who pledged to ascertain the wishes of the people of the territory by 1969.² Thus a rallying point for national unity, for such had the claim for West Irian become, was removed from the Indonesian political scene.

Between the outbreak of the 1958 rebellions and the settlement of the West Irian dispute the internal political structure of Indonesia changed and the solidarity makers assumed the ascendancy. In 1959 President Sukarno announced the return to the 1945 constitution which increased the power of the President and the executive at the expense of the representative institutions.³ 'The emerging system of government was more authoritarian than the earlier one: government power was more concentrated'.⁴ But the power of the President was not unchecked, for the army emerged as a political force and a counterweight to the President.⁵ The increase in the strength of the army during the later stages of the West Irian campaign, its firm espousal of that nationalist cause and the existing state of emergency combined to make it by 1961 one of the country's most effective political forces.

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Guy J. Pauker: 'General Nasution's Mission to Moscow', Asian Survey, March 1961, pp.13-22, and 'The Soviet Challenge in Indonesia', Foreign Affairs, July 1962, pp.612-26.

2

Text of agreement, CNIA, Aug 1962, pp.25-31. See also Justus M. van der Kroef: 'The West New Guinea Settlement: Its Origins and Implications', Orbis, Spring 1963, pp.120-49.

3

See Sukarno, 1959 Independence Day Address (text, Indonesian Embassy, Canberra).

4

Feith: 'Dynamics', op.cit., p.327.

5

Daniel S. Lev: 'The Political Role of the Army in Indonesia', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1963-4, pp.349-64; Guy J. Pauker: 'The Role of the Military in Indonesia', in J.J. Johnson (ed): The Military in the Underdeveloped Areas (Princeton University Press, 1962).

At the same time, the party which most clearly benefited from the move towards Guided Democracy was the communist party (the PKI).¹ Crushed in 1948, the PKI grew steadily through the 1950s under the leadership of Aidit, until 'by 1961 the PKI had become the most powerful political party in Indonesia'.² Efficiently organised, energetically led and nationally oriented, the PKI had sympathisers in most sections of Indonesian society. Apparently in order to offset the strength of the army, Sukarno helped protect the PKI, ~~and communism was included in the state ideology.~~ As a result, whereas in 1961 the Indonesian government structure might have been seen as a balance between the army and the President, by late 1962 it was more like a triangular relationship between Sukarno, the army and the PKI, the latter being two mutually hostile.³

Guided Democracy introduced a new chapter to Indonesian foreign policy. Perhaps its first manifestation occurred at Belgrade in 1961 when Sukarno emerged as a radical voice in Afro-Asian politics. No longer did he envisage a world divided into three camps, he explained in a theme he was later to elaborate, but into two: the New Emerging Forces (NEFO) 'for freedom and justice', and 'the old forces [OLDEFO] of domination'.⁴ As this thesis developed it became clear that Sukarno saw the communist countries as a part of NEFO. The rise of the PKI coincided with an increased willingness on the part of Sukarno to regard communist countries as Indonesia's natural allies in the world order. ~~Indonesian foreign policy was modified~~ Under the direction of the Foreign Minister, Dr Subandrio, revolutionary fervour was generated. 'First of all', declared Subandrio in February 1962, 'our diplomatic officers must truly understand and comprehend...diplomacy as an instrument of revolution....Without an understanding of the character and the basic objectives of the National Revolution...our diplomats will

1
The Partai Komunis Indonesia.

2
John O. Sutter: 'Two Faces of Confrontasi: "Crush Malaysia" and the Gestapu', Asian Survey, Oct 1966, p.524; see also Justus M. van der Kroef: The Communist Party of Indonesia (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1965); Donald Hindley: The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951-63 (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1964).

3
H. Feith: 'President Sukarno, the Army and the Communists: The Triangle Changes Shape', Asian Survey, Aug 1964, pp.969-80.

4
Sukarno's Speech at the Belgrade Conference, 1 September 1961, Modelski (ed): op.cit., p.35.

be drowned in the mere formalities of conventional diplomacy'.¹

By 1963, with her armed forces well and newly equipped and her internal revolts crushed,² Indonesia was united, self-assertive, militarily strong and lacking her previous nationalist cause, West Irian. Under Guided Democracy, economic development with Western aid was being ignored 'for the sake of greater principles, i.e., that social conceptions for nation building and for the building of a new world order should not be dictated by forces which thrive upon colonialism and imperial exploitation'.³ Under the all embracing symbolism of the Revolution, Indonesia's preoccupation was national unity, self-respect and even la gloire. It was not a far step from being in the vanguard of the 'Revolution of Mankind', to seeking its exportation.

In contrast to that of Indonesia, Malayan foreign policy was perhaps best characterised by the pragmatic, non-enthusiastic manner of its implementation. The Tunku was largely unconcerned with the subtleties of world politics.⁴ As the Malayan Prime Minister pointed out, from the time of independence 'it was not our intention to spend any more than we can help in setting up various missions'.⁵ Parliamentary debates on foreign policy were rare, and on one occasion shortly after independence the Tunku denied the need for such a debate on the ground that Malaya had no foreign policy.⁶ Various aspects of policy may, however, be discerned. As on domestic issues, so in foreign policy the Alliance Government was unequivocally anti-communist.⁷ The Western position in Indo-China was clearly supported, and Kuala Lumpur 'always regarded Viet Nam as the first line of defence for Malaya',⁸ and provided equipment and training facilities for the Saigon Government.⁹

1.

Speech by Subandrio to trainees of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Djakarta, 18 February 1962, in Modelski (ed): op.cit., p.46.

2

H. Feith and D.S. Lev: 'The End of the Indonesian Rebellion', Pacific Affairs, Spring 1963, pp.32-46.

3

Subandrio, speech in New Delhi, 5 February 1963, in Modelski (ed): op. cit., p.63.

4

T.H. Silcock: 'Development of a Malayan Foreign Policy', Australian Outlook, April 1963, p.42.

5

MPD, HR, 12 Dec 1957, col.4089.

6

ST, 26 Nov 1957.

7

MPD, HR, 3 Sept 1959, col.3233, statement by the Tunku.

8

ST, 27 Oct 1961, statement by the Tunku.

9

Ibid., 25 Jan 1962.

Open contacts with Taiwan and particularly Peking were avoided on the grounds that both had sought to subvert the loyalties of the Malayan Chinese.¹ Some interest was shown in regional organisations and Kuala Lumpur initiated both SEAFET and ASA,² but neither project made much progress.³ The Alliance Government evinced little interest in foreign affairs and when it did it was mildly anti-colonial, sympathetic with the West, and clearly anti-communist.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Malayan foreign policy was the relationship with Britain. The 1956 constitutional conference in London, which had established the basis for Malayan independence, had declared: 'there shall be an agreement between Her Majesty's Government...and the...Federation making provision for defence requirements and mutual assistance in defence matters',⁴ and a working party was set up to examine the matter.⁵ The Tunku favoured such a treaty, defending his position in the following terms:

It is said that with Commonwealth troops being stationed in Malaya this country would invite attack...and be used as a battlefield...that the troops would compromise the sovereignty of independent Malaya. In my opinion...Malaya offers herself an easy target and will always be open to aggression...so if we are able to get help...we should welcome it. 6

The Treaty was duly concluded in 1957⁷ and, when it came before the Malayan Parliament for ratification, was defended by the Government on two grounds: 1) that the Malayan Government would have ultimate control over the deployment of the Commonwealth forces,⁸ and 2) that without the Agreement the Federation would be

1
MPD,HR, 22 April 1960, col.289 (statement by Dato Ismail).

2
The abortive Southeast Asian Friendship and Economic Treaty and the Association of Southeast Asian States. ASA, which was formed with Thailand and the Philippines, ran into difficulties after Manila's claim to Sabah.

3
Silcock: op.cit., p.44.

4
Federation of Malaya, Legislative Council, Paper No.6 of 1956, p.6.

5
MPD,HR, 14 March 1956, col.875 ff.

6
Ibid., col.893.

7
Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Malayan Governments, Oct 1957 (HMSO, London, Cmd. 263). See Appendix One.

8
MPD,HR, 2 and 3 Oct 1957, col.3275 (statement by the Tunku).

forced to spend considerable sums providing for its own defence.¹ But in spite of these advantages the Treaty still came in for criticism both from within UMNO and from the opposition parties.² The Socialist Front was particularly hostile,³ Tan Phock Kin contending that the Commonwealth countries 'are merely interested in using our country as a frontline for their country; this particular fact...is a statement from the Australian Parliament'.⁴

The relationship between the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve (the presence of which in independent Malaya the Treaty legitimised) and SEATO requires some explanation. SEATO had had a poor reception both in Malaya and (more extensively) in Singapore,⁵ although the Alliance Government appears to have been less hostile to the organisation.⁶ It was claimed in Malaya that though the ANZAM powers were members of SEATO, the Defence Agreement did 'not involve the Federation with the affairs of SEATO'.⁷ While Singapore was still a colony, however, there was nothing to prevent the Strategic Reserve forces being used for SEATO purposes after being redeployed in Singapore. By 1961, with a merger pending between the two states, the situation appeared to require clarification.

The first official reference to the Defence Agreement during the Malaysia negotiations was contained in the Anglo-Malayan communique issued in London, on 23 November 1961. It declared:

the existing defence agreement...should be extended to cover the other territories concerned. It was however agreed that the government of the federation in Malaysia will afford...the right to continue to maintain bases in Singapore for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Malaysia, and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia. 8

1
Ibid., col.3346 (statement by Razak).

2
Yeap Gaik Khoon: 'Treaties and Engagements Affecting Malaya, 1946-60' (Unpub. thesis, University of Singapore, 1960) p.33.

3
MPD,HR, 23 June 1960, col.1451 ff. (Lim Kean Siow), col.1460 ff (Karem Singh), 30 Nov 1960, col.2980 (V.David).

4
Ibid., 3 Dec 1960, col.3264.

5
Weekly Digest of the Non-English Press (Singapore), 14, 17 and 21, 1956. See Chapter One, supra.

6
The Tunku conceded that Malaya was 'in a way indirectly connected with SEATO', ST, 12 Dec 1958.

7
MPD,HR, 2-3 Oct 1957, col.3281 (statement by the Tunku).

8
Report of the Commission of Enquiry, p.2.

The statement was hardly a precise definition of the Commonwealth forces' relationship to SEATO. The PAP (probably to forestall domestic criticism) asserted that, with the formation of Malaysia, the Singapore base could not be used for SEATO purposes.¹

Immediately after the communique was issued, the Tunku cabled to Lee that 'the British Government and ourselves emphasise Singapore base is not SEATO base',² and said in London that if the British 'want to use any of the bases in the new Malaysia for SEATO purposes, we would only allow it if our own interests were involved'.³

The British (and Australian) Governments saw things in a different light, Duncan Sandys contending that the Treaty 'obviously does not exclude the use of the base to discharge our obligations to SEATO, which exists precisely for the purpose of preserving peace in South East Asia'.⁴ But he agreed that Singapore was not strictly a SEATO base as Britain could not 'transfer control of the base'.⁵

It appears that a distinction was drawn between 'SEATO purposes' and 'the preservation of peace in South East Asia' to placate potential Malaysian opposition to SEATO. The difficulties which this involved became clear when in June 1962 units of the RAF and RAAF flew from Malaya to Thailand (via Singapore) under SEATO auspices, thus raising criticisms in Malaya.⁶

It would seem that the use of Commonwealth forces in Malaya would be dependent on the circumstances, SEATO notwithstanding. Similarly with regard to control of these forces, although the Tunku asserted that the 'last word on the use of the bases will rest with the...Federation',⁷ on another occasion the following exchange took place in Parliament:

¹
Times, 30 Sept 1961.

²
SLA, Debs, 24 Nov 1961, p.689.

³
ST, 23 Nov 1961.

⁴
Ibid., 24 Nov 1961. See Watt: *op.cit.*, p.58 ff, and Chapter One, *supra*.

⁵
The US Consul-General in Singapore was perhaps less tactful in describing Singapore as part of 'SEATO muscles', ST, 31 Oct 1961.

⁶
MPD,HR, 26 June 1962, cols.936-41. See Chapter One, *supra*.

⁷
Ibid., 27 May 1963, col.251.

S.R.Seenivasagam: To remove any doubt, ...Great Britain has the right to use the base without the consent of the proposed Government of Malaysia? The Prime Minister: The Honourable Member is quite right....I did not assure the British Government that the base could be used for SEATO purposes but I did say that in the event of outbreak of trouble in this part of the world, where our own security is concerned, it will be in our interest...to make use of this base for the defence of this region. 1

Given the pro-Western orientation of the Alliance Government's foreign policy, the implications of this statement were apparent.

Despite the affinities between the 'indigenous'² peoples of Malaya and Indonesia with regard to religion, race, culture and language, the development of the two states in the twentieth century had produced sharp differences. The one had become racially pluralist, parliamentarian, traditionalist and capitalist, the other radical and of revolutionary temper. Despite the efforts of Yamin,³ Boestaman⁴ and the PMIP,⁵ the concept of an Indonesia Raya to embrace both states has fallen on barren ground in the post war years. But Kuala Lumpur quickly recognised the importance of Indonesia, established one of its first diplomatic missions there, made every effort to involve Indonesia in schemes for regional cooperation,⁶ and in 1959 concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.⁷ It was within this framework, or despite it, that by 1963 the relationship between the two states became one of violent animosity.

Before the outbreak of this hostility, which may be attributed largely to the Indonesian reaction to the Malaysia plan, other sources of friction were discernable. In 1957 at the UN, the

1
Ibid., 10 Jan 1962, cols.2930-1.

2
In this context the Malays in Malaya. Indonesian immigrants to the Federation are usually accepted as Malays.

3
See Background to Indonesia's Policy Towards Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1964).

4
See A Plot Exposed, Cmd. Paper No.12 of 1965 (Kuala Lumpur).

5
The PMIP also claimed the four southern provinces of Thailand as 'Malay'.

6
Nranjan Kuma Hazra: 'Malaya's Foreign Relations 1957-63' (M.A. thesis, University of Singapore 1965) pp.153-5.

7
Malaya-Indonesian Relations (Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur 1964), pp.1-2.

Malayan delegation abstained from voting on the issue of West Irian, apparently due to lack of instructions,¹ and, although she subsequently expressed complete support for the Indonesian claim,² incurred press and Government criticism in Indonesia.³ In 1960 the Tunku offered to mediate in the dispute and having received Indonesian consent (so the Malayan Government claims) proceeded to the Netherlands and proposed a solution on the basis of an interim UN administration.⁴ Before the Tunku's return Subandrio condemned this action as unwanted interference, and severe Indonesian criticism followed. Although the final solution to the West Irian problem in 1962 followed the lines of the Tunku's proposal, West Irian was a sensitive issue for Indonesia and the Tunku's intervention was incautious and ineffective.

The second issue was more serious. In 1958 the Malayan Cabinet resolved to ignore the Sumatra rebellion⁵ but Sukarno insinuated shortly afterwards that Malaya was trying to detach the island from Indonesia by aiding the rebels.⁶ Djakarta was further upset when the Malayan Government first granted political asylum to some rebels,⁷ then in 1960 refused to hand over some thirty rebels found in Penang,⁸ and finally refused to conclude an extradition treaty, proposed by Subandrio, the terms of which were to include political offenders.⁹ The extent of Malayan involvement in the Sumatra revolt (despite rumours) is difficult to ascertain. Two journalists have reported that limited assistance to the rebels came from Singapore and Sabah largely as a result of smuggling and ill-enforced regulations.¹⁰ The magnitude and effect of these activities are unknown. The Indonesians were less

¹ ST, 23 Nov 1957 (Dato Ismail, then Malayan representative at the UN).

² Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp.7-8.

³ Indonesian Observer, 24 Sept 1957.

⁴ Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp.7-11.

⁵ ST, 19 March 1958.

⁶ ST, 16 April 1958.

⁷ Malaya-Indonesia Relations, p.5.

⁸ ST, 7 and 10 Jan 1960.

⁹ Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp.5-6 and Appendix VI.

¹⁰ W.Stevenson: Birds Nests In Their Beards (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1964); James Mossman: Rebels In Paradise (Cape, London, 1961).

uncertain, however, Sukarno later asserting that

Still fresh in our minds are the subversions from outside of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions. They operated from bases abroad, around us! Some operated from Malaya, some operated from Singapore...from Taiwan...from South Korea...the Philippines. 1

During her confrontation of Malaysia, in order to create sympathy for her policy Indonesia made much of her accusation that Malaya had been a willing base for subversive operations against the Republic. At no time did the Indonesian Government produce evidence which substantiated that claim. But Malaya had, however unwittingly, become involved in two of the most sensitive issues in Indonesian politics: West Irian and national unity.

Despite these issues, relations between the two states appeared to be, at least on the surface, harmonious up till the Brunei revolt. In mid-1961 Indonesia was informed of the Malaysia plan and responded favourably.² In August 1961 Lord Selkirk visited Djakarta and saw Subandrio who, the Indonesian Observer reported, saw the project as 'entirely a matter for the peoples concerned and did not concern Indonesia'.³ In October 1961 Subandrio saw Lord Home in London and repeated that view⁴ which he later elaborated in a letter to the New York Times:

one fourth of the island of Kalimantan (Borneo)... is now becoming the target of the Malayan Government for a merger. Of course, the people there are ethnologically and geographically very close to the others living in Indonesian territory. Still we do not show any objection....On the contrary we wish the Malayan government well if it can succeed with this plan. 5

He added to this during a subsequent address to the UN General Assembly that 'we have no objections to such a merger based upon the will for freedom of the peoples concerned'.⁶ Subandrio continued to repeat these views until mid-September 1962⁷ after

1 Sukarno's Independence Day Address, 17 August 1963, in G. Modelski (ed): op.cit., p.126.

2 Malaya-Indonesia Relations, p.11.

3 Indonesian Observer, 3 Aug 1961.

4 Times, 18 Oct 1961.

5 NYT, 13 Nov 1961.

6 Select Documents on International Affairs, No. 1 of 1963: Malaysia (DEA, Canberra), p. 38.

7 Interview with the Sydney Morning Herald, in Subandrio: Indonesia on the March (Djakarta, 1963), p. 291.

which Indonesia's attitude began to change. The revolt in Brunei proved decisive in this process.

Brunei, unlike Sabah and Sarawak, was not a crown colony but a British protectorate. In the nineteenth century the Sultan of Brunei had included much of north western Borneo in his domains but by the 1950s all that remained of the empire was two enclaves in Sarawak. The population numbered some eighty thousand people, of whom about a quarter were Chinese, the rest Malays and Islamic natives. The Sultanate drew large revenues from its oil fields. In 1959 a new treaty was concluded with Britain which gave Brunei internal self-government and anticipated elections for the Legislative Council.¹ These elections were held in August 1962 and the Party Ra'ayat won all sixteen of the elected seats, another seventeen having been nominated.² The party disapproved of the Sultan's apparent acceptance of Malaysia, preferring rather a Bornean federation under Brunei leadership. Further, the leader of the party, Azahari, had fought for the Indonesians against the Dutch and had pro-Indonesian sympathies. The Sultan is reported to have set up a commission which found widespread opposition to Malaysia, but its findings were not published.³ As early as 26 May 1962 the Borneo Bulletin reported that about one hundred Malay youths had left Brunei for Indonesia and that there were rumours they would return to instigate a revolt. In September more such reports occurred and in November arms caches and uniforms were found in the jungle. Ten people were arrested for plotting against the government.⁴ Then, according to the Government of Indonesia,

on 8 December 1962 the acknowledged leaders of the people of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo solemnly proclaimed the absolute and complete independence of Negara Kalimantan Utara...their struggle forms part of the struggle of the Now Emerging Forces.⁵

This interpretation hardly fits the facts.

In Brunei there seems little doubt that the revolt had widespread support among the non-Chinese. Its objectives appear to have been to prevent the formation of Malaysia and to create a unified northern Borneo under Brunei's direction. In Brunei, much of the

¹ Brunei: Annual Report 1959.

² Borneo Bulletin, 1 Sept 1962.

³ Plebian, 15 May 1962.

⁴ Extracts from the Chinese and Malay Press in Sarawak, Utusan Sarawak, 8 Nov 1962.

⁵ The Problem of 'Malaysia' (Indonesian Embassy, Canberra, 1963), p.3.

state was overrun; but outside it the revolt's success was limited. In Sarawak, according to an official report, there were 'simultaneous attacks on Limbang...and Bekenu...by Kedayans and persons of other races with Brunei sympathies...some were Brunei Malays'.¹ In fact in Sarawak 'the whole area covered by the 1962 rebellion can be placed on the map and closely fitted with the distribution of Kedayans',² who were Islamic, as were almost all the six hundred or so rebels later captured in the state.³ The revolt was restricted almost entirely to Malays and Islamic natives: it could hardly claim to represent the whole of northern Borneo, only a small proportion of the people of which were Muslims. All the then existing political parties of Borneo, except the Party Ra'ayat, condemned the revolt.⁴

The Sultan invoked the 1959 Treaty with the UK, and British forces were quickly sent from Singapore. Although the rebels had captured much of Brunei and held Limbang for four days, they were quickly overwhelmed. The revolt collapsed before the end of the year. Its influence had been restricted to Brunei and the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak, particularly the Limbang, Miri and Niah areas, with a small outbreak around Sibü.⁵ It appears that the rebels (the TNKU)⁶ were not in contact with the predominantly Chinese communist organisation in Sarawak but, significantly, in January 1963 the Kuching Constabulary reported that a number of youths from the First and Third Divisions had gone into the jungle to join the CCO.⁷

The Malaysian⁸ and British⁹ Governments have both accused Indonesia of aiding the rebels. Azahari has denied this,¹⁰ but it

¹ Sarawak, Annual Report 1962, p.104.

² Tom Harrisson: Background to a Revolt (Brunei, 1963).

³ Sarawak by the Week, (SKW) Doc 1962 to April 1963.

⁴ Extracts from the Chinese and Malay Press in Sarawak, China Daily News, 10 Dec 1962.

⁵ Ibid..

⁶ The Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara (the National Army of North Kalimantan).

⁷ Sarawak by the Week, 2/63, 6-12 Jan 1963, p.28.

⁸ Indonesian Involvement in Eastern Malaysia (Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1964), pp.80-1; MPD,HR, 11 Dec 1962 (statement by the Tunku on the Brunei revolt).

⁹ UKTD,HC, vol.669, 10 Dec 1962, col.35 (Sanlys).

¹⁰ ST, 3 Dec 1963.

is clear that the rebels expected assistance from Indonesia.¹ Perhaps more importantly, Indonesia quickly expressed sympathy for the revolt.² By January 1963 it was clear that Indonesia opposed the whole Malaysia concept, and confrontation was announced.³ For this apparent volte face on the part of Djakarta, some explanation is needed.

For those Governments involved in opposing confrontation, it was clearly necessary to make some assessment of the rationale for Indonesia's policy if any effort was to be made to forestall it. An explanation of the reasons for Indonesia's policy is difficult to arrive at, the ostensible reasons having both changed in the course of time and involved mutually contradictory claims. Broadly two categories of causes may be discerned: (1) those attributable to the international situation per se, and (2) those directly related to and only explicable by reference to domestic Indonesian politics. Malaysia and her supporters could do little to alter the latter, the former appeared to be susceptible to modification.

Perhaps underlying all other factors was 'the powerful, self-righteous thrust of Indonesian nationalism'⁴ and its notion of Indonesia's place in the world. Encouraged by the Government's use of aggressive symbolism,⁵ possessing an increasingly assertive brand of state ideology, conscious of its new-found military strength, and perhaps viewing the culmination of the West Irian campaign as something of an anti-climax, Indonesia appeared anxious in 1963 to stake its claim to being a major force in Southeast Asia. As an official statement declared, 'it is the view of the Indonesian Government that any change in the status quo of the region... should be regarded as a matter for mutual consultations among the countries most concerned'.⁶ In August 1963 Sukarno proudly boasted

¹
See Douglas Hyde: Confrontation in the East (Bodley Head, London, 1965) p.63 ff.

²
Indon Herald, 11 Dec 1962. See also Sutter: op.cit., p.526.

³
Indon Herald, 21 Jan 1963.

⁴
George McT. Kahin: 'Malaysia and Indonesia', Pacific Affairs Fall 1964, p.260. See also Bernard K. Gordon: 'The Potential for Indonesian Expansionism', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1963-4, pp.378-393.

⁵
H. Feith: 'Indonesia's Political Symbols and their Wielders', World Politics, Oct 1963, pp.79-97.

⁶
Quoted by Donald Hindley: 'Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia: A Search for Motives', Asian Survey, June 1964, p.906: official Indonesian statement, published in September 1963 by the Indonesian mission to the UN.

that 'Indonesia is recognised as having the right and a primary responsibility to guard security and peace in the region'.¹ The Malaysians and British were perhaps not sufficiently appreciative of this point, the Tunku saying in late 1962 that he did not think Sukarno would be interested in discussing Malaysia.² Given, however, that Djakarta had claimed that very lack of interest, it is difficult to see what approach might have been taken. Unfortunately Indonesia was later to base its objections to Malaysia partly on the claim it had not been consulted.

Further, Djakarta appears to have become convinced that Malaysia was being created by Britain and was ipso facto a neo-colonialist project. Indonesians, with their anti-imperialist temper, did not believe Malaysia would be genuinely independent.³ Hatta, a former Indonesian Prime Minister, made this clear: 'once Indonesia achieved independence, the ending of colonialism everywhere became one of the objectives of its foreign policy', as was foreshadowed in the preamble to the constitution. Malaysia, he continued, had to be opposed because it was not independent of Britain and, being a tool of neo-colonialism, it would pose a threat to Indonesia as had the British territories in 1958.⁴

It has been suggested that these arguments were equally valid before 1963 but that the Indonesian Government deliberately avoided utilising them until its West Irian claim was successfully resolved.⁵ This is probably too simple an explanation, for it would seem that Sukarno genuinely thought Azahari was leading a nationalist, popular uprising with support throughout north western Borneo. Given the strength of Indonesian convictions, it was apparent that her various objections to Malaysia would have to be shown to be

1
Sukarno's Independence Day Address, 17 August 1963, in Modelski (ed): *op.cit.*, p.127.

2
MFD,HR, vol.IV, No. 5, 28 Nov 1962, col.1567.

3
Hindley: *op.cit.*, p.906; Legge: *op.cit.*, pp.13-7; Kahin: *op.cit.*, pp.261-2 (interview with Sukarno).

4
Mohammed Hatta: 'One Indonesian view of the Malaysia Issue', Asian Survey, March 1965, p.139. See also interview with Nasution, FEER, 4 April 1963, p.13: 'Malaysia is neo-colonialist and feudalist'; Problem of Malaysi, p.4, 'any movement to throw off the yoke of colonialism and imperialism constitutes a cause for immediate support from Indonesia'; Suluh Indonesia, 24 Jan 1964.

5
Modelski: 'Indonesia and the Malaysia Issue', p.138; L.Castles: 'Indonesian Attitudes to Malaysia', Australia's Neighbours, Dec 1963, p.4.

completely groundless, and considerable deference paid to her position as a regional power, if the new federation was to become acceptable to Djakarta.

During the course of confrontation various Indonesians advanced fears of the Malaysian Chinese, often privately. Since independence Indonesians had shown strong hostility towards the ethnic Chinese residing in the Republic and widespread anti-Chinese riots took place in 1960 and 1963. For Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysia plan presented a means for containing or redirecting the political aspirations of the Chinese; Djakarta took just the opposite view, anticipating Chinese control of Malaysia.¹ If this argument is accepted (and there are reasons why it should not be, for it was certain of the Chinese within Malaysia that Indonesia adopted as allies)² Kuala Lumpur and Djakarta were pursuing the same long-term objective. Both regarded Peking and its overseas 'fifth column' as the most serious long-term threat to their security, but the Alliance strongly opposed Peking and sought accommodation with the Malaysian Chinese; Djakarta pursued understanding with Peking, and suppression of its Chinese minority.³ In non-communist Asia by 1963 the Indonesian attitude, based as it was on the assumption of eventual Chinese supremacy in at least part of east Asia, was not popular and was shared only by Burma and Cambodia.

A second category of explanations for Indonesia's confrontation policy rests largely on the thesis that the Indonesian Government considered the agitation concerning Malaysia domestically necessary for nation building purposes.⁴ 'Confrontation' would also work to the Government's advantage:

ceremonies recalling the heroism of the nationalist movement and the Revolution make it possible for the government to maintain a conspicuous initiative in the country's affairs....Similar effects flow

1

Hatta: op.cit.; Kahin: op.cit., p.254; Sutter: op.cit., p.527 (army); Hindley: op.cit., p.908.

2

Jan.M.Pluvier: Confrontations: A Study in Indonesian Politics (OUP, Kuala Lumpur, 1965), ch.6, argues this was to discredit the radical Chinese in Malaysia and force the Alliance to suppress them.

3

Mary F.Somers Heidhues: 'Peking and the Overseas Chinese: The Malaysia Dispute', Asian Survey, May 1966, p.282. See also, G.William Skinner: 'The Chinese Minority', Ch.3 in Ruth T.McVey: op.cit..

4

G.Pauker: 'Indonesia in 1963: The Year of Wasted Opportunities', Asian Survey, Feb 1964, p.692; see also J.A.C. Mackie: 'Indonesia: A Background to Confrontation', The World Today, April 1964, p.139.

from all foreign policy actions which give rise to a feeling of national pride...they have flowed from ...actions carried out in support of the Azahari revolt...[and] the 'confrontation' of Malaysia. 1

West Irian had provided a national crusade and in 1962, though the economy was severely run down, the campaign for national unity appeared to be succeeding with the collapse of the various revolts² and Sukarno's increased power.³ It seemed that the Government could turn from its political aspirations which had largely been achieved, and pursue economic development, but this was not to be. In December 1963 Subandrio admitted 'we are neglecting our wealth purposely because we are concentrating on nation building...we can afford not to give priority to economic problems'.⁴

Indonesia's political flavour is difficult to savour. Although economically chaotic, Indonesia regarded Malaysia as under-developed, in a political and spiritual sense. Indonesian logic was perhaps Platonic rather than Aristotelian: the attainment of the essence of the 'good life' - in this case national unity and self-respect - would bring inevitably the solutions to Indonesia's other minor problems.⁵ More cynically one might argue that economic reorganisation was difficult and would have upset the political equilibrium: confrontation of Malaysia was a readily available method of perpetuating the existing political system.⁶ In addition the various political factions each had its own reasons for opposing Malaysia.

Of the major political groups, it was the PKI which first expressed hostility to the Malaysia scheme. After hints of anti-Malaysia feeling in the PKI journal Harian Rakyat,⁷ at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in Djakarta, in December 1961, Malaysia was condemned as a tool of SEATO, a neo-colonialist

1
Feith: 'Indonesia's Political Symbols', p.96.

2
Feith and Lev: op.cit..

3
Feith: 'President Sukarno, The Army and the Communists: The Triangle Changes Shape', pp.970-1.

4
ST, 6 Dec 1963.

5
Feith: 'Indonesia's Political Symbols', p.86. See also Sel Soemardjan: 'Some Social and Cultural Implications of Indonesia's Unplanned and Planned Development', Review of Politics, Jan 1963, pp.64-90.

6
Van der Kroef: 'The Sino-Indonesian Partnership', p.338; Hindley: op.cit., pp.908-9.

7
'Apu Itu Malaysia Raya?', Harian Rakyat, 31 Aug 1961.

creation and a threat to Indonesia as part of imperialist encirclement.¹ Given the openly anti-communist nature of the Malayan Government and its rationale for the creation of Malaysia, PKI hostility was, perhaps, only to be expected.² Further, it was in PKI interests for Djakarta to adopt an anti-Western international posture and opposition to Malaysia promised to produce this.³ Sukarno's later criticisms of Malaysia were little different from those of the PKI and 'confrontation' proved to be a major factor in the post-1962 resurgence of the PKI.⁴

The Army was also hostile to Malaysia. Although it may have genuinely feared a security threat from Malaysia (particularly after the events of 1958) and taking into account its anti-Chinese inclinations, the army's reasons for hostility appear to have stemmed in part from domestic politics. The army's political strength since 1958 was a result of the state of emergency, the West Irian campaign and the large military expenditure. By late 1962 there were indications that this situation would end particularly after Sukarno announced that the economy would be stabilised⁵ and Nasution that military expenditure would be cut by forty seven per cent.⁶ Confrontation of Malaysia meant that these plans were abandoned. Although in early 1963 Nasution justified confrontation on the grounds of opposition to neo-colonialism, fear of aid to rebels as in 1958 and the desire to see self determination in Borneo,⁷ domestic factors were important.

But it was Sukarno who held the determinative position in issues of foreign policy⁸ and it was not clear even after the Brunei revolt that he was prepared to take an irrevocably obstructionist stand against Malaysia. On 20 September 1962 the Tunku had sparked a

1
Text in Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp.52-3.

2
Sutter: op.cit., p.527.

3
Hindley: op.cit., p.910.

4
Frances L.Starner: 'Malaysia and the North Borneo Territories', Asian Survey, Nov 1963, p.524. See Justus M.van der Kroef: 'Indonesian Communism and the Changing Balance of Power', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1964-5, pp.357-83.

5
Independence Day Address: Indon Herald, 18 Aug 1962.

6
Nation (Burma), 14 Jan 1963; Hindley: op.cit., p.904.

7
FEER, 4 April 1963, p.13.

8
Feith: 'Indonesia's Political Symbols', pp.81-2.

hostile reaction in the Indonesian Herald by warning Indonesia to keep her 'hands off' Malaysia. Shortly afterwards, Subandrio, whose acceptance of Malaysia had been conditional on the wishes of the people concerned, warned that Indonesia 'could not remain indifferent'.¹ Undoubtedly Sukarno wished to extend Indonesian influence in the area and wanted its status recognised;² Malaysia was used for this purpose.³ Once Sukarno had assumed a posture hostile to Malaysia there was little doubt that a policy of opposition to the new federation would receive widespread support within Indonesia.

In order to assess the subsequent development of 'confrontation', it is important to try to evaluate Indonesia's objectives and the extent to which Malaysia might have been created and existed had they been achieved. In other words were Malaysia and Indonesia fundamentally conflicting political entities? To the extent that internal political considerations determined Indonesian foreign policy, its objectives were obscure. From 1963 to 1965 the ostensible aims varied both in content and emphasis. Within this context Djakarta sought recognition of its position as a leading power in the area, with the right to be consulted before any change in the status quo. Indonesia argued that the people of Borneo had not been consulted on Malaysia and that if they were consulted, they would oppose the scheme. It sought more pliable and conciliatory neighbours, hence its later opposition to the Tunku per se. As time progressed it also became clear that a removal of Western influence from the area was sought: this coincided with the objectives of the PKI and Peking, the influence of both of which increased in Djakarta. It seems unlikely that Indonesia envisaged territorial expansion in the short term, though the possibility should not be ignored.

It is possible that had sufficient deference been paid to Djakarta and sufficient effort made both to explain Malaysia and to invalidate Indonesian objections during early 1963, confrontation might have been avoided. While the British may have paid insufficient attention to Indonesia's interest in the future of British Borneo, Djakarta hardly encouraged London to consult her

1
ST, 27 Sept 1962.

2
A.M.Taylor: 'Malaysia, Indonesia - and Maphilindo', International Journal, Spring 1964, p.170.

3
Modelski: 'Indonesia and the Malaysia Issue', p.130.

on the subject. During the negotiations of 1963 Indonesia's rather inflexible and bellicose posture did not increase the possibility that those negotiations might lead to an amicable settlement to the dispute. In any case, at that late stage in the evolution of the Malaysia plan it would have been unreasonable to have expected those states associated with the project to have determined their relationship with one another on the basis of Indonesian policy.

In December 1962 Indonesia had voiced support for Azahari, in January 1963 confrontation was announced. On 11 February Subandrio more explicitly warned of 'the possibility of physical conflict'¹ and it became clear that confrontation was to be implemented. For Indonesia it presented the means for waging the 'just' and unilateral war, at once cheap, riskless, effective and, perhaps, internationally acceptable. Since 1945 world society had made various efforts to condemn and prevent war, and contemporary morality condemned resort to the use of force in international disputes. Both the UN Charter and the 1955 declaration of the Bandung Conference made this clear. But no state was prepared to renounce the use of force under all circumstances and perhaps two major exceptions were generally accepted: defensive war and that against 'imperialism'. With such vague concepts applying interpretations in the particular became subject to considerable disagreement. For Indonesia 'confrontation' was a means to apply force in an acceptable context.² The distinction between an indigenous revolt and externally directed guerrilla warfare, and between provoked and unprovoked attack are often tenuously demarcated.

Since World War II, Indonesia had two experiences of the successful use of force to alter the status quo: the war against the Dutch 1945-9, and the West Irian campaign. It was the latter which served as the model for the struggle against Malaysia. Intrinsicly the arguments of the Dutch, that they should retain control of West Irian and grant the territory independence, were as well founded as the Indonesian arguments that West Irian should be incorporated in the Republic. The Indonesian success may be attributed to perhaps three factors. First, a substantial military force was built up and utilised in the pursuit of limited warfare;

¹
ST, 12 Feb 1963.

²
For a legal criticism of this policy see L.C.Green: 'Indonesia, the United Nations and Malaysia', JSEAH, Sept 1965, pp.71-86.

this military harassment and threats of escalation served both to disturb the Dutch and create an air of crisis, thus drawing world attention to Djakarta's claim. Secondly, by skilful and energetic diplomacy Indonesia won support in the non-aligned world both for its claims and its use of force as a campaign against imperialism. Third, because of the struggle between the major powers for support in the third world, they felt obliged to support Indonesia's position. The Soviet Union supplied military equipment and, in the early 1960s, the USA abandoned its previous neutrality in the dispute and helped terminate the conflict largely on Indonesia's terms.

It rapidly became apparent that Indonesia was to apply the strategy of West Irian to Malaysia. The various tactics were soon in evidence: military harassment, the campaign for Afro-Asian support, the efforts to neutralise or enlist the sympathy of the great powers and the portrayal of confrontation as an anti-imperialist and so a legitimate war.¹ For a variety of reasons Malaysia was to prove a tougher nut to crack than West Irian.

Indonesia quickly set about to win Afro-Asian support for her campaign against Malaysia. For this she was well equipped, having extensive diplomatic representation, experience, and a President eager to enhance his prestige in the non-aligned world. But such a campaign was more difficult in 1963 than it had been over West Irian, as the neutralist bloc became decreasingly monolithic and its leading members increasingly divided on two major issues, the Sino-Soviet split, and the use of force. The 'radicals' inclined towards the Peking revolutionary philosophy of international politics and included Ghana, Indonesia and to some extent Pakistan. The 'moderates' were (with exceptions) less interested in international revisionism, more sympathetic to Moscow and included India, the UAR and Yugoslavia. With the latter group Kuala Lumpur, which had been outspoken in its support for India against China in late 1962, might find common cause. Indonesia had increasingly moved towards the radicals: by late 1962 its relations with India were soured after the Asian Games and its apparent sympathy for Peking in the border dispute, while the powerful PKI was moving towards a pro-Peking stance after long appearing neutral.² In

1

G. Modelski: Indonesia and her Neighbours, Policy Alternatives for the West, (Policy Memorandum No. 30, Princeton University, 1964); Michael Loifer: 'Indonesia and Malaysia: the Diplomacy of Confrontation', The World Today, June 1965, pp.250-60.

2

Dj. D. Mail, 24 Jan 1963, Njoto led a PKI delegation to Peking.

early 1963 Subandrio in common with China and Pakistan, was seeking a second Bandung, which India and the UAR opposed.¹

At first it appeared that the communist world was united in its opposition to Malaysia. In August 1962 in Moscow, the World Federation of Democratic Youth declared its hostility to Malaysia² and in April 1963 the Soviet representative at the UN said the Soviet Union regarded Malaysia as neo-colonialist.³ Derkach argues convincingly, however, that Moscow did not enthusiastically support Indonesia against Malaysia after the latter became a sovereign state and looked like receiving some Afro-Asian support.⁴ In addition 'PKI-CPSU relations were seriously deteriorating by the fall of 1962'.⁵ Both the Indonesian Government and Communist Party were objects of the Sino-Soviet competition for support. By 1963 it appeared that both were increasingly sympathetic to Peking.

Peking's position on the Malaysia dispute was less equivocal than that of Moscow.⁶ Peking was soon voicing complete support for Indonesia's policy. Reasons for this are not difficult to find. Malaysia was not only to be anti-communist but was designed specifically to counter supporters of Peking among the overseas Chinese. Further, the PKI had been hostile to the scheme since 1961 and the Indonesian Government since late 1962: seeking the support of both, China provided Indonesia with a natural ally in its campaign against Malaysia. In January 1963 Subandrio visited Peking where he was assured of Chinese 'support' against Malaysia;⁷ in April Liu Shao-Chi visited Indonesia and reiterated this assurance;⁸ and Aidit and other PKI leaders,⁹ and Yani, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Army,¹⁰ visited Peking amidst great acclaim. The Peking-Djakarta axis was evolving; its existence was soon to be illustrated.

1

Ibid., 4 Feb 1963.

2

Straits Budget, 19 Sept 1962.

3

Indonesian Observer, 18 April 1962.

4

Nadia Derkach: 'The Soviet Policy Towards Indonesia in the West Irian and the Malaysian Disputes', Asian Survey, Nov 1965, pp.566-71.

5

Uri Ra'anani: 'The Coup That Failed: A Background Analysis', Problems of Communism, March-April 1966, p.37.

6

Heidhuus: op.cit.; van der Kröef: 'Sino-Indonesian Partnership', pp.341-53; Sutter: op.cit., p.528 ff.

7

Heidhuus: op.cit., p.279.

8

Bangkok Post, 19 April 1963.

9

Heidhuus: loc.cit., (Lukman and Njoto).

10

Dj. D. Mail, 29 April 1963.

From 4 to 11 February the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) held its third conference at Moshi, Tanganyika. Formed in 1957 after a Communist Parties' conference in Moscow, AAPSO's headquarters were in Cairo and the organisation was financed largely by the Soviet Union, China and the UAR.¹ The organisation represented political movements rather than states and pursued a most radical variety of Afro-Asianism. In December 1962 its secretariat had condemned Malaysia.² The conference provided Indonesia with its first opportunity to get Afro-Asian condemnation of Malaysia and gave the first clear indication of the Sino-Indonesian partnership.³

Azahari, leader of the movement upon support for which Djakarta's ostensible opposition to Malaysia was based, refused to attend the conference, saying it was 'financed and sponsored by communists and...I am a Muslim'.⁴ He consented to be represented. The Indonesian delegation made clear its determination to get the conference to declare its opposition to Malaysia and support for Azahari.⁵ Conversely, a Barisan Socialis delegate had his passport cancelled and was stopped at Kenya and returned.⁶ The joint Malayan-Singapore delegation suffered a similar fate, being refused admission to the conference, due, said its leader Devan Nair, to Chinese and Indonesian opposition.⁷ 'The Chinese and the Indonesians successfully exerted pressure behind the scenes to exclude from the conference the delegates of Malaya and Singapore', contended the Burmese Nation.⁸ Indonesia put forward a motion condemning Malaysia⁹ but was not fully successful. Although the AAPSO Secretary-General had expressed support for Azahari and opposition to 'the aggressive designs envisaged by the imperialist states

¹ Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (Moscow, 1962).

² The Third Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference, Moshi, (AAPSO, Cairo, 1963), pp.21 and 32.

³ Van der Kroef: 'Sino-Indonesian Partnership', p.349.

⁴ Indonesian Observer, 2 Feb 1963.

⁵ Dj. D. Mail, 1 Feb 1963.

⁶ Dawn, 6 Feb 1963.

⁷ Nation, Hindu, 9 Feb 1963.

⁸ Nation, 26 Feb 1963.

⁹ Dawn, 6 Feb 1963.

through their proposed "Malaysian Federation",¹ the conference was more reserved. Djakarta gained approval for its support for Azahari's revolt² and for NEFO,³ but no resolution opposing Malaysia was passed. Clearly a greater effort was needed.

While the Moshi Conference was being held, Subandrio opened in Djakarta a preliminary meeting of the Afro-Asian Journalists Conference (AAJC). On 16 February the meeting ended having decided to hold a full conference 24-30 April and having expressed support for Azahari.⁴ Significantly India was represented on none of the preparatory committees while the USSR, unlike at Moshi, was not even to be invited. Indonesia and China could operate more effectively in Djakarta. On 24 April Sukarno duly opened the AAJC, spending much of his speech exhorting the Afro-Asians to achieve unity and hold a second Bandung and condemning Malaysia because 'its peoples are not free'.⁵ The following day a twenty member presidium was elected and included a Kalimantan Utara representative. The protests of the excluded Indian, Malayan and Mongolian⁶ representatives were overruled by the Indonesian Chairman.⁷ On 27 April Azahari sent a message to the conference seeking support.⁸ The Sino-Indonesian axis appeared to be working effectively: the Malayan delegates were given no opportunity to reply to Azahari's contentions⁹ and, although a motion condemning Malaysia and the Tunku was blocked,¹⁰ the conference expressed support for Azahari¹¹ and passed a resolution calling for self-determination and independence in Borneo.¹² The Conference was dominated by Indonesia

¹
Moshi Conference, p.42.

²
Ibid., p.74.

³
Ibid., p.99.

⁴
Dj. D. Mail, 18 Feb 1963.

⁵
G. Modelski (ed): The New Emerging Forces, pp.53-9.

⁶
Presumably representing Soviet interests.

⁷
Nation, 26 April 1963.

⁸
Indon Herald, Nation, 29 April 1963.

⁹
Dj. D. Mail, 3 May 1963.

¹⁰
UPI report 29 April 1963.

¹¹
Dj. D. Mail, 2 May 1963.

¹²
Indon Herald, 3 May 1963.

whose delegates were mostly from the PKI journal, Harian Rakyat; both the Soviet Union and the UAR were prevented from attending; the National Liberation Front represented South Vietnam; India had no effective voice; and the Malayan delegation was ignored.¹

Before the formation of Malaysia, Djakarta rested its opposition to the scheme largely on Azahari's contention that he represented the people of northwest Borneo. Within Brunei the revolt might be seen as a popular anti-colonial rising but by 1963 it had ceased to exist. In February, Yani said Indonesia would support the rebels and only awaited the order to move.² On 7 August the Straits Times reported Nasution as admitting that 'it is no longer a secret that we give them [the rebels] military training and war equipment to drive the colonialists out'.³ In fact during 1963 guerrilla attacks

against British Borneo had begun, these were increasingly unrelated to the original TNKU. A new front was opened in western Sarawak and January to September 1963 saw only one incident in the vicinity of Brunei.⁴ This new phase in the insurgency began on 12 April 1963 when the village of Tebedu, in Sarawak's First Division and close to the frontier, was attacked.⁵ On 23 April nearby Gumbang suffered a similar fate,⁶ on 27 April Tebedu again.⁷ In June there were four such incidents, in July five, in August ten, in September seven: with one exception they all occurred in the three westernmost Divisions of Sarawak where Azahari's support had been negligible.

In fact a new front had been opened, for the TNKU revolt was finished. The supporters of the guerrilla attacks which were then being mounted from Indonesian Borneo, were drawn from Sarawak's Chinese. The CCO had taken to arms. Within twelve hours of the first raid on Tebedu the Government ordered all non-natives in the First, Second and Third Divisions to hand in their firearms,

¹ FEER, 23 May 1963.

² ST, 2 Feb 1963; Suluh Indonesia, 1 Feb 1963.

³ ST, 7 Aug 1963.

⁴ Ibid., 20 Aug 1963.

⁵ Sarawak by the Week, 16/63.

⁶ Ibid., 18/63.

⁷ Ibid., 19/63.

explaining that

the signs are perfectly clear. Groups of young Chinese...have been disappearing from their homes and...have been receiving indoctrination and training including some elementary arms training. 1

The following month the Government alleged that many Chinese were leaving for Indonesia to receive military training and to return.² The allegation received some substantiation when from 9 to 13 June, 69 Chinese were arrested heading for the frontier; twenty of them wore SUPP badges.³ On 3 August the Philippines Herald reported that about 1,600 Sarawak Chinese were in Indonesian Borneo receiving military training;⁴ shortly after it was announced in Kuching that there was no trace of the '1,600 young Chinese men and women who slipped over the Indonesian border' and who were 'products of Chinese education and firmly in the grip of Peking'.⁵

The guerrilla raids into Sarawak continued throughout Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia and Djakarta later admitted that the raids were inspired from Indonesia. Most of the raiders were Indonesians and their support in Sarawak was limited to the Chinese. The Muslim based TNKU had collapsed. The Sarawak Government had previously referred to a communist organisation among its Chinese citizens;⁶ after the first raid on Tebedu a spokesman talked of

Sarawak's misfortune to have a well organised Communist group at work in the country. This group is entirely Chinese...its members owe their loyalty...to the cause of international communism and particularly to the forces of Chinese communism. 7

The Government referred to the movement as the CCO, and in March 1963 published an official version of its history, The Danger Within.⁸ Its strength, contended the Government, was among the Chinese educated. These Chinese believed themselves to be discriminated against and were Peking oriented: as in the Malayan Emergency

1
Ibid., 16/63.

2
Ibid., 18/63.

3
Ibid., 24/63.

4
Philippines Herald, 3 Aug 1963.

5
Malayan Times, 18 Aug 1963.

6
Sarawak by the Week, 44/62, p.4.

7
Sunday Times, 21 April 1963.

8
The Danger Within (Sarawak Government Printer, Kuching, 1963).

many of them had taken to arms. Indonesian support for Azahari's war of liberation had left Djakarta with a strange bed fellow. This became even more apparent when it was announced in June that Brunei would not join Malaysia due to a dispute over the distribution of the revenues produced by the Sultanates oil fields.¹

Malaysia was not to inherit resources adequate to deal with confrontation. Apart from the Western world, Kuala Lumpur was diplomatically represented only in India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the UAR and South Vietnam;² these missions were insufficient to fight an effective battle for support in Afro-Asia and there was no indication that the Alliance Government would remedy the position.³ Lee Kuan Yew was more aware of the situation. In April 1962 he toured extensively to explain the Malaysia project, and in February 1963 warned Kuala Lumpur to avoid alienating Afro-Asia.⁴ The Alliance Government was more concerned to get Western material aid and in April 1963 Razak visited the US seeking support.⁵

Malayan defence policy, like her diplomatic representation, had been dictated by economy, and, as Razak admitted, it had 'always been the policy of the Alliance Government as far as possible to maintain the level of our defence expenditure low'.⁶ On 13 December 1962 he announced an increase in defence expenditure of \$M3.4m. which kept it at below 10 per cent of the total budget, or about \$M94m.⁷ On 1 January 1963, despite the Brunei revolt, the Tunku said he hoped to avoid any further increase⁸ but, following the announcement of confrontation, the Malayan Cabinet decided on a 'substantial increase'.⁹ Discussions with the UK followed¹⁰ and Malaya made it clear that it hoped the UK would finance much of

1
Times, 22 June 1963.

2
Malaysia: Official Year Book 1963, pp.124-5.

3
Nranjan Kumar Hazra: 'Malaya's Foreign Relations', p.25 and p.21.

4
ST, 13 Feb 1963.

5
Ibid., 9 and 25 April 1963.

6
MPD,HR, 29 May 1963, col.494.

7
Ibid., 13 Dec 1962, col.2893.

8
ST, 2 Jan 1963.

9
Ibid., 14 Feb 1963.

10
Ibid., 21 Feb, 13 April 1963.

the increase.¹ In May Razak visited London and was offered aid for defence expenditure.² At the end of the month it was announced that an extra \$M 75m. would be spent on defence but that British forces would remain Malaya's first line of defence.³

Until the formation of Malaysia the defence of the Borneo territories was a British responsibility. It would then be shared with Malaysia. In 1963 the Malayan armed forces were limited in strength, consisting of eight infantry battalions with support groups, a navy designed largely for coastal patrol, and an air force capable of performing only transport functions.⁴ The British forces, which were bearing the brunt of confrontation, were more extensive: five British and Gurkha battalions in Borneo by May 1963,⁵ two carriers with airborne marines on intermittent service, and a commando ship based at Hong Kong; commando groups at Singapore and Kuching; various RN vessels, including a cruiser; and RAF units including Canberras, Javelins, Hunters, various transport units and helicopters.⁶ To this might be added the considerable British reserves in Singapore and the Commonwealth forces in Malaya.

The total military forces available were sufficient to deter escalation of Indonesian activity, but in Sarawak they could clearly be extended with a thousand mile border to patrol. Alone, the Malaysian forces would be inadequate, and Malaysia's diplomatic machinery insufficient to remove the stigma of a protected neo-colonialist state. Further, the threat of an indigenous guerrilla revolt in Sarawak presented an unpleasant prospect.

Indonesia was not the only Southeast Asian country to oppose the formation of Malaysia. In 1962 the Philippines notified Britain of her claim to legal ownership of much of Sabah,⁷ the claim resting on interpretation of a nineteenth century treaty. President

¹ Ibid., 1 and 2 April 1963.

² Ibid., 17 May 1963.

³ MPD,HR, 29 May 1963, cols.478-508.

⁴ Year Book 1963, pp.159-61.

⁵ UK Statement on Defence 1964, (HMSO, Cmd. 2270), p.29.

⁶ Times, 20 Sept 1963. See also Peter Boyce: 'The Defence of Malaysia', Australia's Neighbours, Sept-Oct 1964, pp. 5-8.

⁷ ~~Part of Indonesian Borneo was also claimed but largely ignored during confrontation.~~

Macapagal, elected in December 1961, appears to have had a particular interest in the claim. The British did not take it seriously and Kuala Lumpur would not at first discuss it.¹ In January 1963 Salvador P. Lopez visited London to discuss the issue but he achieved little.² On 13 February Emmanuel Palaez, the Foreign Minister and Vice-President of the Philippines, proposed in Manila a tripartite meeting between representatives of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaya, to solve the problems posed by Malaysia. The Tunku cautiously accepted.³ In early March this proposal was further pursued during the ECAPF conference in Manila, which both Razak and Subandrio attended.⁴ Razak seemed responsive⁵ but it appeared that Djakarta wanted the formation of Malaysia delayed for a year⁶ and, with the Philippines, was seeking a plebiscite in the Borneo territories.⁷ By late March the three states had agreed to a meeting of officials in early April to discuss arrangements for a summit conference.⁸ The parties were clearly far from being in agreement, the Tunku insisting, at the ASA meeting in Manila, that Malaysia could not be delayed.⁹ The Tunku's sharp comments against Indonesia led to some bitterness in Djakarta where the First Deputy Foreign Minister, Suwito Kusumowidogdo, said he was not optimistic about the coming talks.¹⁰

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See K.G.Tregonning: 'The Claim for North Borneo by the Philippines', Australian Outlook, Dec 1962, pp.283-91; H.B. Jacobini: 'Fundamentals of Philippine Policy Towards Malaysia', Asian Survey, Nov 1964; pp.1144-51; Salvador P. Lopez: 'Malaysia and Maphilindo', Progressive Review (Manila) Jan-Feb 1964, pp. 31-9; J.L.Vellut: 'The Asian Policy of the Philippines' (Ph.D. thesis, ANU, 1964) pp.278-330; Malaya-Philippine Relations (Kuala Lumpur, Department of External Affairs, 1963); Philippine Claim to North Borneo, vol.I (Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1963).

2

Manila Chronicle, 20 Feb 1963.

3

ST, 14 Feb 1963.

4

Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp.15-16. See Chapter Four, infra, p.123 ff.

5

ST, 6 March 1963.

6

Dj. Daily Mail, 11 March 1963.

7

Manila Chronicle, 10 March 1963.

8

Ibid., 28 March 1963.

9

ST, 5 April 1963.

10

Dj. Daily Mail, 2 and 4 April; Indon. Herald, 2 and 3 April 1963.

On 9 April the tripartite meeting of officials took place in Manila, and arranged for a Foreign Ministers' Conference in May to be followed by a summit meeting.¹ However, relations quickly worsened after the meeting, with Sukarno increasing his invective against Malaysia and demanding the postponement of its formation,² and with the commencement of guerrilla raids into Sarawak. The Foreign Ministers' meeting was postponed twice and seemed to have been abandoned when Sukarno invited the Tunku to meet him personally in Tokyo. The Tunku accepted the invitation³ and the two met on 30 May and 1 June. It was reported that Sukarno was again seeking a plebiscite in Borneo⁴ and the postponement of Malaysia,⁵ but the joint communique only envisaged a Foreign Ministers' meeting for 7 June.⁶

The meeting took place 7-11 June at Manila. The 'Manila Accord' which resulted revealed that the three states were considering a 'confederation of nations of Malay origin' which had been proposed by Macapagal in 1962, and that

Indonesia and the Philippines stated that they would welcome the formation of Malaysia provided the support of the people of the Borneo territories is ascertained by an independent and impartial authority, the Secretary General of the United Nations or his representatives. 7

The summit meeting would be held in late July.

For the next month relations between the states were fairly harmonious,⁸ despite the continuation of guerrilla raids into Sarawak. This tranquil atmosphere did not last. On 9 July 1963 in London the Malaysia Agreement was concluded, and allowed for the formation of Malaysia on 31 August 1963.⁹ Sukarno immediately condemned this as a breach of the Manila Accord,¹⁰ the Indonesian

¹ Malaya-Philippine Relations, Appendix V; Problem of Malaysia, p.7.

² Indon.Herald, 12 April, 20 April, 1 May 1963.

³ MPD,HR, 28 May 1963, cols. 375-6.

⁴ ST, 30 May 1963.

⁵ Malaya-Indonesia Relations, p. 16.

⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 57-9.

⁸ ST, 14 June.

⁹ See infra, pp. 92-3.

¹⁰ Indon.Herald, 11 July 1963.

Government arguing that the Tunku 'preferred to turn his back upon his immediate neighbours and brothers and choose to be dictated to by the British Government'.¹ It was viewed as a provocative act on the part of the Tunku who was reported as saying in London that a referendum in Borneo would not be needed.² It thus appeared that the summit meeting might not be held, but despite the bad feeling it opened 30 July 1963.

The reports from the summit meeting indicated that the Tunku was prepared to delay Malaysia in order that the UN might assess Bornean opinion.³ The British were not keen on this proposition,⁴ but U Thant said an assessment could not be made before 31 August.⁵ A compromise formula of a delay without a referendum appears to have been worked out.

On 5 August the summit conference concluded and three documents were issued. In the first the Manila Accord was endorsed. The second, the 'Joint Statement',⁶ allowed that 'prior to the establishment' of Malaysia U Thant should assess the wishes of the Borneo people 'by a fresh approach', particularly by examining the recent election results in the territories. Malaya agreed to ask the UK to allow observers from the three states to accompany the UN team. The statement continued that the Governments

emphasised that the responsibility for the preservation of the national independence of the three countries and of the peace and security in their region lies primarily in the hands of the governments and the peoples of the countries concerned. 7

Within that context they agreed that 'foreign bases - temporary in nature - should not be allowed to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence of any of the three countries'. The third document, the 'Manila Declaration',⁸ emphasised the common ties of race and culture between the states, pledged their

¹ Problem of Malaysia, pp. 9-10.

² Bangkok Post, 12 July.

³ Times, 7 Aug 1963.

⁴ Ibid., 8 Aug 1963.

⁵ Ibid., 12 Aug 1963.

⁶ Malaya-Indonesia Relations, pp. 60-2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 55-6.

mutual cooperation and envisaged 'regular consultations at all levels to be known as *Mushawarah Maphilindo*'.

In the meantime negotiations for the establishment of Malaysia had been proceeding. On 28 February 1963 the report of the Inter-Governmental Committee concerning the proposed terms of entry into Malaysia of the Borneo territories was concluded.¹ Its intention was to include 'safeguards for the special interests of North Borneo and Sarawak to cover such matters as religious freedom, education, representation in the Federal Parliament, position of the indigenous races, control of immigration, citizenship and the State Constitutions'.² Broadly the Borneo states were to receive considerable autonomy. West Malaysia (i.e. Malaya and Singapore) was to help finance their development while they would gain considerable representation in Federal Parliament, Sabah getting sixteen and Sarawak twenty-four seats out of a total of 159. With a combined population rather less than, and a degree of autonomy at least similar to, that of Singapore, the Borneo states' federal representation would be almost three times as great. In both states there seemed to be general satisfaction with the proposed terms.³

Negotiations between Singapore and Malaya presented a more difficult problem. On 28 February 1963 the final stages were begun to settle the financial and economic arrangements. Essentially Singapore wanted a common market and maximum financial autonomy; Kuala Lumpur wanted maximum federal financial control, was less keen on a common market and hoped to get Singapore to help finance Bornean development. After considerable bickering, on 29 May it was agreed that a common market would follow Malaysia.⁴ On 5 July agreement was reached on Singapore's contribution to federal revenues while she agreed to make a loan of \$M150m. to the Borneo states in part interest free.⁵ Singapore had the promise of a future common market, the retention of its free port status and sufficient autonomy to continue its social programmes. Hard bargaining had

¹ Malaysia: Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee (HMSO, London, Cmd. 1954, 1963).

² Ibid., p. 7. See Robert O. Tilman: 'Malaysia: The Problems of Federation', Western Political Quarterly, 1963, pp. 897-911.

³ ST, 30 May 1963.

⁴ ST, 30 May 1963.

⁵ Ibid., 6 July 1963.

won considerable advantages for Singapore.¹

On 9 July the Malaysia Agreement was concluded² and then submitted to the various Parliaments for ratification. In Kuala Lumpur the pre-eminence of the Alliance assured the Agreement's easy passage, despite the united opposition of the other parties.³ Similarly in London little opposition was encountered, the Labour Party having already given its approval of the plan.⁴ Only Fenner Brockway expressed hostility towards Malaysia and on 19 July the Bill was passed without division in the House of Commons.⁵

In Singapore opposition to Malaysia was more widespread, vociferous and radical. The Barisan had condemned Malaysia as 'a feudal state with an imperialist taint'.⁶ In December 1962 the party voiced support for the Brunei rebels.⁷ Less than two months later, the ISC instituted operation 'cold store'. Starting 2 February, 133 people were detained, 107 of them in Singapore,⁸ and ten left wing publications were banned.⁹ The PAP sought to appear a reluctant partner in this venture and indicated that it preferred to wait for Malaysia and then let the federal authorities take full responsibility.¹⁰ The operation undoubtedly weakened the Barisan, the majority of those arrested being party leaders. On 9 April, Lee defended the action by accusing the Barisan of collusion with Azahari and Indonesia to defeat Malaysia by force.¹¹ In his criticism of the action, Dr Lee Siew Choh did little to disprove Lee's accusations.¹²

¹ See statements on negotiations: SLA, Debs, 5 April 1963, col.23 ff; 10 June, col.613 ff; and on agreements: SLA, Debs, 30 July 1963, cols.297-422; 31 July, cols.426-572; 1 Aug, cols.576-718.

² Malaysia: Agreement concluded between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo Sarawak and Singapore (Cmd. 2094, HMSO, London, 1963).

³ MPD, HR, 12 Aug 1963, col.672 ff; 15 Aug 1963, col. 965 ff.

⁴ UKPD, HC, 21 Feb 1963, cols.609-11.

⁵ Ibid., 19 July 1963, col.922 ff.

⁶ Plebian, 3 Nov 1962.

⁷ Ibid., 23 Dec 1962. Hyde: op.cit., pp.61-3, suggests that this was due to the Barisan's opposition to Malaysia rather than support for Azahari.

⁸ SLA, Debs, 5 April 1963, cols. 65-9.

⁹ ST, 5 Feb 1963.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4 Feb 1963; FEEER, 21 Feb 1963, p.249.

¹¹ SLA, Debs, 9-10 April 1963, col.375 ff.

¹² Ibid., cols.394-482.

If 'cold store' weakened the Barisan, it did not eradicate it. The PAP did not hold an overall majority in the Assembly and avoided an overdue by-election which could have left it in a minority. On the issue of Malaysia the party could rely on the support of the minority right wing parties, however, and on 1 August the Malaysia Agreement was ratified by twenty five votes to seventeen, with the People's Alliance abstaining.¹ But the situation was far from stable. The PAP had promised that a general election would follow merger² and the result was difficult to predict. Although Malaysia would not be blocked, the PAP would clearly have to fight hard to regain its Parliamentary ascendancy.

In the Borneo states the position was more complex. Whereas in May 1961 there had been two political parties in Sarawak and none in Sabah, by 1963 the position was markedly different. In Sabah there were four major political parties and in late 1962 they had formed the Sabah Alliance.³ Similarly in Sarawak, PANAS had joined with four newer parties to form the Sarawak Alliance.⁴ Both Alliances favoured Malaysia, approved of the terms suggested by the Inter-Governmental Committee and promised to align with the Malayan Alliance. It was under these circumstances that Sabah and Sarawak were to hold general elections beginning December 1962 and June 1963 respectively. The only party in either state to oppose Malaysia was SUPP;⁵ in Sabah the Alliance faced no opposition.

In both states the electoral system was three-tiered: district representatives were directly elected; they elected members to the Divisional or Residency Councils who in turn elected representatives to the state councils. An overall majority at any level could elect all the members at the next level. In July the results of the elections were made known. In Sabah the Alliance won all the seats in the Legislative Council; in Sarawak the Alliance won nineteen seats, sympathetic independents seven.⁶ The complexity of the electoral process, particularly in Sarawak, makes interpretation of these results difficult.

¹ Ibid., 1 Aug 1963, col.717.

² ST, 26 July 1963.

³ Sabah in Brief (Department of Information, Sabah), p.8.

⁴ Sarawak in Brief (Department of Information, Kuching), p.2.

⁵ SUPP Election Manifesto (Kuching, 1963).

⁶ See Table 12.

Table 12: Election Results In Sarawak, 1963¹A. Direct Representation

	Alliance	PANAS	SUPP	Independents
No. of votes ^a	56,808	28,242	45,493	55,073
Per centage of votes	30.6	15.2	24.0	29.7
No. of District seats	138	59	116	116

^ain contested wardsB. Divisional Representation

	1st (25)				2nd (22)				3rd (27)				4th (22)				5th (12)			
	A	P	S	I	A	P	S	I	A	P	S	I	A	P	S	I	A	P	S	I
Divis- ional Seats	1	11	10	3	19	1	0	2	13	0	8	6	7	0	4	11	0	0	0	12
	[10]				[6]				[11]				[6]				[3]			
Council Negri seats	0	3	5	2	6	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	3

() indicates number of seats in Divisional Council

[] indicates number of members to be elected to Council Negri

C. Total Representation of Parties at Each Level

	Alliance	PANAS	SUPP	Independents
Votes	56,808	28,242	45,493	55,073
District seats	138	59	116	116
Divisional seats	40	12	22	34
CN seats	19	3	5	9

D. Total Representation of Parties at Each Level, by Per Centage

	Alliance	PANAS	SUPP	Independents
Votes ^a	30.6	15.2	24.0	29.7
Votes ^b	34.0	14.3	21.3	27.8
District Councils	32.2	13.8	27.0	27.0
Div. Councils	37.0	11.1	20.4	31.5
Council Negri	52.8	8.3	13.9	25.0

^ain contested wards^bin all wards¹ Sarawak by the Way,Sources: BMN, 26/63, 27/63 and 29/63, and UN Mission Report.

In Sarawak the elections proved to be more complicated than those in Sabah. On 15 April PANAS broke from the Alliance and determined to fight the elections alone.¹ When the composition of the Divisional Councils was announced it was apparent that independents (particularly those in the Third Division) held a determinative position in the election of the Council Negri members.² It also appeared possible that SUPP, the largest single party, might be unrepresented in the state legislature. A period of intense political activity followed.³ SUPP and PANAS formed an electoral coalition, settling their differences on the Malaysia issue by agreeing to the submission of the issue to a UN supervised referendum.⁴ They would thus dominate the First Division and with the assistance of independents might have formed the government.⁵ This situation did not eventuate, for as Table 12 reveals, the majority of the independents sided with the Alliance.

An examination of the results reveals some interesting aspects of the Sarawak elections. There was, as in Malaya, extensive urban (and so Chinese) under-representation.⁶ Kuching for example could well have been unrepresented in the Council Negri. The natives, by virtue of their geographic distribution, dominated the Council. Further it could hardly be claimed that the elections were fought largely on the issue of Malaysia.⁷ Voting was determined by, and parties were the result of, communal affiliations: SUPP emerged as the Chinese party of Sarawak, PANAS represented the Malays of the First and Second Divisions, the Alliance generally

1
Sarawak by the Week, 17/63.

2
See Table 12.

3
Sarawak by the Week, 29/63, 14-20 July 1963.

4
Sarawak Tribune, 2 July 1963.

5
If the six independent representatives in the Third Division had voted with SUPP, the SUPP-PANAS coalition would have had twenty one members in the Council Negri.

6
Edwin Lee: op.cit., p.61; Justin M. van der Kroef: 'Communism and the Guerrilla War in Sarawak', The World Today, Feb 1964, p.55.

7
Starnes: op.cit., p.529; Justin M. van der Kroef: 'Communism and Chinese Communalism in Sarawak', China Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1964, p.48.

the Ibans, and the independents the smaller tribes.¹ That Malaysia was not an all pervading issue was indicated by the SUPP-PANAS coalition. Equally it would be difficult to argue that SUPP's support was a result of its anti-Malaysia policy, for the party had made good use of Chinese concern over the Chinese education system and dissatisfaction among Chinese smallholders at restrictions on Chinese land tenure.

It would appear that voting in both states was largely on a communal pattern.² The traditional (and now political) leaders of the indigenous communities had accepted Malaysia and it might be contended that the elections were irrelevant to the issue. One important difference between the states was revealed: the disaffected Chinese, so widespread in Sarawak, did not exist in Sabah. The Sabahan Chinese party³ formed an integral part of the political system, and radicalism among the Chinese remained negligible. In the light of the experiences of the other states party to the Malaysia plan, this was not an inconsiderable achievement.

It was against this background that the Tunku had concluded the Manila Agreements but his partners in the Malaysia Agreement were far from satisfied with the obligations he had undertaken. It was reported that Britain awaited the Tunku's report with 'puzzled embarrassment'.⁴ Sandys had already indicated that 'we very much take the view that it would be a mistake to delay a new association, which is clearly desired by the peoples...concerned',⁵ and the Commonwealth Relations Office reiterated that 'the British Government would greatly regret delay' in Malaysia's formation.⁶ London was not eager to grant the Tunku's request that it comply with the Manila terms, and wished to avoid a UN investigation, which might

1

See Robert O. Tilman: 'Elections in Sarawak', Asian Survey, Oct 1963, pp.507-18, and 'The Alliance Pattern in Malaysian Politics: Bornean Variations on a Theme', South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol.LXIII, 1964, pp.60-70.

2

For an analysis of Sabahan voting behaviour see Henry Robert Gliok: 'The Chinese Community in Sabah and the 1963 Election', Asian Survey, March 1965, pp.144-51.

3

The Borneo Utara National Party (BUNP).

4

Age, 8 Aug 1963.

5

UKPD,HC, vol.682, 2 Aug 1963, col.794.

6

Times, 5 Aug 1963.

set an awkward precedent for British territories.¹ Shortly after, Britain agreed, stipulating that the UN team be responsible to U Thant and not the General Assembly, that its report require no ratification, and that it be made as quickly as possible.² These terms were fulfilled.³ The British were less pleased than the Malaysians with the results of the Manila summit meeting but both would accept its terms if Indonesian hostility could be curtailed.

The Bornean and Singapore governments were much less willing to accept the Manila formula: they wanted no postponement of Malaysia. Stephen Ningkan, Sarawak's Chief Minister, opposed the UN mission, viewing the elections as a test of Sarawak opinion⁴ and the mission's existence as questioning the legitimacy of his position. Donald Stephens warned Kuala Lumpur that any delay could wreck the Malaysia plan in Borneo.⁵ Lee Kuan Yew went to Kuala Lumpur to prevent a delay in Malaysia,⁶ for under pressure from the Barisan, the PAP was reluctant to make any compromise. In addition, the racial implications of the Maphilindo concept were hardly attractive to the Chinese, and Lee made no secret of this.⁷ But the Tunku firmly asserted that the UN team was to operate, and it seemed likely that a delay in the formation of Malaysia would be necessary.

On 12 August U Thant named his representatives who included members from the Western, communist and Afro-Asian blocs, and Indonesia expressed satisfaction.⁸ On 16 August the mission arrived in Kuching, where it was greeted by anti-Malaysia demonstrations involving some 2,000 Chinese.⁹ It was scheduled to make its investigations from 22 to 31 August. But the hearings were delayed and before their completion two new points of dispute arose.

1
Ibid., 8 Aug 1963.

2
Ibid., 12 Aug 1963.

3
UN Report, p.4.

4
Sarawak by the Week, 32/63, 4-10 Aug 1963, pp.1-5.

5
Ibid..

6
Times, 10 Aug 1963.

7
ST, 14 June 1963.

8
NYT, 14 Aug 1963.

9
Sarawak by the Week, 33/63, 11-17 Aug 1963. p.1.

The Manila Joint Statement had provided that Malaya should ask Britain to allow observers to accompany the UN mission.¹ Kuala Lumpur did not regard this as an integral part of the agreement but acquiesced at Subandrio's insistence.² Djakarta then sought to send thirty observers, a number which the British refused to accept. U Thant offered a compromise of four observers and four clerical assistants which was accepted. There was then a further delay when the British refused to allow the assistants because they were senior officials and, it was contended, intelligence officers. The Malayan Government concurred with the British attitude.³ As a result of this dispute the UN survey did not start until 26 August and then without the observers who only arrived 1 September,⁴ by which time Subandrio had warned that Indonesia would not accept the report without the observers being present.⁵ Sukarno was extremely upset by what he regarded as this slight to Indonesia's standing.⁶

The second difficulty arose over the date for Malaysia Day which the parties to the plan were reluctant to postpone. Lee Kuan Yew visited Borneo to encourage pressure against delay⁷ and on 23 August Ningkan threatened to declare independence on 31 August.⁸ Sandys flew to Kuala Lumpur and conferred with Lee, Stephens, Ningkan and the Tunku, who finally agreed to implement Malaysia on 16 September.⁹ Two Malayan officials went to Djakarta to explain this action but while they were there it was publicly announced.¹⁰ Djakarta denounced this as 'naked defiance of the Manila spirit' and evidence that the UK was controlling events.¹¹ The situation was not improved by Stephens' statement that Malaysia would be implemented no matter what the UN mission reported.¹²

1
Joint Statement: op.cit., para.7.

2
Malaya-Indonesia Relations, p.18.

3
Ibid., p.19; Age, 19 Aug; Nation, 26 Aug; Times, 24 Aug 1963.

4
UN Report, pp.5-12.

5
Age, 20 Aug 1963.

6
See Problem of Malaysia, pp.16-7, and Chapter Four, infra, p.141.

7
Sarawak by the Week, 34/63, 18-24 Aug 1963, p.3.

8
Ibid., p.2.

9
Times, 23, 24 and 29 Aug 1963.

10
Sarawak by the Week, 35/63, 25-31 Aug 1963,

11
Problem of Malaysia, pp.15-16.

12
ST, 30 Aug 1963.

Strictly, the Malayan actions did not contravene the Manila agreement: U Thant said he would report on 14 September, Malaysia would follow two days later. Further, the Malaysia Agreement did require a date to be fixed before 31 August.¹ But the actions did contravene the 'spirit' of Manila as Djakarta was quick to point out.² Kuala Lumpur was caught with two conflicting sets of obligations. More tactful handling of Indonesia might have assuaged Djakarta's hostility but this would have been a difficult course for Malaya to take.³

On 14 September the UN report was made public. On 16 September Malaysia was inaugurated and Djakarta and Manila withheld recognition. Such action on the part of Indonesia had been foreshadowed by Subandrio's accusation that the UN mission was not doing its job properly.⁴ Later he said Indonesia would regard Malaysia as illegal due to 'flaws' in the UN assessment, complaining that the mission's time was too limited, the observers were delayed and Malaysia Day was decided before the report.⁵ Indonesia's ostensible objections thus hinged on opinion in the Borneo states and the inadequacies of the UN report.

The report indicated considerable research and effort on the part of the UN mission but 'its terms of reference were in a very real sense weighted in favour of Malaysia...a report against Malaysia would have required greater justification than a favourable one'.⁶ Its terms of reference had essentially required the mission to examine the 1963 elections in Borneo and base its findings upon them; 'there was no reference to a referendum or a plebiscite'.⁷ It concluded that the elections had been on the whole fairly held, that Malaysia was 'a major issue', and so that a majority of the people favoured the new federation.

1
Malaya-Indonesia Relations, p.19.

2
Indonesian protest note: Age, 4 Sept 1963.

3
The Malayan Government fully appreciated this situation according to senior Malaysian officials in interviews with the author, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

4
Bangkok Post, 7 Sept 1963.

5
Nation, 13 Sept 1963.

6
Francis L. Stamer: op.cit., p.533. See also Emily Sadka: 'Malaysia: The Political Background', in Silcock and Fisk (eds): op.cit., p.33.

7
UN Report, p.ii.

The aide-memoire of the Indonesia observers revealed the nature of Indonesia's objections to the report.¹ It asserted that the mission had assumed that the states had reached 'an advanced stage of self-government', while in the opinion of the observers they were still essentially colonial in character, many people had little idea of what Malaysia was and 'local issues and personal loyalties dominated the elections'.² To that extent 'Malaysia could never have been a major issue...in the recent elections'. The general argument that Malaysia had been forcefully presented to, and so accepted by, the people of Borneo, had some force. The same argument might be applied to the opposition to Malaysia with equal validity. Much of the inspiration for British and Malayan activities in Borneo was paternalistic, but this hardly gave any more force to the Indonesian argument, also paternalistic, that Indonesia could better interpret the desires and interests of the Borneans. In any case later events were to reveal that Indonesian objections to Malaysia were much more extensive and less easily placated than by a Bornean referendum.

U Thant suggested that a delay in the formation of Malaysia and a more rapid granting of facilities to the observers could have avoided the 'resentment' engendered.³ It might be recalled, however, that at no time since April had there been a cessation in the raiding parties entering from Indonesia which Nasution openly admitted were trained by the Indonesians.⁴ The Brunei revolt had heralded the commencement of a period of quite intense diplomatic activity for those governments interested in the formation of Malaysia. In late September the Government of Malaysia had cause to regard the events of the preceding nine months with mixed feelings.

During 1963 the negotiations on Malaysia between those party to the plan had progressed satisfactorily and the various differences had been settled by compromise. Malaysia had come into existence with more widespread support and acceptance from those within its borders than might earlier have been anticipated. The problems presented by Indonesia's opposition to the Federation were less easily resolved. During 1961 and 1962, although both the UK and

1
Problem of Malaysia, pp.48-52.

2
Ibid..

3
UN Report, pp.ii-iii.

4
NYT, 3 Sept 1963.

Malaya had consulted Djakarta, Indonesia had denied that it had any direct interest in the Malaysia plan. The Brunei revolt served to transform that situation. Indonesia's reaction to the revolt was hardly justified. Although Indonesian sympathy for a movement designed to overthrow a highly traditionalist political system and block a Federation apparently opposed by the majority of the people in Brunei may have been predicted, Djakarta's acceptance of Azahari as the popular leader of northwest Borneo seems attributable to more devious motives. It is at least possible that Indonesia helped instigate the revolt. If Azahari had been accepted as a popular leader only in Brunei, confrontation against Malaysia could not have been justified in the same terms, particularly after Brunei did not join the Federation. It would seem that Azahari's revolt provided the occasion not the cause for Indonesian policy.

Indonesia's contention that Bornean opinion had not been properly consulted is more difficult to deal with. In politically primitive conditions it is difficult to define what proper consultation amounts to.¹ Despite the reservations which may be expressed about the findings of the Cobbold Commission, the elections and the UN Report, Malaysia does seem to have been acceptable to most Borneans providing their conditions were met. In 1963 their conditions were met.²

It was largely on these grounds that Indonesia demanded to be consulted in 1963. At that time the advanced stage of the Malaysia negotiations prevented Kuala Lumpur from pursuing a completely flexible policy. It would have been difficult for Malaya to have made the considerable concessions which would have been required to make Indonesia's acceptance of the new Federation even possible. In any case the inauguration of military confrontation in Borneo did little to encourage Malaya to attempt to mollify Indonesia. Although the British may have been unnecessarily awkward during the observers' dispute, the reasons for the difficulties involved in further delaying the formation of Malaysia may be appreciated. It would seem that the parties to the Malaysia plan had adequately satisfied Indonesia's demands to be consulted on the matter.

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A senior Australian Government official informed the author that the Indonesians were well aware of the opportunities for predetermining election results in primitive areas. He said that Nasution had told him, 'we've had elections here you know', interview, Sydney, February 1967.

2

The Indonesian argument might have been better applied to Singapore, but in 1963 it was not. See Chapter Five, infra, pp.167-9.

Indonesian policy was attributable to other motives, however, particularly the attraction of confrontation for certain political groups and the opportunity it offered for Indonesia to assert her new-found power. It seems that Malaysia was unacceptable to Indonesia on any terms other than the tacit recognition of Indonesia's dominance of the region. During the next two years this was to become clearer.

CHAPTER FOUR

Australia, Malaysia and Confrontation.

In order to assess Australian policy towards Indonesia's confrontation of the states party to the Malaysia plan, it is necessary to examine aspects of Australian foreign policy from 1959 to 1962. Although some attention was paid during that period to events in Singapore and Malaya, Australia was most concerned with Indonesia's efforts to establish its control of West Irian. Canberra's policy towards both these areas reflected the Australian strategy of defence in depth. Australia was apprehensive at any indication of 'instability'¹ in Southeast Asia, anxious that no Government sympathetic to communism, and particularly to China, should establish itself in the area, and was determined to maintain a forward defence perimeter. These attitudes were largely a function of Australia's fear of Chinese expansion. A barrier between Australia and China should if possible be established, a barrier made stronger if reinforced by the forces of America and Britain.

The states of Malaysia and Singapore had long held a key position in Australian defence strategy. The debacle of 1942 had only modified that situation. At the time of the Tunku's merger proposal, Malaya contained the only significant Australian military establishment overseas:² its presence was dependent on the Malayan Government's willingness to accept it. The Australian forces had come to be regarded as a de facto SEATO reserve to be used against communist aggression; their operations against the Malayan terrorists had become incidental to this major function. They were an integral part of Australia's strategic contribution to the containment of China. Australian policy towards the Malaysia plan was formulated with this strategy in mind.

During its years of opposition, the PAP had been regarded by many observers as a party of the extreme left with at least ideological sympathy for China.³ Differences between the 'moderates' and 'extremists' within the party were neither so obvious nor so great as they were later to become. The English educated leadership

¹ I.e. any threatened alteration in the status quo detrimental to Australian interests.

² Consisting in August 1962 of 2,838 men (statement by Townley, CPD,HR, vol.36, 7 Aug 1962, p.76).

³ See Chapter Two, supra.

flaunted its hostility to European colonialism and its intention to oust the British political and military presence from the island.¹ The PAP's overwhelming victory in the 1959 election was regarded with some apprehension in Australia. The Bulletin feared that the PAP was controlled by 'young hot-heads' and that its victory 'represents another advance of the iron curtain towards us. Singapore has retired to the fringes of the communist jungle'.² The Government appears to have been of a similar frame of mind, although in public Ministers expressed it less openly.³ One ex-member of the Department of External Affairs has reported that the Australian representatives in Singapore refused to have any contact with the PAP.⁴ Canberra feared a pro-Peking Government in Singapore, and the eviction of the British bases from the island which might result.⁵

The PAP soon showed that such Australian evaluations of its position and intentions were inaccurate. The party's leadership expressed its willingness to allow the British bases to remain, and revealed that it had no intention of establishing a communist Singapore. From being seen as a possible outpost of Peking, the PAP Government came to be regarded in Australia as the last hope in a state vital to Australia's forward defence perimeter: its collapse would lead to a communist, or at best an anti-Western Government.⁶ Menzies reported, after having talks with the PAP, that the party was more 'moderate' than had been anticipated.⁷ The apprehension with which Australia had greeted the PAP Government may be contrasted with the satisfaction it expressed on the return of the Alliance to power in Kuala Lumpur.⁸

¹ James Mossman in SMH, 17 Feb 1959.

² Bulletin, 10 June 1959.

³ SMH, 1 June 1959, for statements by Casey and McEwen on the PAP's electoral victory. See also P.J. Boyce: 'Australia and Malaya: A Preliminary Study in Commonwealth Relations, 1941-61' (Ph.D. thesis Duke University, 1961) pp.83-4 and 210-11.

⁴ Gregory Clark: 'Is Asian Communism a Threat to Australia?', in J. Wilkes (ed): Communism in Asia, pp.142-3.

⁵ See Henry S. Albinski: 'Australia's Defence Enigma', Orbis, Winter 1961, p.463.

⁶ SMH, 6 June; Denis Warner in Melbourne Herald, 10 June; Sydney Daily Telegraph, 11 June; G.L. Pleet in West Australian, 18 and 19 June; Nation, 20 June.

⁷ GED, HR, vol.24, 13 Aug 1959, p.191.

⁸ Adelaide News, 20 Aug; Hobart Mercury, Adelaide Advertiser, SMH, 21 Aug 1959. Compare the official reports of the two elections: CNIA, Aug 1959, pp.377-82 for Singapore, and CNIA, Sept 1959, pp.475-81 for Malaya.

By 1960 Australia had accepted that the PAP was not a security threat, although it was still thought that threats to Australian interests could emanate from the island. In March 1960 the official Australian publication, Current Notes, published one of Lee Kuan Yew's speeches in which he claimed to be a 'revolutionary' inasmuch as he sought a radical transformation of Singapore's society. But he was not a Marxist, he said, and looked mainly to private enterprise for the development of the state's economy.¹ In July the same journal published an article on 'The State of Singapore' which may be taken to reflect official opinion on the subject. It accepted that the PAP leadership was non-communist and did not intend to oust the British base. Its tone was moderately pro-PAP.²

The challenge to the PAP leadership in 1961 was greeted with some consternation in Australia. The press was particularly concerned at the effect which this could have on the British bases.³ The Tunku's merger proposal, though viewed sympathetically, also aroused some anxiety that restrictions might be placed on the use of the Commonwealth forces stationed in Malaya.⁴ Previously such restrictions could be circumvented by regrouping these forces in Singapore.⁵ The communique which followed the Tunku's talks with the British Government in London November 1961, was greeted with some relief.⁶ It appeared that the Commonwealth forces in both Malaya and Singapore would be unaffected by merger. Malaysia would continue to provide an effective barrier against communism, housing a mobile British and Commonwealth force.

The Australian Government's reaction was little different from that of the press. No official statement was made for some months after the Tunku's original proposal, Canberra preferring to await the announcement of specific arrangements before revealing its evaluation of the situation. On 17 November 1962, following the Tunku's departure for London, Menzies revealed that 'the Australian Government was greatly interested in the concept of

¹
CNLA, March 1960, pp.143-5.

²
Ibid., July 1960, pp.301-7.

³
Melbourne Herald, 15 July; Bruce Grant: Age, 18 July; Douglas Wilkie: Melbourne Sun-News Pictorial, 18 July; West Australian, 24 July 1961.

⁴
Age, Melbourne Herald, J.A.C. Mackie: Nation, 23 Sept; SMH, Hobart Mercury, 3 Oct; Brisbane Courier-Mail, 4 Oct; West Australian, 9 Oct; Adelaide News, 16 Oct; SMH, Melbourne Herald, 18 Oct; West Australian, 22 Nov 1961.

⁵
See Chapter Three, supra.

⁶
SMH, Brisbane Courier-Mail, Hobart Mercury, Melbourne Herald, 24 Nov; Age, Adelaide Advertiser, 27 Nov; Sydney Daily Mirror, 30 Nov.

Greater Malaysia. If it proved practicable, it would contribute significantly to stability and progress in an area in whose development and progress Australia was deeply interested'.¹ On 25 November, following the London communique,² Menzies issued a less reticent statement;

We have throughout indicated our belief that the concept was a very good one and we hope it will include all the countries originally indicated by the Tunku. We know that the question of the use of the Singapore base is a very important one and we have emphasised this. Having been in close touch we welcome the agreement now made. We hope that the Malaysia proposal will reach full achievement as soon as possible. As in the case of the Malayan Defence Agreement of 1957...we will give consideration to Australia's association with the new agreement in appropriate form. 3

These two statements revealed Australian policy at that time. Canberra had been careful not to commit itself until British policy was both clearly defined and public. The London communique showed that Britain was fully committed to the Tunku's plan and willing and able to continue to use the British bases at Singapore.⁴ These assurances helped allay any Australian anxieties.⁵ The Australian Government was aware that the formation of the proposed federation was likely to involve considerable difficulties but felt that it should not be unduly delayed. This was for two broad reasons: it estimated that internal opposition might thus be minimised and that Indonesia, while concerned with West Irian, would be less likely to prove obstructionist, although in late 1961 the latter consideration was not foremost in the Government's mind.⁶ The Malaysia plan was attractive for Canberra because it seemed likely to prevent the eviction of the British from Singapore, to prevent an extension of Chinese or communist influence in the region by placing Chinese radical groups under the control of the pro-Western Malayan Alliance Government, and to enable Australia to continue in its forward

¹ CNIA, Nov 1961, p.14.

² See Chapter Three, supra, pp.67-8.

³ CNIA, Nov 1961, p.14.

⁴ This was reaffirmed in the 1962 British Defence White Paper (HMSO, London, Cnd. 1639) and by the British Defence Minister, Harold Watkinson, in talks with Townley, CPD,HR, vol.34, 27 March 1962, p.941.

⁵ It is to be borne in mind that in mid-1961 Britain had announced her intention to seek membership of the EEC, causing some apprehension in Australia that Britain might withdraw from Southeast Asia. With the French veto of January 1963 the fear abated, but the possibility had been raised. See H.G.Gelber: Australia, Britain and the EEC, (OUP, Melbourne, 1966).

⁶ Interviews with Australian Government officials, Canberra, July 1966, and Sydney, Feb 1967.

defence policy by continuing to provide a forward base from which her forces could operate.

During 1962 there seemed no reason for Australia to alter this assessment: the wishes of the peoples of Borneo and Singapore were investigated, Indonesia was consulted and Australia was adequately informed of the plan's progress. Canberra could only complain that progress was too slow,¹ but the parties principal to the affair were concerned to ensure that the preparations were adequate. On 21 August 1962 Sir Garfield Barwick, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, returned from overseas and reported to Parliament on talks he had in Malaya. He was clearly satisfied with the assurances he received from the Tunku and Razak 'of the Federation's continued wish to see Commonwealth forces stationed in Malaya', adding that the Government was following the Malaysia negotiations 'with sympathetic interest'.² Only a short time later, the train of events sparked by the Brunei revolt necessitated a reassessment in Canberra. But Australia's reaction to Indonesia's inauguration of confrontation against the Malaysia plan cannot be adequately examined without a review of Australia's policy towards the West Irian dispute.

Australian policy towards Indonesia from the time that the latter achieved independence until 1962 was dominated by the West Irian issue.³ During the Indonesian revolt against the Dutch, particularly 1945-9, the Australian Labor Government had moved from a policy of passive sympathy to one of active diplomatic support for the nationalists.⁴ This was largely for ideological and sentimental

1 Interviews with Australian Government officials, Canberra, July 1966, and Sydney, Feb 1967.

2 CNIA, Aug 1962, p.61 (Barwick's report tabled in Parliament). See also statements by Barwick, CNIA, Aug 1962, p.81, and CPD,HR, vol.36, 18 Oct 1962, p.1769.

3 See Chapter Three, supra. A most thorough and critical analysis of Australian policy is to be found in J.A.C. Mackie: 'Australia and Indonesia, 1945-60', Chapter VI in G.Greenwood and N.Harper (eds): Australia in World Affairs, 1956-60. Mackie comments that 'Australia's overall policy towards Indonesia cannot be disentangled from her West New Guinea policy' (p.283).

4 See Mackie: op.cit., pp.275-8; Albinski: 'Australia's Search for Security', pp.222-34; Sissons and Harper: op.cit., p.283; Beverley M.Male: 'Australia and the Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1942-45' (M.A. (preliminary) thesis, ANU, 1965).

reasons but also out of strategic consideration: the Dutch had presented no barrier to a southward military thrust against Australia, whereas the Indonesians might. But the continuing Dutch control of West Irian after 1949 was to cloud the good relations Canberra had established with Djakarta.¹ The strength of Indonesian feeling on the West Irian issue has already been referred to:² a similar feeling, for different reasons, existed in Australia. The Menzies Government was less sympathetic than the ALP with Indonesian aspirations at large, but both desired to prevent Indonesian control of the territory.³ Undoubtedly 'purely domestic considerations of sentiment'⁴ affected this policy but Australia's concern for defence in depth was also influential. New Guinea was not the outer defence perimeter but the last barrier before Australia, or so the Japanese advance had seemed to indicate. In 1950 Spender had reported that a military evaluation had declared New Guinea to be 'an absolutely essential link in the chain of Australian defence'.⁵ Because of this, asserted Spender, Australia had a right to be consulted on matters concerning the future political status of the island:

any arrangement which would alter the status of New Guinea...is no longer one merely for those two parties themselves....New Guinea is of vital importance to our security. It would, we think, be both unreal and unreasonable that any change in the status of the territory should occur which disregards the interests of the indigenous population and those of Australia. 6

While the Dutch were prepared to retain control of West Irian, Australia would support their policy.

1

It is possible that Australia encouraged the separation of West Irian from Indonesia at the Round Table Conference held in 1949 which led to Indonesian independence.

2

See Chapter Three, supra, pp.62-3.

3

CPD,HR, vol.208, 8 June 1950, p.3975 (Evatt), and 23 March 1950, p.1176 (Calwell).

4

Mackie: op.cit., p.272. Mackie quotes one politician, Senator O'Sullivan, as saying 'New Guinea has been sanctified by the blood and bones of our gallant boys who died there....That area is sacred to Australia', CPD,Senate, vol.202, 13 June 1950, p.4062.

5

CPD,HR, vol.206, 9 March 1950, p.633.

6

Statement of 8 June 1950, CNIA, June 1950, pp.292-3. See also H.A.W.: 'The Indonesian Claim To New Guinea', Australia's Neighbours, July 1950.

Throughout the 1950s, Australia's attitude towards West Irian changed little.¹ Efforts were made to prevent Indonesia from taking the dispute to the UN, and when the matter did reach the General Assembly, Australia opposed Djakarta's claim.² Canberra made no secret of its moral support for the Dutch.³ By the end of the decade Australia still considered New Guinea to be a vital factor in its security,⁴ as Subandrio appears to have been told in Canberra in 1959.⁵ But by that stage the character of the dispute had changed and Dutch-Indonesian relations approached a nadir as both parties tenaciously clung to their positions. In 1957 Indonesia seized Dutch property and severed diplomatic relations. In 1960, after the Dutch had announced a plan allowing for the independence of West Irian in ten years,⁶ Indonesian leaders began to talk openly of a 'rebellion' to liberate the territory.⁷ During a visit to Indonesia at that time Khrushchev voiced support for Indonesia's pursuing a more active policy.⁸ The Dutch were sufficiently concerned to send reinforcements to the area⁹ and the Defence Minister, Visser, hinted that the Netherlands would receive 'international support' against the Indonesians.¹⁰ With Indonesians increasingly infiltrating into West Irian,¹¹ it seemed likely that the degree of Australian support for the Dutch would be tested.

1

R.G. Casey: Friends and Neighbours, pp.136-45.

2

SMH, 4 Oct 1955 for Casey's activities; for Australian voting in the UN on the issue see statement by Barwick, CPD,HR, vol.35, 2 May 1962, p.1894.

3

See CNIA, Nov 1957, pp.882-3, for text of Australian-Netherlands administrative agreement on New Guinea.

4

See discussion in J.Andrews: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January to June 1958', AJPH, Nov 1958, pp.25-7; statement by Casey, External Affairs Press Release, no.124, 25 Oct 1958.

5

CNIA, Feb 1959, pp.81-89.

6

Age, 26 Feb 1960.

7

SMH, 29 Feb 1960.

8

Ibid..

9

Ibid., 7 April 1960.

10

Ibid., 12 May 1960.

11

Ibid., 18 Aug 1960.

During 1961 Indonesian military pressure mounted, and on 19 December Sukarno spoke of liberating West Irian by force.¹ The US, previously neutral and apparently uninterested, offered to mediate in the dispute and a settlement was negotiated in August 1962 largely on Indonesia's terms. Where diplomacy had failed, Indonesian military and diplomatic pressure against the Dutch had succeeded. Australia had played no significant role in the resolution of the dispute. In view of the long interest shown by Australia in the West Irian issue, this requires some explanation.

In 1959 Subandrio had visited Australia and the communique issued on his departure gave rise to speculation that Australia had changed its policy towards West Irian. The communique stated that 'if any agreement were reached between the Netherlands and Indonesia as parties principal, arrived at by peaceful processes and in accordance with internationally accepted principles, Australia would not oppose such an agreement'.² But as Subandrio reaffirmed at that time that Indonesia would not use force,³ and Menzies stated that Australia would not urge the Dutch to negotiate,⁴ Canberra's position remained in fact unaltered. The Government did recognise, however, that if the Dutch did decide to transfer the territory, 'what could or would an Australian government do, except recognise the new sovereignty as lawful?'⁵ In April 1961 Nasution visited Canberra with the avowed intention of seeking Australian neutrality in the dispute. The Government adopted a similar posture and declared that it would recognise any settlement peacefully negotiated without the use of force.⁶ It seemed unlikely that the Dutch would leave New Guinea under such conditions.

In December 1961, following a narrow win at the general election, Menzies appointed Sir Garfield Barwick as Minister for External Affairs. On 4 January 1962 Barwick issued his first public statement on the West Irian dispute and emphasised that 'there was no present occasion for inflammatory or exaggerated statements as

1

Ibid., 20 Dec 1961. See also Subandrio, Age, 21 and 22 Dec.

2

Casey-Subandrio joint communique, 15 Feb 1959, CNIA, Feb 1959, p.82.

3

CNIA, Feb 1959, p.82 and p.96.

4

CPD,HR, vol.22, 24 Feb 1959, p.194.

5

Ibid., p.196 (Menzies).

6

Statement by Menzies, 27 April, CNIA, April 1961, pp.50-4.

to the effect of the dispute on Australia'. He added that he saw 'no evidence whatever of any present threat to Australia or to any Australian territorial interest'.¹ A week later, on 12 January, the Prime Minister took a similar attitude. He explained that Cabinet had examined a review of the subject by Barwick and considered 'we are not a party principal to this dispute...our great desire is for a peaceful settlement'.² These two statements gave rise to the suspicion in the press that the Government had changed the emphasis of Australian policy and was prepared to accept Indonesian control of West Irian without demur: the press was not sympathetic.³

The Government was aware that such a change in posture would bring public disapproval. According to one observer, in January 1962 'certain Australian journalists were privately called in by a minister, or ministers, and asked not to overdo the dispute before the public, since it was probably only a matter of time before the inevitable transfer would be effected'.⁴ On 23 January the Melbourne Herald reported that the Government had changed its policy. The paper ignored the confidential nature of the briefing 'by a minister, or ministers'; as a result that briefing proved to be counterproductive and even greater attention was paid to the subject of West Irian. The following day most other papers carried the report, and it was felt that Barwick had introduced a new aspect to Australian policy.⁵ Although Barwick denied this, he did reaffirm that 'the ultimate resolution of the matter is one for the parties themselves'.⁶ Following this episode Australia made little effort to influence the course of the dispute, reiterating that she was 'not a party principal in that matter'.⁷

There seems little doubt that at about the time that Barwick took office the tone if not the substance of Australian policy changed. Although by 1961, as shown by Menzies' talks with Nasution,

¹
CNIA, Jan 1962, pp.40-1.

²
Ibid., pp.41-2.

³
SMH, 5 Jan and 13 Jan.

⁴
Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China, p.196. An interview in Sydney, February 1967, with a prominent official at that time substantiated this account.

⁵
Mercury, West Australian, Courier-Mail, 24 Jan. 1962.

⁶
Statement of 25 Jan, CNIA, Jan 1962, p.42.

⁷
CPD,HR, vol.34, 1 March 1962, p.410 (Menzies).

Australia was stressing less her own strategic interests and more the wishes of the Papuans and her own desire for a peaceful solution, she remained pro-Dutch. With the Dutch committed to a policy of self-determination for the territory and refusing to negotiate their own withdrawal, Australian policy in fact supported the Netherlands. Menzies had made it clear that Canberra would not ask the Dutch to negotiate. But on 30 December 1961 Barwick sent a letter to both parties urging them to negotiate.¹ This, coupled with the tone of the subsequent statements, indicated that Canberra had adopted the posture of benevolent neutrality towards Indonesian policy which Nasution had sought.

Australia's preparedness to accept the incorporation of West Irian into Indonesia may be attributed to a number of factors. Whether Australia's military appraisal of the significance of New Guinea altered between 1950 and 1962 is open to conjecture, but a comparison of Spender's statements in 1950 with that of Barwick on 4 January 1962 would appear to indicate that it had. But perhaps more importantly the strategic situation had altered. Barwick argued that, 'From Australia's point of view, the most important change in the world situation since the war has been the emergence of Communist China'.² Indications that Djakarta was becoming more friendly with the communist powers were regarded with some trepidation in Australia. Barwick warned:

we must not lose sight of our major interest in reducing the spread of communism to our north west...and extending our friendship with the people of Indonesia...both peoples we would hope [are] bent on arresting the southward thrust of Communism. 3

It was in Australian interests to prevent Indonesia from depending on communist support for the success of her West Irian policy. As Nation had earlier pointed out, while 'New Guinea is strategically important to this country [Australia]...the friendship of Indonesia is a matter of life or death'.⁴ But perhaps most importantly, as

¹ CPD,HR, vol.34, 15 March 1962, p.903 (Statement by Barwick).

² Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, CNIA, June 1962, p.37.

³ CPD,HR, vol.34, 15 March 1962, p.908.

⁴ Nation, 1 Feb 1961. Subandrio had made this point earlier: 'Once Australia realises that Indonesia as a whole is more important than a Netherlands colonial enclosure in West Irian, then I think we will have achieved our aim', quoted in B.Beddie: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, July-December 1957', AJPH, May 1958, p.145.

Barwick later admitted, 'in a real sense that result [Indonesia's absorption of West Irian] was beyond our control'.¹ This impotency was a function of Australia's isolation from her major allies, the UK and the US. The former appears to have been largely uninterested in the dispute; the latter was prepared to sponsor a settlement satisfactory to Indonesia, presumably with a view to avoiding Djakarta's alienation from the West.²

The repercussions of the West Irian dispute in Australia affected the country's reaction to Indonesia's proclamation of opposition to Malaysia. Undoubtedly 'feelings of outraged nationalism'³ pervaded the country, and criticisms of the Government's accommodation of Indonesia were widespread.⁴ Such attacks were often anti-Indonesian in character and suspicions were voiced that Indonesia's expansionist mood would not be assuaged by the annexation of West Irian.⁵ Australia's inaction was widely attributed to US pressure:⁶ it seemed unlikely that Canberra would again so lightly adopt a position of diplomatic isolation. Finally, the dispute and its ramifications were influential in emphasising to Australia its lack of military preparedness.⁷ On 24 October Townley announced a new defence programme involving increased defence expenditure, and hinted that further increases might follow.⁸ Whether with justification or not, by late 1962 Indonesia had taken on in Australia the role of a prospective threat. It was with that legacy of the West Irian dispute that Australia greeted the Brunei revolt. As one commentator observed,

¹
CPD,HR, vol.36, 21 Aug 1962, p.517.

²
Australian Government officials have confirmed this point in confidential interviews. The thesis is developed further, infra, pp.138-9, and in Chapter Six.

³
Charles Grimshaw: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1962', AJPH, Nov 1962, p.141.

⁴
Sydney Sun-Herald, 2 Aug; SMH, 5 Aug; SMH, 20 Aug 1962; CPD,HR, vol.36, 23 Aug 1962, p.671 (Kent Hughes).

⁵
CPD,HR, vol.36, 3 Oct 1962, p.1125 (Clyde Cameron), and p.1321 (Bury).

⁶
See Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China, p.196; Grimshaw: op.cit., p.142; CPD,HR, vol.36, 16 Oct 1962, p.1548 (Barnes).

⁷
See D.W.Rawson: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, July-December 1962', AJPH, May 1963, p.84; SMH, 15-19 Oct 1962; CPD,HR, vol.34, 7 March 1962, pp.586-8 (Daly); vol.35, 15 May 1962, p.2352; vol.37, 5 Dec 1962, p.2917; and debate on Townley's statement, vol.37, 25 Oct 1962, pp.1943-2014.

⁸
CPD,HR, vol.37, 24 Oct 1962, pp.1877-84.

Unfortunately for the Indonesian image in Australia, Djakarta embarked on her 'confrontation' with Malaya at the very time when wide segments of official opinion in the country [Australia] were somewhat sceptical of Soekarno's bona fides in West Irian and somewhat ashamed of Australia's ready accommodation of Soekarno's victory there. 1

It was apparent that Canberra would need to clarify Australian policy towards Indonesia, particularly in relation to those areas most likely to cause friction between the two states: Malaysia and New Guinea. The first nine months of 1963 witnessed the efforts of the Australian Government to define its position, from the beginning of confrontation until the unilateral Australian declaration of support for Malaysia. The period brought a new interest in what was thought to be the inadequacy of Australia's defence establishment; it also saw the growth of anti-Indonesian sentiment. Both became important electoral issues, a fact soon recognised by Government and Opposition alike. As the Sydney Morning Herald, Australia's most consistently anti-Indonesian paper,² pointed out:

There is a certain irony in the prospect that the Australian Government, which repeatedly proclaimed the impossibility of raising a finger to resist Indonesian expansionism on Australia's own borders, may find itself committed to supplying military forces to resist Indonesian expansion in Borneo. 3

In fact it was only after two years of hesitation that the Australian Government committed combat forces to the defence of eastern Malaysia.

Before formulating its policy the Australian Government clearly needed to assess the policies of those four countries which were, for Canberra, most immediately concerned with confrontation: Malaya, Indonesia, the UK, and the USA. The two months following Subandrio's announcement of confrontation⁴ were taken up with this task.

The first Australian approach was made, perhaps necessarily, in Djakarta. The Australian Ambassador, Mr Shann, had an hour-long interview with the Indonesian Foreign Minister on 10 February. Little was said following this discussion, although both men confirmed that 'cordial relations' existed between their countries.⁵

1 P.J.Boyce: 'Canberra's Malaysia Policy', Australian Outlook, Aug 1963, p.149.

2 Ibid., p.150.

3 SMH, 29 Jan 1963.

4 Indon.Herald, 23 Jan 1963.

5 Ibid., 11 Feb. Interview with Australian Government official, Canberra, July 1966.

The tone of the interview may have been a little stronger in view of Subandrio's statement at a press conference two days later: 'if we have a common land frontier with a federation that is hostile towards us, the possibility of physical conflict would be difficult to avoid. I do not mean war but incidents - incidents of physical conflict'.¹ This received hostile publicity in Australia.² The Melbourne Age, which had been disposed to view Indonesian intentions with some sympathy,³ commented that Subandrio's 'veiled references to conflict will cause concern in Australia, which has every reason to support our Commonwealth neighbours over Malaysia'.⁴ There is little reason to believe the Government reacted differently. By mid-February Indonesia's position had thus been clarified.

In Washington the Malaysia project attracted little attention while it progressed smoothly during 1961 and 1962. Indonesian hostility towards the planned federation presented the State Department with some difficulties, as the Administration attached some importance to maintaining friendly relations with Djakarta. In Australia there was some fear that the US would attach more importance to her connections with Indonesia than to the needs of Australian policy, as appeared to have happened in the West Irian dispute. The Canberra correspondent of the Economist expressed the view that 'no Indonesian regime short of a blatantly communist one would earn active American hostility, no matter what harm it did to national Australian interests'.⁵ The first indication that Washington might be better disposed to support Malaysia than it had been to support the Dutch in West Irian, was a statement by the State Department press officer, Lincoln White. He said that the US 'would hope to see progress toward the Federation of Malaysia... [which] is the best means for promoting the political and economic progress of the people involved, while bringing an orderly conclusion to colonialism in the area'.⁶ There were also indications that outside the Administration American opinion was becoming more hostile

1
ST, 12 Feb.

2
Melbourne: Herald, 12 Feb; SMH, 13 Feb; ~~WA~~ West Australian, 14 Feb.

3
Boyce: op.cit., p.150.

4
Age, 13 Feb.

5
Economist, 12 Jan 1963; also SMH, 15 Feb; Coral Bell: 'Australia and the American Alliance', The World Today, June 1963, pp.305-6.

6
Times, 30 Jan 1963.

towards Indonesia. A New York Times editorial expressed the view that

the Sukarno Government, having achieved big power military status through Russian arms aid...is now as irresponsible as it is ambitious....The best hope for stability in the area lies in the British-Malayan plan. 1

Official American policy was still unclear, however, when on 13 February 1963 it was announced in Canberra that the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Sir Arthur Tange, was to go to the United States. The official reason given for the trip was that Tange would confer with the Australian delegation to the United Nations.² In view of the short notice involved and the fact that Tange's itinerary included meetings with Dean Rusk, Averell Harriman and David Bell, a senior foreign aid administrator, the Australian press assumed that he was to seek American views on Indonesia's confrontation policy and possibly to urge the United States to declare its support for Malaysia.³ The Government made no effort to deny this.⁴ Almost simultaneously the American position was apparently clarified. At a press conference on 14 February President Kennedy was asked to explain American policy towards Malaysia. He replied: 'We have supported the Federation of Malaysia and it is under pressure from several areas. But I am hopeful it will sustain itself because it is the best hope of security for that very vital part of the world'.⁵ This statement was well-received in Australia where apprehensions were beginning to be felt that Indonesian policy towards northern Borneo might be duplicated in New Guinea.⁶ Within days there were further reports that the US Ambassador in Malaya had re-affirmed American support for Malaysia⁷ and that the Australian Minister for the Navy, Senator Gorton, then in Washington, had received similar assurances.⁸

1
NYT, 6 Feb.

2
Age, 14 Feb.

3
Age, 15 Feb. This interpretation was verified by a senior Government official in an interview with the author, Sydney, February 1967.

4
Boyce: op.cit., p.152.

5
NYT, 15 Feb 1963.

6
SMH, 20 Feb; Age, 19 Feb; Ad.News, 25 Feb; Advertiser, 22 Feb.

7
ST, 20 Feb.

8
Age, 20 Feb.

Despite these assurances it seemed unlikely that America would willingly provide Malaysia with military support. There had already been press reports that the US wanted her allies to play a greater role in Southeast Asia and sought to limit her own burdens.¹ On 24 February 1963 a US Senate report on the region was published which added credence to such views. Although not a statement of official policy, the report's compilers were influential, including the Democratic leader, Senator Mansfield. In the event it appears to have anticipated US policy fairly accurately. Its main theme was that the United States should try to reduce its heavy military burdens in the area and seek greater aid and cooperation from its allies.² In this vein were the report's recommendations for US policy towards Malaysia:

The general principle of strict non-involvement... would appear to apply to the emerging Malaysian Federation...it would seem to be desirable...to continue to maintain the position of non-involved cordiality...there can be no justification for the kind of one-sided aid involvement which has appeared elsewhere...[any complications] would appear to involve in the first instance the Commonwealth nations. 3

The following month the Clay Committee report on foreign aid also argued that the UK should assume primary responsibility for new Commonwealth nations.⁴ The Sydney Morning Herald termed the Mansfield report 'a rather tepid blessing' for Malaysia.⁵ An Australian academic observer was more specific, noting that

the Americans have reinforced the limited quality of the alliance [with Australia] by their policy towards...Malaysia...[the US] will not enter into the argument over the Borneo territories if she can avoid doing so. 6

1
West Australian, 14 Feb; Sydney Sun, 19 Feb.

2
NYT, 12 March.

3
Vietnam and Southeast Asia: Report of Senators Mansfield, Boggs, Pell and Smith to the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (88th Congress, 1st Session, February 1963) p.17.

4
Complete Report of Clay Committee, (USIS, American Embassy, Canberra) p.6.

5
SMH, 27 Feb.

6
Coral Bell; *op.cit.*, pp.305-6.

But if Washington was reluctant to support Malaysia, American sympathy for Indonesia was also declining. The Clay Committee reported on that country that 'we do not see how external assistance can be granted to this nation...unless it puts its internal house in order...and refrains from international adventures'.¹ This strand in US policy was to become progressively stronger, as one American commentator anticipated:

We are deeply concerned to see that a flanking movement shall not develop around our...position in South Viet Nam, and...we consider the best way of forestalling this is for Malaysia to be a success...[it is] primarily a British responsibility. But if attacked ...the U.S. would cease any and all aid to that [attacking] nation. 2

By March 1963 America was chiefly concerned with Vietnam and wished to avoid an open breach with Indonesia, but Washington would lend moral support to the Malaysia plan as long as the Commonwealth nations accepted primary responsibility for its success. This was a role that the British were prepared to accept, as firm statements by Mr Thorneycroft, the Minister for Defence,³ and Sir Richard Hull, Chief of the Imperial General Staff,⁴ had indicated. There was little opposition in Britain to this policy.

In late February discussions were held between the ANZAM powers in Canberra at a military level.⁵ Shortly before, it had been announced that Lord Selkirk, British Commissioner-General in Southeast Asia, and Mr Critchley, the Australian High Commissioner to Malaya, would visit Canberra in early March for consultations with the Australian Government.⁶ Having assessed the views of its major ally, the US, and of the potential protagonist Indonesia, Canberra was preparing to evaluate its policy in consultation with Malaysia's prospective guarantor. As the Brisbane Courier Mail pointed out:

The Federal Government...is very conscious of the need to remain friendly with Indonesia. Obviously, as in the case of the Dutch and West New Guinea, it will be the United States' attitude that will count most. 7

¹
Clay Committee, p.6.

²
Hamilton Fish Armstrong: 'The Troubled Birth of Malaysia', Foreign Affairs, July 1963, p.693.

³
UKPD,HC, vol.670, 28 Jan 1963, cols.580-6.

⁴
Times, 22 Feb.

⁵
East Australian, 2 March; Age, 4 March.

⁶
SMH, 26 Feb.

⁷
Brisbane Courier-Mail, 25 Feb.

By early March both these factors seemed to indicate that a cautious policy on the part of the Australian Government towards Indonesia's confrontation of the potential members of the Malaysian Federation would be necessary.

Within Australia the growing interest in defence and foreign policy, already apparent by late 1962, accelerated after Subandrio's announcement of confrontation.¹ Like the Government, the ALP spent much of 1963 trying to turn this to its electoral advantage. Calwell had already revealed his new interest in these subjects, if in an alarmist manner, by asserting Indonesia's capacity to bomb, without fear of retaliation, any Australian mainland city.² Prompted by the new public interest, Labor decided at a Federal Executive meeting in Sydney, on 27 February, to hold a Special Federal Conference in March to clarify its rather confused platforms on defence and foreign policy.³ There were by March, therefore, indications that the Menzies Government would be, perhaps for the first time, under close scrutiny with regard to its administration of defence and foreign policies.

On 27 February Critchley left Kuala Lumpur for Canberra after long discussions with the Tunku. He stopped en route at Djakarta for talks with Subandrio,⁴ talks which gave rise to rumours that he might seek to mediate in the dispute.⁵ These rumours were quickly denied in Canberra.⁶ It would seem rather that the purpose of Critchley's visit to Canberra was to report to Cabinet on the positions of the Malayan and Indonesian Governments.⁷

On 5 March the Federal Cabinet met for the first time to consider the issue of confrontation.⁸ Much of the Australian press was demanding, and the Indonesian Government was hinting, that

¹

See Boyce: *op.cit.*, p.149; SMH, 5, 15, 19 and 27 Feb; Adelaide Advertiser, 5 and 22 Feb; Adelaide News, 25 and 28 Feb; Hobart Mercury, 23 Feb; Canberra Times, 27 Feb; Sydney Sun, 25 Feb; Melbourne Herald, 14 Feb; West Australian, 5 March.

²

SMH, 29 Jan and 2 Feb; see also A.A. Calwell: Labor's Role In Modern Society (Landsdowne Press, Melbourne, 1963) pp.187-8.

³

SMH, 28 Feb.

⁴

ST, 28 Feb.

⁵

ST, 1 March; West Australian, 2 March.

⁶

SMH, 2 March.

⁷

See Boyce: *op.cit.*, p.154.

⁸

Ibid., p.153.

Australia's policy should be clearly delineated.¹ Sections of the press, however, felt that caution was necessary to avoid aggravating relations with Indonesia on a delicate issue.² It was rumoured that Sir Garfield Barwick, Athol Townley, and sections of the Department of External Affairs shared this view.³ It had already been announced, on 2 March, that Barwick would attend the ECAFE conference at Manila later in the month.⁴ There he was expected to have talks with Subandrio.⁵ Even if no public revelation was to be made concerning Australian policy, some decisions were necessary in order to brief Barwick.

Cabinet deliberated all day on 5 March and Selkirk and Critchley were called on to give information. Only one short official statement was issued by Barwick.⁶ In this the Minister said that Malaysia was 'primarily the concern of Britain'. But he conceded that Australia, 'apart from its interest in the prosperity and well-being of Malaya and its friendship for a close Commonwealth neighbour, has a direct concern in the stability of the area'. He added that the Malaysia plan deserved support as a 'major act of orderly de-colonisation'. But this was far from being an unequivocal declaration of Australian support for Malaysia. Almost concurrently, however, it was announced that further Australian naval craft would join the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve and that the Australian battalion would remain stationed in Malacca following the formation of Malaysia.⁷ Probably the most firm conclusion which may be drawn is that 'Cabinet is believed...to have committed Australia less conditionally to the defence of the Malaysian area'.⁸ The Sydney Morning Herald came to a similar conclusion, one of its editorials applauding the fact that 'the Australian Government has now, it seems, abandoned...the policy of appeasement of Indonesia'. This change of heart (as the paper saw it) was attributed to various

1 Indon.Herald, 5 March 1963.

2 Bulletin, 2 March; Mercury, 2 March.

3 ~~Canb. 25 Feb; SMH, 5 March~~ Brisbane Courier-Mail, 25 Feb; SMH, 5 March.

4 DEA Press Release, No.28, 2 March 1963.

5 See CNIA, March 1963, p.31.

6 Reprinted *ibid.*, March 1963, p.36.

7 SMH, 6 March 1963.

8 Boyce: *op.cit.*, p.154.

factors: British representation, Commonwealth ties with Malaya, Labor and press demands for a firmer, clearer policy, the growth of communist influence in Indonesia, and apprehensions about the defence of Australian New Guinea.¹ These factors were probably influential, but Canberra had certainly not abandoned its desire for friendly relations with Djakarta.²

Canberra supported the Malaysia plan as a relatively straightforward solution to the problems which Singapore and the Borneo territories seemed likely to pose. The possibility of the plan's arousing Indonesian hostility had been given relatively little consideration. During the later stages of the West Irian dispute, the Government had come to place considerable emphasis on the retention of good relations with Djakarta. Although there was little doubt that Canberra would continue to support Malaysia despite Indonesian opposition,³ Cabinet was hopeful that Djakarta might be persuaded to accept the scheme. In consequence Australian policy appeared ambiguous. In fact the public reticence of the Australian Government was a result of its desire to avoid disturbing Djakarta too much by firmly declaring Australia's support for Malaysia.

The ambiguities inherent in Australian policy were clearly revealed the following week. On 10 March Tunku Abdul Rahman, at a rally in Malacca, asserted that Australia had pledged support for Malaysia in the event of the Federation being attacked by Indonesia.⁴ The reason for his making this assertion is unclear as no such assurance had been given publicly, but he may have been seeking to force Canberra to further clarify its attitude.⁵ If this was the case he was unsuccessful for, despite encouragement by the Australian press,⁶ Sir Robert Menzies merely reiterated Barwick's statement of 5 March.⁷ The Tunku was forced to repudiate his statement, alleging that he had been misquoted.⁸

¹ SMH, 7 March. See also Age, 6 March; Adelaide Advertiser, 6 March; Hobart Mercury, 9 March.

² On 6 March Sir James Plimsoll made this clear in New York, Mercury, 7 March.

³ Various Government officials made this point in interviews and there seems no reason to doubt it, particularly in view of Barwick's statement of 22 March, quoted infra, p.125. One official added, 'But there was no reason to shout it from the rooftops', interview Canberra, July 1966.

⁴ West Australian, 11 March. ST, 7 March had previously suggested this.

⁵ Interview with Malaysian official, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

⁶ Melbourne Herald, 11 March; West Australian, 12 March; SMH, 12 March; Sydney Daily Telegraph, 12 March.

⁷ SMH, 12 March.

⁸ Straits Budget, 20 March; Malay Mail, 12 March.

On 10 March 1963 Barwick arrived in Manila and during the next few days had conversations with Subandrio. On 13 March at a press conference he admitted that he had explained to the Indonesian Foreign Minister the Australian Government's attitude. He said 'that the proposed Federation...was the best available practical solution to the problems which decolonising these territories would create'. He continued: 'whilst he remained convinced that Malaysia should be formed as planned, he would particularly like to commend the initiative of the President [of the Philippines] in suggesting talks between the three countries'.¹ This statement made it clear that at that stage the Australian Government was unwilling to commit itself, hoping that a negotiated settlement of the problem of confrontation, might evolve. The Australian press was also optimistic that a diplomatic solution was possible,² particularly following the tripartite Manila talks.³

The role which Barwick played, during his visit to Manila, in initiating the discussions between Malaya and Indonesia, remains largely open to conjecture. Perhaps the Australian press attached too much significance to the Minister's activities, one paper terming them the beginning of a 'new era in Australia's relations with Asia'.⁴ Even a seasoned political observer felt that the Barwick-Subandrio discussions marked the end of the 'Koala Line' in Australian policy towards Indonesia, a policy of 'fuzzy friendliness which was empty of all but the most generalised policies of neighbourliness'.⁵ The assumption became widespread that 'under Barwick Australia is rethinking her foreign policy'⁶ and embarking 'on a refreshingly vigorous course of regional coexistence and diplomatic initiative'.⁷ It has also been suggested that, in accordance with the Australian evaluation of the situation, Sir Garfield played a significant role in persuading Indonesia to attend

¹ Statement to the Press by the Minister for External Affairs at Manila on 13 March 1963 (DEA, Canberra).

² Age, SMH, 15 March; Sydney Daily Telegraph Advertiser, West Australian, 18 March.

³ See Chapter Three, supra.

⁴ John Shaw in Sydney Sun-Herald, 17 March.

⁵ Bruce Grant in Age, 16 March.

⁶ Times, 21 March.

⁷ Boyce: op.cit., p.161. See also NYT, 18 March; FEER, 25 April, pp.215-6.

the tripartite meeting which Macapagal had proposed.¹ It seems that Australia was moderately optimistic that, if Indonesia was adequately consulted and informed on the Malaysia plan, it would accept the proposed federation. During March Barwick clarified Australia's position in a series of statements.

On 15 March Sir Garfield Barwick gave a press conference at Sydney airport. In his opening statement he emphasised that Australia shared many problems of security with her northern neighbours and that 'we should regard ourselves as part of [Southeast Asia] and not regard ourselves as standing outside'.² To some extent this did introduce a new strand to Australian policy. In relation to his activities in Manila he said that he had 'put Australia's view that we had a direct interest in the creation of Malaysia as planned - according to the timetable...that we had a great interest in seeing Malaysia created, without hostility between the three countries directly concerned'. He then described Australia's reaction to the proposed tripartite talks:

On the footing that this conference was not intended as a delaying tactic or an attempt to torpedo Malaysia, I thought it should be supported and I said so. I felt that it could very well make a great contribution to removing misunderstandings [and] misconceptions.

He later added 'there is reason to think that Malaysia could come into existence with at least much less opposition and perhaps an absence of it...we can say that Australia's part has been useful in this connection'. Finally, Barwick was reluctant to admit that Australia was obliged to assist in Malaya's defence in the event of her being attacked by Indonesia. He termed questions on the subject 'hypothetical', denied the existence of a 'formal obligation' to Malaya and only when pressed agreed that the 'strategic reserve...is defending Malaya'. From a refusal to be drawn on a 'hypothetical question', the Minister moved to an admission that Australia had a de facto commitment to the defence of Malaya. His reluctance may be attributed to his knowledge of Indonesian sensitivity and his desire to avoid aggravating Australian-Indonesian relations.

1

Suggested in interviews with officials in Kuala Lumpur, May 1966, Canberra, July 1966, and Sydney, February 1967. See Chapter Three, supra, p.89.

2

Press Conference Given by the Minister for External Affairs...at Sydney, 15 March 1963 (DEA, Canberra).

A week later, on 22 March, Sir Garfield delivered a lengthy address to the Australian Institute of International Affairs¹ in which he elaborated on his press conference themes of the need for Australia to understand Asia and to act as a part of the Asian region. He stressed that the Asian nations were re-emerging, 'deeply conscious of their historical roots, of past grandeur',² and argued that their actions should not be interpreted as if they were in a European context. In Australia, he continued, 'we must adjust our thinking to the notion that for purposes of security... we are part and parcel of the Asian region'.³ Perhaps his central theme was that

we must learn to live with the countries from which they [Asians] come.... We must appreciate that these countries have hopes and aspirations which may be different from ours, which may even at times clash with ours... we must not condemn them because their political systems differ from ours. The fact that one country has a parliamentary system and another has not... does not make one morally better than another. Australians should avoid crude moralising about the systems. 4

He continued that 'among peoples who have had to fight for their independence, anti-colonialism is a deeply and sincerely felt emotion'.⁵ Barwick later admitted that the problem of Malaysia had recently been foremost in Government thinking and that Cabinet had 'after close consideration decided that it favoured the creation of Malaysia as planned... not withstanding the expressed opposition of Indonesia and the Philippines'.⁶ He conceded that his visit to Manila had been made largely to talk to Subandrio but insisted that 'Australia has not cast itself in the role of mediator'. He summed up Australia's difficulties: 'we have a special relationship with Malaya... as a Commonwealth country.... We also have a particular interest in the friendship of Indonesia'.⁷ That basic dilemma of two potentially conflicting objectives pervaded Australian policy towards confrontation for the next three years. Perhaps Barwick, of all Cabinet ministers, was most aware of its existence and implications.

¹ Full text printed CNIA, March 1963, pp.23-35.

² Ibid., p.23.

³ Ibid., p.25.

⁴ Ibid., p.26.

⁵ Ibid., p.28.

⁶ Ibid., p.29.

⁷ Ibid., p.31.

On 26 March the Parliamentary session opened. On that day Barwick admitted that Australia, while having no formal alliance with Malaya, regarded 'its security [as]...of direct significance to us'.¹ The following day, replying to a question on notice, he elaborated on this point. For the first time the exchange of letters of 1959, associating Australia with the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement,² was made public. Sir Garfield again said Malaya was regarded as of vital importance to Australian security, a fact which would be borne in mind were the Federation attacked. He concluded by saying: 'What the position will be after Malaysia comes into being has not yet been discussed with the Malayan Government'.³

On 28 March Barwick made a Parliamentary statement on 'recent developments on Malaysia'.⁴ He said that the Government had viewed the Malaysia project 'with sympathetic interest' and regarded 'Malaysia as the best solution for the future of the Borneo territories and Singapore'. He added: 'It is in Australia's interests that the Federation should come into existence and we have framed and conducted over diplomacy accordingly'. He reviewed progress towards the formation of the federation, reiterating that Australia supported it despite the effects this might have 'on our relationship with some of our Asian neighbours'. But he was optimistic that such effects might be minimal as the 'problems which have arisen over Malaysia are political and regional ones which are susceptible to diplomatic handling and solution'.

Sir Garfield had again made a cautious statement, unwilling to formally commit Australia while the position remained fluid and a negotiated settlement seemed possible. Both the Melbourne Herald⁵ and the Sydney Morning Herald⁶ applauded this as a 'clear statement'. Boyce was probably more accurate, writing that the statement 'amounted to little more than a recapitulation of previous benedictions, together with a useful precis of the Cobbold and Lansdowne reports'.⁷

¹ CPD,HR, vol.38, 26 March 1963, p.4.

² See Appendix Two for text.

³ CPD,HR, vol.38, 27 March 1963, p.130.

⁴ Ibid., vol.38, 28 March 1963, pp.196-200.

⁵ Melbourne Herald, 29 March.

⁶ SMH, 29 March.

⁷ Boyce: op.cit., p.156.

By the end of March it appeared that Sir Garfield was maintaining a flexible posture with respect to confrontation. He was prepared to give some consideration to Indonesia's accusations against Malaysia and, at least in public, he did not summarily dismiss Indonesia's charges as indicative of duplicity on the part of Djakarta. There were also indications that the Minister, with support from the Department of External Affairs, sections of the press and perhaps from within Cabinet, was anxious that Canberra should maintain, in the interests of regional security, a rapport with Djakarta. These are factors helping to account for Australia's reluctance to be drawn, at that stage, into a firm declaration of support for Malaysia, a declaration sought by Britain and Malaya.¹ At the same time, the concept of Commonwealth collaboration in Southeast Asia, centred on ANZAM and the Strategic Reserve and evoking emotive overtones, demanded less hesitancy of Australian policy. During the next six months, as Australian opinion became more vociferously anti-Indonesian and it became more difficult for Australians to understand and sympathise with Indonesian policy, Australian foreign policy became more clearly pro-Malaysian.

During March 1963 the ALP had also been seeking to clarify its defence and foreign policy platforms. After the 1955 Hobart Conference the party had been largely uninterested in these topics but in 1962 had been prepared to react with vigour to apparent Indonesian bellicosity. In 1963 it was quick to realise the potentialities a 'strong defence' platform seemed to offer as a vote-winner. On 18 March a special federal conference was convened in Canberra to discuss defence and foreign policy. Many members of the Parliamentary Labor Party, including its leader, Mr Calwell, were anxious to adopt a firm platform on these issues to enable them to attack the Government for its vacillations in foreign policy and the weaknesses it had allowed to develop in the armed forces. The other section of the party, largely the left wing, was less inclined to alter the tone of Labor's platform. This division of opinion became apparent at the conference and as a result Labor's Malaysia policy, like that of the Government, remained unclear until later in the year.

1

Interviews with officials in Kuala Lumpur, May 1966, Singapore, February 1966, Canberra, July 1966, and Sydney, February 1967.

On 6 March Calwell had, for the first time, voiced ALP support for Malaysia, while saying that the UN was the proper place to settle the problems of confrontation.¹ Only four days later, however, his reaction to the Tunku's statement at Malacca revealed that his support was only moral, and that the ALP platform of withdrawing troops from Malaya still stood.² Nonetheless the Economist was probably correct in asserting that, fearing an early election, Calwell was reluctant to stand on an essentially left-wing defence platform.³

The Special Federal Conference convened in Canberra on 18 March 1963, and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs presented its report.⁴ A division of opinion within the party was immediately evident in that two reports were presented by the Committee: a majority report signed by three members from the right-wing state branches of New South Wales and South Australia, and a minority report more critical of the Government's policy. The former differed from the latter in that it would accept the Naval Communications Station, which the Government proposed to allow America to build and control in Western Australia, provided that 'Australian sovereignty were maintained'. As the Station was for communicating with US nuclear armed submarines, it had excited some controversy. The majority report also passed its judgement on ANZAM. The relevant section read:

Labor does not believe that Australian forces should be committed overseas except subject to a clear and public treaty which...gives Australia an effective voice in the common decisions of the treaty powers. See Labor policy on troops in Malaya. 5

Fortunately the last sentence was clarified. Mr C.T.Oliver, a signatory of the majority report, said that it did not mean that the Committee rejected item eight of the Hobart Declaration (which had committed the ALP to withdraw Australian forces from Malaya).⁶

1
SMH, 7 March.

2
Ibid., 11 March.

3
Economist, 16 March.

4
Australian Labor Party: Official Report of the Proceedings of the Special Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Canberra, 18 March 1963.

5
Ibid., p.22.

6
Ibid., p.7.

of the sample replied yes, only 22 per cent, no.¹

On 2 April Calwell proposed a motion of no confidence in the Government, placing unusual if not unprecedented emphasis on defence and foreign policies.² Envisaging a future election fought partly on these issues,³ he warned the governing parties that tactics of trying to smear the ALP as sympathetic to communism and opposed to the US alliance would not be sufficient to win votes as 'the ALP is pledged to maintain the American alliance'.⁴ (In fact the Liberal and Country parties did adopt such tactics, with apparent success, from that time until the Federal election held in November 1963). During the debate Government supporters were eager to emphasise that 'one of the greatest differences between the... Government and the...Opposition is in relation to their defence policies'.⁵ On Malaysia, the Government, instead of defending its own policy attacked that of the Opposition. Malcolm Fraser, later Minister for the Army, fairly represented its position: 'At the Labor Party Conference of 1963 the question of troops for Malaysia was left unanswered....Does this mean that the old policy of withdrawing troops from Malaya stands?...the Leader of the Opposition made a strong statement supporting the establishment of the federation, but the conference issues some vague statement. It made no mention of support for the Malaysian federation....Why is there ambiguity?'⁶ The Prime Minister was also eager to drive home this line of attack, asking

where does it [the ALP] stand on Malaya?...It is important to know where Labor stands on Malaya which happens to be a British country of the Commonwealth of Nations, not so very far to our north, friendly and loyal. 7

If the final sentence represented Sir Robert's opinions, and was not merely for debating purposes, his line of approach would seem to differ from Barwick's. There were later other indications of such a difference of opinion.

¹ Australian Public Opinion Polls (APOP) Nos.1676-1687, May-June 1963.

² CPD,HR, vol.38, 2 April 1963, pp.259-266.

³ There were already suggestions in the press that there might be an 'early' Federal election fought in 1963 on foreign policy and defence issues. E.g., Alan Reid: 'A Foreign Policy Election?' Bulletin, 6 April.

⁴ CPD,HR, vol.38, 2 April 1963, p.266.

⁵ Ibid., p.320 (Dean).

⁶ Ibid., vol.38, 3 April 1963, p.299 and 300-1.

⁷ Ibid., pp.342-3.

The ALP response to these accusations was predictable. Labor supporters, like those of the Government, found it difficult to state their own position clearly and relied almost solely on criticism of their opponents. Gray expressed a typical ALP contention which, without its emotive overtones, contained more than a grain of truth:¹ 'our entire defence activity is organised on the assumption that we shall simply be part of a general defence force',² 'we are organised to defend ourselves as a lackey of somebody else'.³ On Malaya E.G. Whitlam, Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, voiced the core of what was to become official ALP policy:

what are the arrangements under which Australian troops are in Malaya?...under which the RAAF occupies the Butterworth Base and last month went to Brunei? The arrangements are completely vague and veiled...the whole world ought to be informed what are the actual obligations in this regard. 4

The Government survived the motion but the basis of the debate on Australian policy towards Malaysia had been laid.

From 8 to 10 April the annual SEATO conference was held in Paris,⁵ and afforded Barwick, who led the Australian delegation, his first opportunity to discuss the confrontation of Malaysia with Britain and America at a ministerial level. The Australian press appears to have agreed with the ALP's assessment of SEATO and gave little publicity to an organisation which the Bulletin described as a 'sorry farce'.⁶ One Australian observer felt:

It is not too ridiculous to classify this [the SEATO Conference] as a minor matter of foreign policy... recognising its decline in recent years the press tended to agree it was obvious that SEATO had become a 'pallid and palsied instrument of defence'...it had been superseded in US policies against communism. 7

In early 1963 this judgement on the organisation appeared to be justified.⁸ Nonetheless the conference gave Barwick the chance to

1

See Chapter One, supra.

2

Op.cit., p.310.

3

Ibid., p.311.

4

Ibid., vol.38, 4 April 1963, p.420.

5

CNIA, April 1963, pp.15-18.

6

Bulletin, 20 April; see also 27 April.

7

Neale: op.cit., p.135.

8

The US commitments in the area, e.g. to Thailand and Vietnam were increasingly organised on a bilateral basis. See Neuchterleins: Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia. The British commitment to Malaya and Malaysia was similarly outside SEATO.

visit London where he had talks with Mr MacMillan, Mr Heath and Foreign Office officials, with whom it was reported that he discussed 'ways of promoting' Malaysia.¹ In Paris and the US he saw Dean Rusk and other US officials and, while Malaysia was not publicly mentioned, it would seem likely that the subject was discussed. US policy had changed little since February, however, and according to one experienced observer,

Washington likes to believe that President Sukarno's fear of losing U.S. aid has at least some relation to his new caution....The Administration has chosen to keep alive its influence at Djakarta and restrain the Indonesians at crucial moments. 2

Having visited Malaya during his return journey, Sir Garfield gave a press conference at Sydney airport on 19 April.³ This conference proved more informative than the speculative press reports published during his absence. He admitted that his discussions in London particularly concerned Malaysia.⁴ Mr Calwell's apprehensions that the Government would seek to portray ALP policy as inimicable to the US alliance, were shown by Barwick to be well founded. When asked whether US officials had expressed concern about Labor's policies, Sir Garfield gave the following reply:

It is perfectly clear that the Labor Party's view is that joint control [of the U.S. Naval Communications Station] must be insisted upon and that is going to have a tremendous effect on American views about Australia, enormous effect. 5

[...]

If you carry the Labor Party's view to its extreme, America can't come into this area for its own purposes or even to defend themselves under Anzus and you wouldn't expect America to be so interested in us under those circumstances. Would you? 6

Expressing his optimism that the tripartite talks, then being held on Malaysia,⁷ could solve the problems of confrontation,⁸ Barwick

¹ Times, 5 April.

² Max Frankel, NYT, 5 April.

³ Press Conference given by the Minister for External Affairs... 19 April 1963 (DEA, Canberra).

⁴ Ibid., p.2.

⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁶ Ibid., p.6.

⁷ See Chapter Three, supra, p.89 ff.

⁸ Op.cit., pp.4-5.

denied that he had discussed the growth of communist influence in Indonesia with American officials.¹ Sir Garfield was also emphatic that SEATO did not expect any trouble from Indonesia because 'the Manila Treaty, at least primarily, is directed against communist aggression'.² This was essentially the same optimistic position as he had taken the previous month. He was also anxious to deny that the US felt that it was carrying too heavy a burden in Southeast Asia and that its allies were not doing enough. 'Whilst no doubt the Americans are doing a great deal', he said, 'there are others of us doing much too'.³ Finally, on a matter which was to arise again later in the year, he firmly asserted that 'East New Guinea is within Anzus and the American Ministers always say so quite clearly and unambiguously'.⁴

On 1 May Indonesia took over control of West Irian from the interim UN administration. This, coupled with the apparent renewal of Indonesian bellicosity (evidenced by the guerrilla raid on Tebedu in Sarawak) and the visit of Liu Shao-chi to Indonesia,⁵ tended to increase Australian concern about Indonesian adventures. While there was much support in the press for a policy of seeking a rapport with Djakarta,⁶ particularly over New Guinea, this concern, coupled with the widespread debate on the Naval Communications Station,⁷ increased public interest in Australian security.⁸ On 22 May the Prime Minister announced the third increase in defence expenditure in eight months. From that time it appears to have been accepted that defence and foreign policy would be a major issue in the next federal election and that, with the economy sound, the Government might well hold an early election to exploit what it considered to be its advantages in these fields.

1
Ibid., p.6.

2
Ibid., p.7.

3
Ibid., p.5.

4
Ibid., p.6.

5
See Chapter Three, supra, p.82.

6
Adelaide Advertiser, 1 May; Adelaide News, 1 May; Age, Brisbane Courier-Mail, 2 May; Hobart Mercury, 6 May; Melbourne Herald, 6 May

7
See Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China, p.241.

8
Age, 2 May; Sun-Herald, 5 May; SMH, 4 May.

On 2 May, Mr Galvin, a Labor member, expressed popular feelings when in the House of Representatives he urged the Government 'to let them [the Indonesians] know that we will not tolerate any ventures...over the border....Australia can no longer say "defence does not matter"....We now have right on our doorsteps...a very strong military power'.¹ He reminded the Government that the UK and the US 'were not much concerned' about the West Irian dispute, adding 'it was our problem'. He concluded that 'today we should be leaning more to defence than any other problem'.²

In the interests of long term Australian security, Barwick was less inclined than most Australians to condemn openly Indonesian policy. He remained optimistic that the Malaysian question could be settled by diplomacy, and on 30 April discounted the stationing of 1,500 Indonesian troops in West Irian as a threat to East New Guinea.³ On 7 May, he expressed the opinion that Djakarta was 'turning to the question of economic development'.⁴ Rumours were circulating that Barwick, supported by Townley, was leading a group of 'Indonesian sympathisers' in the Department of External Affairs. The Economist reported that he had 'earned some criticism for his readiness to excuse Indonesia'.⁵ The Hobart Mercury went further in contending that Barwick was leading the 'strong view held in his department that conciliation between Canberra and Djakarta [could] ensure peace with Indonesia', while Townley had been 'strong in his public statements that Indonesian cordiality [could] be held by friendly understanding and economic help'.⁶ There is no evidence to substantiate the claim that there was a division of opinion within the Department of External Affairs. Rather, it appears that Barwick, who was at that stage directing Canberra's Malaysia policy, was acting upon the view of his Department. That view appears to have become increasingly unrepresentative of Australian opinion during the following months.

Amid the concern with Australian security and the defence of Australian New Guinea, on 9 May Barwick presented a bill in Parliament to approve the US Naval Communications Station Agreement.⁷ Such

¹
CPD,HR, vol.38, 2 May 1963, p.1001.

²
Ibid., p.1002.

³
Ibid., 30 April 1963, p.815.

⁴
Ibid., 7 May 1963, p.1035.

⁵
Economist, 11 May 1963.

⁶
Hobart Mercury, 4 May.

⁷
CPD,HR, vol.38, 9 May 1963, pp.1223-9.

legislation was constitutionally unnecessary but politically useful. Referring to ALP policy Sir Garfield stated that the Station would be 'under the sole control of the United States Government' because joint control was 'impractical'.¹ He stressed that the Station was for communications only and was part of the obligations incurred under the ANZUS Treaty. Both his contentions and the Station were accepted by the Australian press, on two grounds: 1) the Station would strengthen the US military capacity,² and 2) it engaged 'the United States on this continent'.³ There was little support for Labor's policy.

During the debate on the bill, which Calwell opened on 16 May,⁴ concern about Indonesian intentions was evidenced, particularly fear of the Djakarta-Peking axis which appeared to be evolving.⁵ The Government generally felt that, in view of the threat to Australia that this appeared to represent, US protection was vital; the ALP concurred that the threat existed but argued that US protection might not be forthcoming, and was certainly not guaranteed.

Mr Holten, a Government backbencher, portrayed the threat: 'if we need anything further to demonstrate the fact that the need may arise in South-East Asia for instant action...we have only to study the joint statement issued by President Soekarno and the Chairman of the People's Republic of China...[its] double talk is characteristic of the communist regime'.⁶ For the first time since the inauguration of confrontation a Cabinet Minister was prepared to relate Australia's Malaysia policy to that threat. Mr MacMahon, Minister for Labour and National Service, stated:

We have stationed our forces in Malaya, because we know that the independence of Malaysia...will be a guarantee of our independence....⁷

We believe in defence in depth. We believe that while our forces are stationed in Malaya...and while we are a party to SEATO we have a second and forward line of defence...as well as that provided by ANZUS.⁸

This appears to have been Government policy.

1
Ibid., p.1226.

2
SMH, Advertiser, Age, Herald, Daily Mirror, Canberra Times, 10 May.

3
SMH, Advertiser, Mercury, Courier-Mail, 10 May.

4
CPD,HR, vol.38, 16 May 1963, pp.1480-5.

5
See Chapter Three, supra, pp.82-3.

6
Ibid., p.1500.

7
Ibid., p.1507.

8
Ibid., p.1510.

The ALP position is best represented by statements by two of its most prominent members, Whitlam and E.J.Ward. The Deputy Leader said that the ALP 'accepts the station as a grim and awful necessity'. He explained:

The Labor Party wants alliances. Above all it wants an alliance with the United States of America. It wants all alliances to be clear and mutual. Some alliances like Anzam are not clear and are not mutualAnzus however is a clear and mutual alliance. 1

Whitlam thus accepted Oliver's unamended motion from the March conference and anticipated the platform adopted by the July 1963 Federal Conference. Ward, like Galvin, recalled the precarious Australian position during the West Irian dispute and warned: 'An Indonesian attack on Australia might be regarded as not being Communist aggression and assistance from the U.S. might not be forthcoming to us'.² Although it ignored the provisions of the ANZUS Treaty, this apprehension was widespread.

Thus, by mid-May, defence and foreign policy had become important issues in Australian politics. Australian opinion, the press, the ALP and Government alike saw two chief means for safeguarding Australian security under the prevailing circumstances: 1) by cementing Australia's alliances, especially that with the US, and 2) by building an independent defence capacity which the Government had neglected since the mid-1950s.³ The Naval Communications Station was seen as part of the first policy; during 1963 Canberra began to pursue the second.

On 22 May Sir Robert Menzies announced a new defence programme.⁴ He began by pointing out:

the condition of an effective defence programme is that it should be based upon as accurate an assessment as can be made of the probable sources and nature of the apprehended attack, the area of possible conflict and the nature of the operations, and the nature and extent of the cooperation from...our allies.

His statement did much to elucidate the Government's assessment of these issues: Indonesia was clearly regarded as a potential threat. This became apparent when Sir Robert continued:

1
Ibid., vol.38, 21 May 1963, p.1598.

2
Ibid., p.1612.

4
Ibid., 22 May 1963, pp.1669-72.

3
See Chapter One, supra.

We have noted...the conflicts which exist over the creation of the new Federation of Malaysia and the events in and concerning West New Guinea....We have made our review in the light of our treaty arrangements, but particularly in reference to the security of our own country and of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. We will defend these territories as if they were part of our mainland; there must be no mistaken ideas about that.

The new plan allowed for an enlargement of the army from 21,000 to 28,000 and of the Pacific Islands Regiment from 700 to 1,400. The RAAF was to get forty more Mirage fighters, two new air control units, eighteen Caribou transports and eight Bell Iroquois helicopters, while new airfield programmes would be undertaken at Tindal, Amberley, Williamstown, East Sale, Townsville and Wewak. Finally a team of 'qualified experts' would be sent overseas to evaluate possible replacements for Australia's strike-reconnaissance force of Canberras, which were already coming under criticism for being obsolete and inferior to their Russian-built, Indonesian counterparts. Without the replacement for the Canberra, planned defence expenditure before and after the review, stood as follows:

	<u>Before Review</u>	<u>New Programme</u>
1962-3	£m. 212.2	£m. 212.2
1963-4	219.2	237.5
1964-5	220	253.4
1965-6	222	269.6
1966-7	220	277.0
1967-8	220	269.5
	<u>1313.4</u>	<u>1519.2</u>

The Prime Minister concluded: 'such forces will provide a significant and welcome addition to any allied effort....But they will do more in that they will provide a capacity for independent action'. Even with these extensive increases in defence expenditure Australia would still be spending a smaller percentage of her National Income on defence than most developed Western nations, and much less than her major allies, the USA and Britain.¹

The defence review was greeted by the Australian press with an enthusiasm tempered only by comments to the effect that it 'was not as far reaching as some critics of earlier policies would have liked'.²

1

See T.B.Millar: Australia's Defence, p. 173, for table on comparative military expenditure.

2

Advertiser, 23 May; see also SMH, 23 May; West Australian, 24 and 25 May.

Some editorials linked the review with the Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea,¹ many applauded the pledge on Papua-New Guinea,² and there was widespread approval of the intention to create an independent military capacity, which the Economist described as 'a new departure' in Australian policy.³ Probably influential in that process had been American hints that Australia was not pulling her weight within the Western alliance.⁴ The review of 22 May was a step in a programme of rearmament which Australia was to pursue over the following years.

During the early part of June, events occurred which appeared to improve Australia's diplomatic position in relation to her policies towards Indonesia and Malaysia: 1) Indonesian bellicosity seemed to decline; 2) the US affirmed unequivocally that Australian New Guinea was within the area encompassed by the ANZUS Treaty; and 3) the ANZUS Council deliberated in Wellington.

In Tokyo during May representatives of American oil companies had been negotiating with Indonesian officials after President Sukarno had warned the companies that, unless they complied with certain yet-to-be-announced restrictions, they would be nationalised. The US State Department was thought to want to keep a connection with Djakarta, but there were known to be pressures in Congress to cut the Indonesian aid programme.⁵ During the negotiations Mr Wyatt, the chief American negotiator, threatened such a reduction of aid; the Indonesians threatened to treat with China.⁶ On 2 June the parties reached a settlement which was widely construed as an Indonesian concession made in the face of US pressure.⁷ With the apparently successful conclusion of the Manila tripartite talks, it seemed that Indonesia was moving towards a renewed detente with the West and a negotiated settlement on Malaysia. Barwick was sufficiently optimistic to accept such an interpretation.⁸

1
Advertiser, 23 May.

2
Age, Mercury, Daily Telegraph, 23 May; West Australian, 24 May.

3
Economist, 25 May; also SMH, 23 May.

4
Times, 31 May.

5
See Clay Report; Times, 30 May; NYT, 30 May.

6
Times, 30 May; NYT, 30 May.

7
Times, 3 June; ST, 7 June; Times of Vietnam, 12 June; S. China Morning Post, 11 June; NY Herald-Tribune, 8 July; Bulletin, 22 June; FEER, 13 June and 20 June.

8
Press Release, No.58, 12 June (DEA Canberra).

The ANZUS Council met in Wellington 5-6 June, but before attending, the American delegate, the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr Averell Harriman, paid a brief visit to Australia. During his stay, on two occasions, he reaffirmed Barwick's earlier contention that Australian New Guinea was covered by ANZUS and that the US ~~would fight~~ ^{recognised her commitment to help} to defend it.¹ Legally this had never been in doubt, as Article V of the ANZUS Treaty specifically included 'the island territories...in the Pacific' of the signatory powers.² This reaffirmation by an important US official, however, was a useful reassurance for Australian public opinion and was warmly applauded by the press.³

The final communique of the ANZUS Council confirmed that 'anything that happens in the Pacific area is of concern to all three [ANZUS powers], and...a threat to any of the partners in the area, metropolitan and island territories alike, is equally a threat to the others'.⁴ The communique also showed the degree of similarity between the Australian and American positions on Malaysia in that, while it expressed sympathy for the projected new federation, it said that the three ANZUS powers hoped that the federation's problems could be solved by 'diplomatic discussion'. Finally, the plan for a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere, supported by the ALP, was condemned as 'not only illusory but positively dangerous'.

J.G.Starke contends that under the Kennedy administration new importance was attached to the ANZUS Treaty by the US as the Alliance's role in global strategy increased in significance. The establishment of the Naval Communication Station, he argues, 'must inevitably tend to transform Anzus from an alliance that has been primarily defensive...into one with a strong element of global deterrence'.⁵ The New York Times also felt that 'recent developments in the South-West Pacific [Indonesia was later referred to] have made this year's Anzus meeting the most important for some time'.⁶ The 1963 ANZUS declaration must be read in conjunction with the 22 May defence review:⁷ they appear to have strengthened Australia's

1
NYT, 4 June.

2
CNIA, July 1961, p.404.

3
~~Newspaper~~ Herald, 5 June; Age, 6 June.

4
CNIA, June 1963, p.5.

5
J.G.Starke: The Anzus Treaty Alliance, p.3.

6
NYT, 15 June.

7
See Neale: *op.cit.*, p.135.

position in New Guinea. By late June the reasons for Australian apprehensions concerning Indonesian adventures, and the apprehensions themselves, seemed to have become less significant.¹

If Australian concern about Indonesia decreased, interest in defence did not. On 1 June 1963 the Queensland State elections were held, in which the Country-Liberal Parties' Government retained its large majority. One analysis of the elections contends that

The Communist bogey...was used effectively....In its attack on the ALP the Liberal Party in particular emphasised that Australian security essentially depended upon continued support for the policies advocated by the Liberal and Country parties in defence and foreign affairs. 2

The Government parties also emphasised 'those current federal issues of defence and foreign affairs on which the ALP could be labelled irresponsible'. The analysis concludes:

the coalition parties' campaign against the ALP left wing on the federal issues of foreign affairs and defence...was undoubtedly successful. The decision of the federal Liberal-Country party government to hold a federal election a year early...on these issues appears to stem partly from this success. 3

At the same time the ALP was making clear its intention to attack the Government parties on their defence and foreign policy records. At the New South Wales ALP Conference, Calwell launched a vigorous attack on the Government. He asserted that the ALP would rest its defence policy on four pillars: 1) increased self-reliance, 2) industrial expansion, 3) expanded regular forces and CMF, and 4) greater defence for western and northern Australia.⁴ In this speech he was anticipating the ALP election platform. The NSW President, Mr Oliver, another right wing Labor spokesman, also attacked the inadequacies of the Government's defence programme, in an essentially anti-Indonesian speech.⁵ By mid-June it was clear that both Government and Opposition were prepared to treat defence and foreign policy as significant, if not major, election issues.

¹
Economist, 6 July.

²
Margaret N. Lettice and Clair Skerman Clark: 'The 1963 Queensland State Election', AJPH, Nov 1963, p.190.

³
Ibid., pp.199-200.

⁴
SMH, 10 June; Melbourne Herald, 11 June.

⁵
Sydney Sunday Telegraph, 9 June.

Later in the month Sir Robert Menzies visited London where he had talks with Mr Thorneycroft, the Minister for Defence, Mr Butler, the Foreign Secretary, and Mr Sandys, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.¹ He left for Washington on 6 July. On 9 July the Malaysia Agreement was signed in London. The following day President Sukarno, contending that the Agreement was a breach of the previous understanding reached with Indonesia, announced the renewal of confrontation.²

On 14 July Sir Robert returned to Australia where he gave a press conference describing and interpreting these events.³ He agreed that in London 'the principal things that I discussed with them [the British] had relation in South East Asia, in particular Malaysia and the developments of that new Federation'. He continued:

As far as Malaysia is concerned, the idea has been actively supported by the United Kingdom, supported by us as a matter of principle quite clearly, and supported by the United States as a matter of principle; the one reservation being made by the United States to the effect that any defensive arrangement in relation to Malaysia seems to the United States to be essentially a Commonwealth matter at this stage.

Washington was continuing its policy of regarding the region covered by the ANZAM arrangement as primarily a Commonwealth responsibility and, as the Mansfield and Clay reports had recommended, would regard Malaysia as being within 'British sphere of influence'.⁴ Referring to Indonesia's renewed hostility, the Prime Minister commented, 'this is all very odd'.

The renewal of confrontation again presented the Australian Government with the need to clarify its policy towards Malaysia. Broadly two issues presented themselves: should the Australian commitment to Malaya be extended to Malaysia, and if so under what sort of arrangement should the commitment be made? By July there was a widespread assumption within Australia that the commitment would be extended. Such a policy would be greeted with approval.⁵ On the second issue there was some controversy. There were reports in the press that officials in the Department of External Affairs felt it would be unwise and unnecessary for Australia to enter into

¹ Times, 20 June.

² Indon.Herald, 11 July; see Chapter Three, supra, pp.99-100.

³ Text, CNIA, July 1963, pp.58-61.

⁴ Interview: US Embassy, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

⁵ Only Outlook expressed opposition to such a policy. See Malaysia: An Outlook Publication (Sydney, 1963).

a binding treaty with Malaysia when a further exchange of notes would give Australian policy more flexibility and place the major responsibility for Malaysia's defence on the UK.¹ That this proved to be Australian policy adds some credence to these rumours. There was much support in the press, however, for a treaty,² and there had already been indications that the ALP was likely to adopt such a policy.

On 29 July the ALP Federal Conference opened in Perth. As in March there were broadly two schools of thought on foreign policy issues: the right wing, including many of the Parliamentary leaders, favouring a vote-winning policy of strong defence and a 'hard line' towards Indonesia, and the left, strangely quiet since March, which preferred the Hobart platform and was more sympathetic towards Indonesian aspirations.³ In July the central themes of each view were expressed by representatives from each group, Whitlam for the right, and J.Keefe, then ALP Federal President, for the left.

On 9 July Whitlam delivered the Fourteenth Roy Milne Memorial Lecture at Armidale.⁴ In an essentially 'moderate' address he anticipated the vote catching tone of subsequent ALP policy. He began by emphasising Labor's support for the US alliance. He continued by describing the Malaysia plan as

an ingenious attempt at orderly decolonisation...
[Britain] rushed ahead without taking into account
the attitudes of Indonesia and the Philippines...
consultation...could have avoided much of the later
hostility. Australia was neither consulted nor
interested until an outbreak of hostilities seemed
imminent. 5

He denied that Australian forces in Malaya helped Australian security, saying that Australia's commitment to Malaya's defence was too vague. In this analysis he differed little from his left wing colleagues: it was on policy recommendations that a difference of opinion became apparent. Whitlam felt that 'Australian troops should not be stationed overseas unless Australia has an effective

1

Courier-Mail,

West Australian, 13 and 17 July; SMH, 17 July; SMH, 16 July. This was confirmed in interviews with senior officials in Canberra, July 1966.

2

Courier-Mail,

West Australian, 17 and 30 July; SMH, 17 July; Age, 23 July; SMH, 30 July.

3

See J.F. Cairns: Living With Asia (Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1965) esp. pp.76-103, for a comprehensive statement by one of the left wing leaders.

4

E.G. Whitlam: Australian Foreign Policy 1963 (AIIA, 1963).

5

Ibid., p.13.

voice in the policies of the countries where they are stationed'. Thus under certain conditions the Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party favoured maintaining the Australian contribution to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve.

Keefe delivered the opening address to the ALP Federal Conference.¹ While prepared to criticise the Government's 'criminal neglect of the defence of Australia', his tone was reminiscent of the ALP of the 1950s, imbued with the sentiment that 'at heart, all socialists are pacifists'. He was prepared to place great reliance on the UN. Specifically on the Australian commitment to Malaya, he said:

the Menzies Administration has squandered a substantial portion of the defence vote to keep Australian troops in Malaya. The decent Malaysians don't want our troops in Malaya and the ALP does not want to keep them there. 2

This view was clearly incompatible with Whitlam's.

As the Times pointed out, there was 'widespread interest in the country in diplomatic and defence decisions taken by the ALP ...it is felt that Labor's approach to these matters will have a big influence on its chances at the next Australian general election'.³ The Conference was no doubt aware of this, unanimously carrying a resolution providing for the 'provision of voluntary defence forces a) properly equipped..., b) capable of great mobility within Australia and its environs, c) having sufficient range and strike power to deter aggressors, d) capable of being used as part of a UN force'.⁴ This was essentially a vote catching, strong defence policy. Of Malaya specifically the conference made no mention, although the following recommendation was carried unanimously:

Labor does not believe that Australian forces should be committed overseas except subject to a clear and public treaty...which gives Australia an effective voice in the common decisions of the Treaty powers. 5

The conference also pledged Labor to 'honour and support Australia's treaties and defence alliances' particularly ANZUS.⁶ As D.W.Rawson pointed out:

1 Official Report of the Proceedings of the 25th Commonwealth Conference, ALP, pp.6-8.

2

Ibid., p.7.

3

Times, 2 Aug 1963.

4

Op.cit., pp.18-19.

5

Ibid., pp.23-4.

6

Ibid., pp.18-19.

In retrospect it is easy to see many of the events of the latter half of 1963 as a background or prelude to the federal election...and in this case hindsight is more justified than usual since throughout this period there were constant reports that an early election would in fact be held. Such a likelihood must have certainly been a factor at the meetings of the federal conference of the ALP. 1

But Labor policy towards Malaya remained unclear. On 1 August the Sydney Morning Herald felt that the Hobart platform remained unchanged.² The following day the paper revised its opinion, deciding that the Conference had reversed the 'traditional Labor opposition to the stationing of Australian forces abroad in time of peace', due to the possibility of a federal election in the near future.³ The West Australian pointed out that within the ALP there were different interpretations of the platform and there was no clear indication as to how the platform would be implemented.⁴ By 3 August the right wing of the ALP was contending that the Hobart platform had been rescinded when it was rejected at Canberra in March.⁵ The papers accepted this contention according to their bias. The Sunday Telegraph felt that the ALP was still committed to the withdrawal of Australian forces,⁶ the West Australian that Labor policy might have changed.⁷ The Age was probably nearest the truth in saying that 'the conference attitude was to say the least confused and ambiguous', with F.E. Chamberlain, the Federal Secretary, contending that policy had changed, Keefe that it had not.⁸

In fact the press was only reflecting the confusion within the ALP, which Calwell did something to clear up in an interview given on 8 August. In this interview he asserted that the 'party's plank on the withdrawal of troops from Malaya has been replaced. In its place is a new one...we will gladly defend'.⁹

1
D.W. Rawson: 'Australian Political Chronicle, July-December 1963', AJPH, April 1964, p.96.

2
SMH, 1 Aug 1963.

3
SMH, 2 Aug.

4
~~Wk, 2 Aug.~~ West Australian, 2 Aug 1963.

5
SMH, 3 Aug.

6
~~Sunday Telegraph, 4 Aug.~~ Sydney Sunday Telegraph, 4 Aug.

7
~~Wk, 5 Aug.~~ West Australian, 5 Aug.

8
Age, 5 Aug.

9
~~Qld, 9 Aug.~~ Brisbane Courier-Mail, 9 Aug.

It would appear that the ALP was shifting to the right in preparation for a federal election.¹ Such a view was given added weight when Mr Daly defeated Dr Cairns in a ballot for place on the Federal Executive,² and Cyril Wyndham became Federal Secretary.³ Alan Reid, an experienced political observer, felt that, with the likelihood of an early election, neither wing wanted an open fight, and a vague, compromise resolution on Malaysia had provided an acceptable alternative with the interpretation of either group possible.⁴ That Calwell was eager to represent the ALP as pro-Malaysia and in favour of greater defence expenditure was understandable. Almost the whole of the press supported such views, only the Daily Mirror and the Nation voicing significant reservations.⁵ Further, in August, opinion polls revealed that only 22 per cent of the sample approached opposed Australia fighting Indonesia to defend Malaysia, while 69 per cent favoured conscription.⁶ It was clear by early August that if the Government decided to accept an obligation to defend Malaysia, such a policy would face little domestic opposition.

Internationally, the situation was also moving to Malaysia's advantage and, with anti-Indonesian forces growing stronger in the USA, restraints on a pro-Malaysian Australian policy appeared to be lifting. On 25 July, in Washington, the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted 17 to 12 to stop US aid to Indonesia unless the President considered it to be in the national interest. Representative Broomfield, a leading critic of Djakarta, complained that 'instead of curbing Sukarno our nation's foreign policy appears to be to placate him'.⁷ Again, in early August, while the Administration was reported to be enthusiastic about the Maphilindo agreement,⁸ a House sub-committee insisted that the Government

1 Courier-Mail, West Australian, Walter Brown: SMH, 24 Aug and West 7 Sept. This was substantiated during interviews with senior members of the ALP.

2 SMH, 22 Aug.

3 ~~West Australian~~ West Australian, 7 Sept.

4 'Labor's New Defence Policy', Bulletin, 10 Aug; 'Malaysia - Another Labor Split', Bulletin, 7 Sept.

5 Nation, 10 Aug; D.Mirror, 13 Aug.

6 APOP, Nos, 1698-1710, September-October 1963. Support for Malaysia had increased from 55 per cent to 58 per cent since April.

7 NYT, 26 July.

8 See Chapter Three, supra, pp.91-2.

should explain its aid policy towards Indonesia and the meaning of the clause in the Manila Accords concerning the temporary nature of foreign bases on the territory of the signatory powers.¹ Robert Trumbull appears to have expressed popular apprehensions when he wrote: 'Soekarno succeeded at Manila in establishing a new basis for sabotaging the emerging...Malaysia, for undermining SEATO and for eventually divorcing western military power from its principal defensive allies in this vital region'.²

During the rest of August and September interest in defence and Malaysia remained high in Australia. The Parliamentary session re-opened at the end of August when 'the keenest debate was on the estimates for the defence departments with the Labor Party in the unaccustomed role of vociferous advocate of more effective, even if more expensive, defence'.³ This attitude on the part of the ALP was expressed by Calwell who, in his opening speech during the debate on the estimates, criticised the Government for spending only 2.7 per cent of the National Income on defence, and asserted that the 1952-3 level of 4.3 per cent should be returned to.⁴ MacMahon was probably correct when he contended that the ALP had favoured a cut in defence expenditure until it became clear that the electorate favoured an increase.⁵ The Government defended itself largely by drawing attention to the ambiguities of Labor's policies.⁶

If there was in Australia by September a widespread consensus that increased defence expenditure was necessary, and this was related to apprehensions about Indonesian intentions, it did not translate itself into a policy of, or even a desire for, confrontation of any sort with Djakarta. There remained a strong section of opinion, perhaps best represented by the Bulletin,⁷ which advocated

¹ NYT., 8 Aug.

² Ibid., 10 Aug.

³ D.W.Rawson: op.cit., p.98.

⁴ CPD,HR, vol.39, 20 Aug 1963, pp.305-6.

⁵ Ibid., pp.310-11.

⁶ Ibid., vol.39, 22 Aug 1963, p.456 (Jess); 29 Aug 1963, p.628 (Haworth).

⁷ E.g., Bulletin, 7 Sept. It has been suggested to the author that the then editor of the Bulletin was in close contact with the Department of External Affairs and that on Malaysia the journal often reflected the Department's views.

a greater effort on the part of Australia to try to understand Indonesia. At the same time it would appear that Barwick was anxious to prevent 'the Malaysia issue...[from driving] a permanent wedge between Indonesia and Australia'.¹ In part these sentiments may be attributed to a fear that the UK would withdraw from the region leaving Australia 'more and more to hold the Tunku's awkward baby'.² In Parliament the Government refused to be drawn on its Malaysia policy until the new federation was inaugurated.³ Backbenchers from both sides of the House expressed various degrees of sympathy for Indonesia's economic troubles⁴ and only Sir Wilfred Kent Hughes was openly hostile, calling Sukarno 'the petty Hitler of the Pacific'.⁵ Under these circumstances it was announced on 9 September that Barwick would visit Djakarta en route to Kuala Lumpur for the Malaysia Day celebrations of 16 September, to fully explain Australia's position and to assess that of the Indonesian Government.⁶

On 16 September the Federation of Malaysia was inaugurated amidst celebrations in its constituent states and hostile rioting in Djakarta.⁷ The Australian press was almost universally enthusiastic about the new state, while the Djakarta riots only served to increase anti-Indonesian feeling.⁸ It had become necessary for the Australian Government to declare its policy and remove the apparent ambiguities of the previous eight months.

Barwick's visit to Djakarta, and his talks there with Sukarno, Subandrio and Nasution attracted little attention. It has been suggested that the visit did much to dispel Barwick's sympathy for Indonesia. Press reports at the time did little more than agree that Barwick had some 'unpleasant' interviews and that he firmly stated the Australian position.⁹ Barwick himself gave little indication of what had occurred, except admitting, on his return to

¹ Economist, 7 Sept 1963.

² Times, 13 Sept.

³ CPD,HR, vol.39, 10 Sept 1963, p.745.

⁴ Ibid., 12 Sept 1963, pp.948 (Bury), p.954 (King), pp.963-5 (Jess).

⁵ Ibid., p.959.

⁶ Age, 10 Sept 1963.

⁷ See Chapter Three, supra.

⁸ 17 Sept; Daily Telegraph, 18 Sept, 20 Sept; West Australian, 19 Sept; Age, 20 Sept; SMH, 21 Sept.

⁹ Bruce Grant: Age, 16 Sept; Guy Harriott: SMH, 16 Sept.

Sydney, that he and Subandrio had 'an agreement to disagree'. He felt that under the circumstances 'the important thing is to keep your bridges up'.¹ The following April at a press conference he elaborated a little. When asked if the Indonesians knew that the ANZUS Treaty applied to Australia's involvement in Malaysia's defence, he replied: 'Oh, yes, they know. You know this goes back to when I saw Sukarno last September. This was made plain and he himself said to me that he knew he would be opposed by the British and by us and by the Americans. He knew that then'.²

It appears that during the first seven months of 1963 Australia favoured making concessions to Indonesia in order to lessen her hostility to Malaysia.³ At the same time Canberra wished, as did the US, to warn Djakarta discreetly of the consequences if confrontation was continued. Some Australian officials considered that the UK had not tried sufficiently to ameliorate relations with Indonesia⁴ and it appears that Canberra suggested that London pay more attention to Indonesian objections, particularly with respect to the dispute over the observers of the UN investigation and the date for the formation of Malaysia. But it seems that during his visit to Djakarta in September 1963 Barwick became convinced that by that stage Malaysia could not be formed without incurring Indonesian hostility.⁵ Australia's efforts had been unsuccessful.

On 17 September the Prime Minister indicated in the House of Representatives that the previous defence arrangement with Malaya would be extended to Malaysia.⁶ The press approved the proposed commitment but there was some controversy as to whether it should 'be on the same vague and unsatisfactory basis', or explicitly defined in a treaty.⁷ Barwick clearly favoured an exchange of

1
SMH, 21 Sept.

2
Press Release (DEA Canberra) 17 April 1964.

3
Much of the information in this paragraph has come from interviews with Government officials, but its contents may be partly deduced from information presented earlier.

4
One official felt that 30 Indonesian observers should have been admitted to the Borneo states and Malaysia's formation delayed at least until 1 Oct.

5
As he admitted on his return to Sydney, SMH, 21 Sept.

6
CPD,HR, vol.39, 17 Sept 1963, p.1026.

7
SMH, 18 Sept; see also Ad.News, 19 Sept.

notes, arguing that 'this flexible Commonwealth arrangement allows you to make your political decisions in the current circumstances according to their need'.¹ The significance of this statement became clearer during the following eighteen months. The Canberra correspondent of the London Times assessed the position in the following terms:

Events in Djakarta have hardened Australian opinion towards Indonesia, whose government has been trying for a long time to keep the policies of Australia and Britain towards it as far apart as possible. There is certainly a strong disposition here [in Australia] not to underwrite completely the Tunku's policies by giving him unquestioning support in all the territories of the Federation. There is also a reluctance to commit Australian soldiers in the Borneo territories, in case Indonesia retaliates by formenting trouble along the border with New Guinea. 2

As the Age pointed out, under these circumstances the Government preferred not to have a treaty in order that it might act as it, and not other signatories, saw fit.³ However, with the exception of the Adelaide News,⁴ the rest of the Australian press favoured a clearer arrangement.⁵

The reaction in America to the events accompanying the inauguration of Malaysia, was similar to that in Australia. On 22 September, during a television interview, David E. Bell warned that 'the United States is able to assist other governments only when they behave sensibly in international matters'.⁶ Two days later the US Government announced that it would not start any new aid programmes to Indonesia.⁷ On the same day Dean Rusk had talks with Subandrio and was reported to have cautioned him.⁸ It would appear that, as in the case of West Irian, the US had been prepared to make considerable efforts to avoid alienating Indonesia.⁹ Although this policy had

¹
SMH, 21 Sept 1963.

²
Times, 23 Sept.

³
Age, 23 Sept.

⁴
Ad.Nows, 19 Sept.

⁵
Advertiser, Mercury, West Australian, 19 Sept; Canberra Times, Sun, 29 Sept.
20 Sept.

⁶
NYT, 23 Sept.

⁷
Ibid., 25 Sept.

⁸
Ibid., and Times, 25 Sept.

⁹
See Chapter Six, infra, for a more extensive treatment of this theme.

not been abandoned, by late September 1963 American sympathy for Indonesia was rapidly withering.

On 25 September the Prime Minister formally announced Australia's support for Malaysia in the House of Representatives.¹ He first referred to the long standing Australian commitment to Malaya, which he clarified:

The establishment of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, of SEATO - to the functions of which the Reserve was relevant - the negotiations of the Anzus pact, are all on the same pattern....There has been some suggestion that our forces in Malaya went there primarily for the purposes of internal security. This is not so. As I have indicated, they went there and are there as part of a strategic reserve...as a contribution to the defence of the South-East Asian area.

Referring to Malaysia he went on to say that 'we have publicly and unambiguously said that we support Malaysia which is, never let it be forgotten, a Commonwealth country'. The Prime Minister also thought it necessary to explain why a bilateral treaty had not been signed, saying: 'The Government of Malaysia has said clearly that this exchange [of letters] is completely satisfactory to it. But it has not been the normal practice of Commonwealth countries to spell out in detail their sense of mutual obligation, nor to confine themselves to legal formulae'. Sir Robert made Australia's commitment to Malaysia explicit in the final sentence of the statement:

I therefore, after close deliberation by Cabinet, and on its behalf, inform the House that we are resolved and have so informed the Government of Malaysia, and the Governments of the United Kingdom and New Zealand and others concerned, that if, in the circumstances that now exist, and which may continue for a long time, there occurs, in relation to Malaysia or any of its constituent states, armed invasion or subversive activity - supported or directed or inspired from outside Malaysia - we shall to the best of our powers and by such means as shall be agreed upon with the Government of Malaysia, add our military assistance to the efforts of Malaysia and the United Kingdom in the defence of Malaysia's territorial integrity and political independence.

At the same time the Prime Minister tabled the Anglo-Malayan and Anglo-Malaysian defence agreements and the two exchanges of notes which associated Australia with those agreements.²

¹
CPD,HR, vol.40, 25 Sept 1963, pp.1338-9. See Appendix Five, infra, for text.

²
See Appendices Two and Four, infra, for texts.

As Professor Miller has pointed out, three aspects of this statement need to be considered: 'its immediate reception, its apparent meaning and its relation to subsequent events'.¹ At this stage only its reception will be analysed. As Miller continues:

Its immediate reception was almost entirely favourable. ...There seems no doubt that Sir Robert had caught the public mood: impatient at Indonesia's harrying of the new state; anxious for some new definition of the Australian position; convinced that some kind of military guarantee was necessary to encourage Malaysia.²

Newspaper editorials expressed almost complete approval of the statement and adopted a clearly anti-Indonesian posture.³ But the statement did not represent an unequivocal Australian commitment to the defence of Malaysia. The Times contention that 'it made clear for the first time that Australian forces would fight for Malaysia if necessary in the Borneo territories',⁴ while literally accurate suggested a misinterpretation of Canberra's priorities. Australia would avoid such a commitment if possible.

Later, on the same day, Calwell opened a short debate on the statement.⁵ He said: 'The Labour Party supports the concept of Malaysia and welcomes its creation. We believe that this experiment in nationhood should be given its chance, free from attack or interference from other nations, to prove itself'. He stressed that the ALP attached great importance to the findings of the UN mission to the Borneo territories and contended that 'the proper forum for disputes that may arise in the future about Malaysia is...the United Nations'. He again criticised the fact that the functions of the Australian forces in Malaysia were not clear and recommended a clear treaty with that country. He pointed out that Labor policy was to negotiate such a treaty, not to withdraw the forces.

Four other members spoke in the debate. The crucial point at issue, with both sides of the House supporting Malaysia, concerned the treaty proposal. Paul Hasluck, then Minister for Territories, made the Government's most telling point in asking 'will it [the ALP] withdraw its support if it does not get its treaty?'⁶ For the ALP

¹ J.D.B.Miller: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, July-December 1963', AJPH, April 1964, p.11.

² Ibid..

³ The Mirror and Bulletin were partial exceptions.

⁴ Times, 26 Sept.

⁵ CPD,HR, vol.40, 25 Sept 1963, pp.1365-70.

⁶ Ibid., p.1377.

only Whitlam had answered that question in the affirmative.¹ On this occasion, as on many others, it went unanswered. Despite this, and although Menzies' statement received widespread endorsement, there was 'considerable support for the declaration by Mr Calwell...that Australia ought now to have an equal voice in Anglo-Malaysian diplomacy'.²

Two aspects of the Parliamentary discussion of the commitment would appear to require some explanation. The first feature was the united stand presented by the three Labor speakers. The ALP left wing had agreed to remain quiet on the Malaysia issue and Calwell had chosen two right wing speakers in Makin and Beazley.³ Considerations of electoral advantage had overridden intra-party divisions of opinion.⁴ Again, the absence of Barwick from the House, although he was still in Australia, and although Menzies had indicated previously that Barwick would make the statement,⁵ deserves some comment. It was suggested in the press that Menzies, like Calwell, was having to paper over the cracks to present a hard line on Malaysia, for 'Sir Garfield's attitude to Indonesia and that of several of his advisers has tended to be a soft-pedal'.⁶ Menzies' explanation was that Barwick had to leave for the UN as soon as possible after the statement had been drafted by Cabinet.⁷ There seems no good reason for not accepting the Prime Minister's explanation. Nonetheless it did appear that while Barwick was stressing the need for Australia to make every effort to preserve her good relations with Indonesia, Menzies, at least in public, was more concerned to emphasise Australia's support for Malaysia.

In Australia, the reaction to the creation of Malaysia and associated events had occurred at a variety of levels in the body politic. Before 1963 it had been the Government which had shown the greatest interest in the project and had supported it because it seemed likely to create a friendly state, the structure of which would allow for the containment, if not the suppression of anti-Western forces within its borders. Canberra had accepted an

¹ Ibid., vol.39, 10 Sept, p.765.

² Times, 27 Sept.

³ West Australian,

See M.C.Uren: ~~MA~~ 28 Sept; Alan Reid: ~~XXXXXX~~ Daily Telegraph, 10 Oct.

⁴ Senior members of the ALP substantiated this in interviews with the author.

⁵ CPD,HR, vol.40, 24 Sept, p.1261.

⁶ ~~XXXXXX~~ Brisbane Courier-Mail, 28 Sept.

⁷ CPD,HR, vol.40, 25 Sept, p.1335.

obligation, which it had reaffirmed in 1959, to assist in the defence of Malaya as part of a general strategy designed to prevent the extension of Chinese and communist influence. In 1961 and 1962 with the same purpose in mind Australia had been prepared to extend that obligation to Malaysia. Djakarta's announcement of its opposition to the plan presented Canberra with the prospect of being in conflict with Indonesia. This was unfortunate, for Australia desired good relations with both Malaysia and Indonesia, at least partly in order to contain Chinese influence. In the hope that Indonesia was neither immutably expansionist nor unalterably opposed to Malaysia, Australia sought to help reconcile the differences between the two states. This objective was pursued by discreet diplomacy, Barwick in particular being careful not to make statements which might be construed in Indonesia as being inflammatory. Whether such a policy could be pursued for long was open to question, particularly as Australian opinion became increasingly vocal on the Malaysia issue.

The solution to the West Irian dispute seemed to present the Australian Government with the opportunity to establish lasting amicable relations with Indonesia. It would appear that Barwick in particular was hopeful that that could be accomplished. Australian public opinion was more inclined to view the West Irian settlement as a defeat for Australian diplomacy, a factor which contributed to the hostility shown in Australia towards Indonesia's opposition to Malaysia. Malaysia received considerable favourable publicity and was given all but unanimous support by the Australian public. At the same time there was a growing concern in Australia about the security of the country and an anxiety about the apparent inadequacy of its defence forces: these were largely responses to the apprehensions felt about Indonesia. The ALP revised its foreign policy and defence platforms rather than risk the loss of electoral support.

Menzies' statement of 25 September took account of these various factors. It appeared sufficiently firm for Malaysian and domestic opinion to take comfort in Canberra's determination to oppose Indonesian confrontation; it was sufficiently qualified to permit Canberra to continue to pursue a friendly relationship with Djakarta. It was the implementation rather than the declaration of policy which would reveal Canberra's intentions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Malaysia: Confrontations, Internal and External

In September 1963 Malaysia came into existence in the face of Indonesian and Filipino opposition. It is possible that Djakarta's hostility could have been avoided, for example by more thorough explanation of the Federation or by more amenable policies towards Indonesia during 1963. But this is open to question and it would appear that Indonesian acceptance of Malaysia was only to be bought at a price unacceptable to Kuala Lumpur: recognition of Indonesia's regional dominance. In addition the readiness with which Indonesia resorted to force and yet vociferously denounced the reaction, and even the presence, of the forces of Malaysia's allies, seemed to render disputable the bona fides of her ostensible intentions. Indonesian actions had led to the strengthening of British forces in the area. In this respect Indonesian policy appeared to be counter-productive. During the first year of Malaysia's existence Indonesian demands became less flexible and less acceptable to Kuala Lumpur, and it became increasingly likely that confrontation was the result of Indonesian domestic politics. The contentions of Kuala Lumpur and some Western observers, that Indonesian policy was increasingly directed by the PKI and so less susceptible to modification, are not to be treated lightly. Indonesian attitudes did appear to move closer to those of Peking. Although Djakarta continued to insist that it merely sought the full implementation of the Manila Agreements, PKI opposition to both those Agreements and to compromise in general, served only to increase the scepticism of observers. It began to appear that Malaysia was unacceptable to Indonesia on any terms except in tutelary relationship with Indonesia. Whereas in early 1963 Kuala Lumpur had been prepared to make concessions in the hope of ameliorating Indonesian hostility, following the creation of Malaysia it became less willing to do so. During the first nine months of the Federation's existence the situation hardened and the positions of the disputants became more rather than less disparate.

In addition to being beset by Indonesian confrontation, Malaysia was facing the strains perhaps inevitable in a new federation. The constitutional framework was an adequate starting point but clearly the Federal Government would have to adjust to its new role: UMNO would have to handle carefully the various regional and communal

aspirations. That neither UMNO nor those aspirants were liberally endowed with the spirit of compromise soon became apparent. By mid-1964 it was clear that negotiations were unlikely to solve the problem of confrontation, and compromise unlikely to resolve smoothly the Federation's internal disputes.

The first repercussions of the inauguration of Malaysia were perhaps predictable. Riots ensued in Djakarta and the British and Malaysian Embassies were attacked, the former being burnt and sacked. Both Indonesia and the Philippines refused to extend recognition and on 17 September the Malaysian Cabinet decided to sever relations with the two states, who were asked to withdraw their missions within a week.¹ Shortly after, Sukarno announced an embargo on all Indonesian trade with Malaysia.² Whether this would harm Indonesia (of whose total exports of US 600 million, 98 million went to Malaysia, while Singapore dealt with entrepot trade to the value of a further 168 million) more than Malaysia, was debatable. But only the severity of the effect of this move on the latter's economy was open to question.³ In September Lee estimated that as a result of Indonesia's trade embargo two thousand Singaporeans would lose their jobs;⁴ later estimates were more pessimistic. Sukarno then ordered the breaking of air links with Malaysia⁵ and in November the taking over of Malaysian assets in Indonesia.⁶ The rationale for Indonesian hostility remained the same: Malaysia was a neo-colonialist plot and the wishes of the Bornean people had not been properly ascertained.⁷ Coupled with the continuation, indeed intensification, of guerrilla raids into Sarawak, these events only served to increase the hostility between the two states.

The issues at dispute were clearly shown during the 1963 session of the UN General Assembly. Having on 17 September objected to the seating of the Malaysian delegation,⁸ on 27 September the

1
ST, 18 Sept 1963. Suadi, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, attributed the refusal to grant recognition to the power held by the Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia's fear of an extension of Peking's influence. This explanation may have just been for the benefit of Western audiences, Age, 18 Sept 1963.

2
NYT, 22 Sept 1963.

3
Economist, 21 Sept 1963.

4
ST, 1 Oct 1963.

5
NYT, 26 Sept 1963.

6
ST, 30 Nov.

7
NYT, 26 Sept.

8
Official Records of the UN General Assembly, 18th Session, vol.1, Meeting 1206, 17 Sept 1963, p.2.

Indonesian representative, Palar, delivered an extensive criticism of the British propensity to federate ex-colonies, pointing out the list of failures in this regard, and continued by describing Malaysia as a British designed, enforced and promulgated plot. He alleged that Kuala Lumpur had accepted the Manila Agreements, and was then forced by Britain to break them. He attributed this to Britain's fear that she might be asked to vacate her military bases in Malaysia. Palar insisted that if Bornean opinion was shown to favour Malaysia, his Government would welcome the Federation.¹ The Malaysian delegate reiterated his Government's position.² The British delegate, Lord Home, argued that the UK was anxious to grant independence to colonies, but only to viable units within the framework of self-determination.³ On 30 September Palar extended his attack, criticising Malaysia as part of a plot to maintain the 'Pax Britannica' in Southeast Asia,⁴ claiming 'what we want there, and what we are entitled to have is a Pax Indonesia in our territory'.⁵ He later described the Brunei revolt as an insurrection popular throughout Borneo, which had been suppressed by the British. He admitted that thousands of rebels had fled to Kalimantan only to return to attack the British.⁶ Despite his activity Palar failed to get Malaysia's right to a UN seat challenged, even within the Afro-Asian caucus.⁷

The months following the establishment of Malaysia witnessed various efforts to get the disputants to resume negotiations. In September 1963 the Philippines approached Kuala Lumpur and Djakarta with this end in view. Sukarno was amenable providing there were no preconditions.⁸ The Tunku, conversely, agreed to talks providing three conditions were fulfilled: any agreement should be honoured, Malaysia should be recognised, and attacks on Borneo should be ended and Indonesian forces withdrawn.⁹ Similar efforts by the

1
Ibid., Meeting 1219, 27 Sept 1963, pp.3-12.

2
Ibid., pp.16-8.

3
Ibid., pp.18-9.

4
Ibid., Meeting 1221, 30 Sept 1963, pp.18-9.

5
Ibid., p.15.

6
Ibid., Meeting 1237, 10 Oct 1963, p.8.

7
ST, 25 Oct 1963.

8
Ibid., 21 Sept; Nation (Burma) 7 Oct.

9
ST, 21 Sept.

Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Ikeda, during his tour of Southeast Asia¹ met with a lack of success, the Tunku expressing the same reservations.² Ikeda abandoned his efforts³ as did the Japanese Foreign Minister, in November, after encountering a similar impasse.⁴ A third prospective mediator appeared when Thailand proposed a summit meeting at Bangkok,⁵ but the Tunku remained unwilling to participate while military confrontation continued.⁶ But from 12 to 18 November the Colombo Plan conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Bangkok; Razak, Subandrio and Lopez attended.⁷ Despite Thanat Khoman's efforts neither Subandrio, nor Razak, who repeated Malaysia's conditions, appeared enthusiastic to reconvene negotiations.⁸ The three parted, agreeing that a more congenial atmosphere was needed before talks could be resumed.⁹

These efforts at mediation revealed the degree of polarisation in the dispute. Malaysia was reluctant to negotiate while Indonesia continued to use force.¹⁰ But Kuala Lumpur does appear to have largely rejected by that time the possibility of successfully negotiating a settlement, viewing Djakarta's policy as part of a long term plan for expansion¹¹ and as being communist directed and so implacable.¹² The Tunku on one occasion said that only the overthrow of the Indonesian Government would prevent its expansionist ambitions being fulfilled.¹³ This was an unfortunate but understandable reaction to Indonesian pressure. The gulf between

1
Japan Times, 20 Sept.

2
Nation, 27 Sept.

3
ST, 30 Sept.

4
Dj. D. Mail, 20 Nov; Japan Times, 21 Nov.

5
ST, 2 Oct 1963.

6
Ibid..

7
Ibid., 9 and 13 Nov; Bangkok Post, 10 Nov.

8
ST, 18 Nov.

9
Dj. D. Mail, 19 Nov; Daniel Wolfstone and Bernadino Ronquillo: 'Malaysia's Mediators', FEER, 30 Jan 1964, p.203.

10
ST, 28 Nov.

11
MPD,HR, 11 Dec 1963, cols.1949-69.

12
ST, 15 Oct 1963.

13
Ibid., 4 Oct 1963.

the two states' positions was growing and a strong initiative would clearly be required to bring negotiations. This initiative was provided by the US.

American policy towards Indonesia was ambivalent. Although Sukarno was increasingly unpopular in the US, Washington was anxious to prevent Indonesia from being drawn into the communist bloc. The US was prepared to make considerable efforts to maintain friendly relations with Djakarta, and desired a negotiated settlement to the Malaysia dispute. If possible, open US support for Malaysia was to be avoided.¹ Following reports that America was considering mediating in the dispute,² and the despatch of a note from President Johnson to Sukarno expressing concern at the latter's policies,³ it was announced that Robert Kennedy, the US Attorney-General and brother of the late President, would visit Tokyo for talks with the Indonesian President.⁴ Probably seeking to capitalise on US fears, on arrival in Tokyo Subandrio warned that Indonesia might be forced to seek aid from Peking against Malaysia.⁵ Certainly Kennedy was more than cautious, saying that the problem 'must be decided, resolved and determined by Asian countries, not by outsiders',⁶ and being careful to avoid committing the US to support for Malaysia.⁷ He met Sukarno and proposed that Indonesia implement a cease-fire in Borneo and that negotiations then be resumed. Sukarno agreed to this proposal and Kennedy appeared to be impressed with his reasonableness. After visits to Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Djakarta, Kennedy got an agreement that there would be tripartite talks in Bangkok following a cease-fire in Borneo.⁸

Sukarno appears to have persuaded Kennedy of Indonesia's value as a bulwark against Peking, perhaps within the Maphilindo framework.⁹ Others were less optimistic than Kennedy. The British were clearly

¹ See Chapters Four and Six for more detailed treatment of US policy.

² Nation, 21 Sept and 5 Oct.

³ See Chapter Six, infra, p.216.

⁴ NYT, 15 Jan 1964.

⁵ Ibid., 16 Jan.

⁶ Times, 17 Jan.

⁷ Ibid., 18 Jan.

⁸ Ibid., 23 Jan.

⁹ Ibid., 28 Jan 1964.

sceptical during Kennedy's subsequent visit to London.¹ The Malaysians were even less pleased, one official complaining that 'when Kennedy said Asia for the Asians he meant Asia for the Indonesians, that the Indonesians should solve the problem. How should we survive without the British?' He roundly abused Kennedy's efforts to mediate.² An American diplomat was more subtle: 'Kennedy thought that when Sukarno nods his head, he agrees. In fact it only means that he understood what you said'. He said most US officials in the area thought the trip to be a mistake, the result of domestic politics.³ Considering America's extensive military presence in Asia, Kennedy's attitude did appear to be inconsistent.

After visiting Manila, where he received some support for his position, Sukarno again saw Kennedy in Djakarta and on 23 January ordered a cease-fire.⁴ The Tunku agreed to accept Kennedy's proposals, with a cease-fire to be the only precondition to talks, although as Sandys pointed out this would not prevent further reinforcements (a battalion of Gurkhas) being sent to Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur was to 'talk softly but carry a big stick'.⁵ Although both sides had moderated their positions, the likelihood of a negotiated settlement remained remote, particularly when on the day after the cease-fire was announced, Sukarno revealed that confrontation would continue. 'Indonesia may change its tactics', he added, 'but our goal will remain the same', to crush Malaysia.⁶

After various discussions with Thanat Khoman it was agreed that the talks begin at a ministerial level in Bangkok on 5 February,⁷ and that a series of meetings would be necessary. On 10 February the talks ended with Indonesia refusing to withdraw her forces but agreeing to continue the cease-fire.⁸ Kuala Lumpur was becoming increasingly disenchanted with the negotiations for not only had no advances been made at the talks but the cease-fire gave no indication of having been implemented.

¹
Ibid., 1 Feb.

²
In an interview with the author, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

³
In an interview. Times, 6 Feb, reported that the US realised that it had been a mistake to send Kennedy without consulting the UK.

⁴
Indon Herald, 24 Jan, 'as part of a general cease-fire implemented by all parties concerned'.

⁵
Times, 24 Jan.

⁶
SMH, 25 Jan.

⁷
Bangkok Post, Times, 3 Feb.

⁸
ST, 11 Feb.

The talks had neither improved relations between the states nor defined their differences.¹ The Indonesian delegation had asserted that the difficulties arose 'from the improper implementation of the Manila Agreements', and 'that Indonesia would welcome Malaysia provided the wishes of the people of Sarawak and Sabah are ascertained in the way laid down in the Manila Agreements'. The difficulties were attributed to 'certain outside forces' causing the observers' dispute and the precipitate implementation of Malaysia: Sukarno had been 'treated lightly'. The Indonesian delegation denied that there was any urgency, and when asked to specify Indonesian grievances argued that the delegations 'should exchange points of view and not stress so much on points of disagreement'. At a later stage the Indonesians contended that the British were at fault and objections were raised to the 'presence of British bases'.

These objections were vague and, given Indonesian assumptions, difficult to refute. Clearly Djakarta was far from accepting the two conditions which Malaysia deemed essential for a settlement: 'a) Indonesia must take into account Malaysia's territorial integrity; and b) Indonesia must acknowledge and respect the national existence and sovereignty of Malaysia'. The Malaysian delegates were in a frustrating position; assailed by confrontation they were unable precisely to ascertain Indonesian desires. As one delegate pointed out,

The impression is that whatever Malaysia does it has never been satisfactory to Indonesia....Tomorrow you will create a new difficulty, a new problem. We have done nothing which is acceptable to you. Now what do you really want? 2

While the Malaysian case was not watertight, the frustration was understandable. Many of Indonesia's objections stemmed from the British military presence, which Malaysia was clearly unwilling to have removed, at least in the short term.³ As Razak pointed out, the British were there to oppose aggression, although 'if Malaysia was satisfied that it could live in peace with its neighbours, the Anglo-Malaysian defence treaty could be reviewed'.⁴

1

The following account is based on information obtained from official sources in Kuala Lumpur.

2

Ibid..

3

Times, 8 Feb.

4

Ibid., 6 Feb.

Malaysia was thus growing increasingly sceptical of the value of further talks. Indonesia not only refused to withdraw forces from Borneo but wanted to supply them by military aircraft, desiring first a 'political solution'.¹ Further, the PKI made no secret of its hostility to compromise.² The second round of talks were delayed while Indonesian forces remained active in Borneo.³ RAF units were sent to Borneo, at Kuala Lumpur's request, to prevent Indonesia supplying ~~the~~^{the guerrillas}.⁴ Finally it was agreed that talks would begin on 3 March in Bangkok. Both sides maintained their positions and within two days the talks collapsed. It appeared that the cease-fire period had ended.⁵

Throughout this period the Philippines had taken an almost neutral stand, approving neither confrontation nor Malaysia. Manila continued to work for negotiations and on 17 March announced that a compromise formula had been agreed upon for talks to be held after the Malayan elections, due in late April. Indonesia would withdraw her forces under Thai supervision, talks would begin simultaneously and a summit meeting would follow.⁶ Subandrio agreed to this.⁷

Negotiations still centred around the preconditions for talks, not for a settlement to the dispute. Sukarno continued to demand a Bornean plebiscite,⁸ Malaysia to refuse one. At this time one rationale for Indonesian policy was presented by Subandrio in an interview for the Times at the Hague.⁹ He argued that both the UK and Indonesia wished to contain Peking's influence but differed in their proposed means. Malaysia would be dominated by the Chinese. Suggesting that the British bases were not a threat to Indonesia but that they did increase tensions in the area, he voiced four objections to Malaysia: 1) that it was not clear that Bornean

¹
Indon Herald, 19 Feb.

²
Harian Rakyat, 17 Jan 1964. Alex Josey: 'Aidit and Malaysia', FEER, 20 Feb 1964, p.422, quotes Aidit in an interview as saying that he was pushing Sukarno against Malaysia. See van der Kroef: The Communist Party of Indonesia, pp.282-3.

³
SMH, 20 Feb 1964.

⁴
Times, 21 and 26 Feb.

⁵
See Times, 5 March 1964; and ST, 6 March for statement by Lopez.

⁶
ST, 19 March.

⁷
Ibid., 26 March.

⁸
Age, 28 April.

⁹
Times, 6 April.

opinion favoured the Federation; 2) Malaysia could be used to subvert Indonesia; 3) the British had both the economic and military power to control Malaysia; and 4) the Manila Agreements had not been properly implemented. It seemed unlikely that he would use the same arguments in Peking or to the PKI.

By April 1964 the possibility of a negotiated settlement seemed remote. But confrontation, though an irritant, seemed unlikely to threaten Malaysia's existence while British forces continued to protect the Federation. At that stage Djakarta was avoiding an escalation of the military conflict while making efforts to exacerbate the very real internal difficulties of Malaysia. The Federation was not only beset with inter-regional differences, but also with the problems inherent in such a racially and politically pluralist society. It did seem that within each of the component states a majority of the population approved the Federation.¹ But it became clear during Malaysia's first year that the various political groups had differing images of how Malaysia should develop and that these groups had different political aspirations which might well prove incompatible. Although the most important of these problems related to Singapore, it is most convenient to deal with the Borneo states first.

It was eastern Malaysia that was most affected by confrontation. Sarawak suffered constant military harassment, raiding parties from Indonesia regularly infiltrating the state. In December 1963 Sabah experienced its first serious attack when some 150 Indonesians crossed the border near Tawau and inflicted a number of casualties on the Security Forces, including eight Malay soldiers, before withdrawing.² But Malaysia brought problems other than confrontation to Borneo.

Bornean interests and aspirations did not always coincide with those of Malaya. The dislike of Malays, a legacy of the ~~nineteenth~~ ^{earlier} century Brunei Malay empire in Borneo and apparently widespread among natives and Chinese alike,³ extended to a fear of domination by Malaya - a fact which the Cobbold Commission had been at pains to point out. In Malaya, efforts were being made to eliminate the

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For this purpose Malaya may be viewed as one state; in fact in September 1963 Kelantan had sought to secede.

2

ST, 31 Dec 1963. Malaysian forces had only joined British forces in Borneo that month.

3

See Tom Harrisson (ed): The Peoples of Sarawak; and North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak (Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, 1956).

vestiges of British rule in two spheres: by the Malayanisation (in fact the Malay-isation) of the government services and by the adoption of Malay as the national language. In Borneo different policies were being pursued. The education systems had been moving towards the adoption of English as the general medium of instruction, while government services were being Borneanised.¹ Expatriate officials would retain their positions until Borneans could replace them, Malaysians would not be used. These differences appeared to be minor, but in the course of time they were compounded with others of religion and culture.² In September 1963, for example, Kuala Lumpur had insisted that the Sarawak Governor be a Malay.³ At the root of the problems of Bornean-federal relations (and they were to grow rather than diminish) was the patronising attitude adopted by the Malayan Alliance Government. The Malayan Alliance parties had helped create Bornean politics in their own communally based image. This was unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable in any case. The Malayan tendency then to treat the Bornean Alliances as offshoots of their own Alliance and to ignore their disparate interests was hardly wise.⁴ In this respect confrontation does appear to have helped paper over the cracks.⁵

Borneo's other major internal problem was the armed insurrection of a section of Sarawak's Chinese. Passing reference has already been made to this situation but to the extent that it represents a facet of Malaysia's central problem, that of the future of the Nanyang Chinese, it is deserving of more intensive investigation. The manifestations of the Chinese revolt were clear: emigre Chinese guerrillas returned and led Indonesian raiding parties into Sarawak and resident Chinese sometimes gave them aid. Occasionally

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See R.H.K.Wong: 'Education and Problems of Nationhood', in Wang Gungwu (ed): Malaysia. See also statements by Ningkan, Sarawak by the Week, 3/64 and Sarawak Tribune, 9 July 1964. Tuan Syed Nasir bin Ismail, Director of the Language and Literature Agency, said, 'I am afraid expatriate officers in the Borneo territories are trying to split the unity of Malaysians on the language issue', Sarawak by the Week, 27/64.

2

Particularly Islam as the national religion and a Malay Sultan as the monarch.

3

Sarawak Tribune, 13 and 14 Sept 1963.

4

Abdullah Ahmad, Tun Razak's Secretary, described to the author how Ibans were just a particular sort of Malay and spoke a similar language, mutually intelligible. As a Malay party PANAS was particularly concerned at the possibility of UMNO domination, Sarawak by the Week, 43/63.

4

Ningkan believed this to be the case, Borneo Bulletin, 31 Oct 1964.

the Chinese also committed acts of terrorism within Sarawak, though these rarely reached alarming proportions. Some bombs were thrown in Kuching and on at least one occasion an uncooperative Chinese was tried and punished by a 'people's court'.¹ The reasons for the Chinese revolt are more difficult to establish. The Government's explanation, couched in terms of a communist conspiracy,² while superficially perhaps accurate, is not entirely satisfactory. Insurrections existed before communists: Marxism is probably an articulation rather than a creation of grievances conducive to revolt.

In contrast to those of Sarawak, the Chinese of Sabah, while retaining their communal cohesiveness in terms of voting behaviour,³ gave every indication of being integrated into the political system. Certainly no equivalent of the CCO existed. As the situation in the two states appeared to be comparable in other respects, this fact may be useful in an explanation of the CCO activities. Communism, or Peking oriented Chinese chauvinism, was certainly strong in Sarawak and was perpetuated by the Chinese language press and education system. Its adherents until 1963 appeared to be prepared to use constitutional methods to further their ends; the opportunities offered by Indonesian policies were not neglected. But this does not explain their specific grievances. Clearly they had lost the battle to have Chinese language education under Government auspices, but so had they in Sabah. Certainly political discrimination against and under-representation of, the Chinese was greater in Sarawak, but this was largely a result of their massive support for the radical SUPP. The less assertive and non-radical Sarawak Chinese Association⁴ wielded undue influence for its poor electoral support. Under-representation of the Chinese was a result of, not the reason for, their radicalism. Again, the Chinese of Sabah appear to have been more inclined to look to Taiwan for their cultural and educational facilities.⁵ Reasons for this are difficult to establish. The suggestion⁶ that Sabah's security service was more effective in the 1950s in detecting and isolating the apostles of the New China might be a clue towards providing

¹
Sarawak Tribune, 17 Dec 1963.

²
See The Danger Within; and The Communist Threat to Sarawak (Government Printer, Kuching, 1966).

³
Glick: 'The Chinese Community in Sabah'.

⁴
A member of the Sarawak Alliance.

⁵
Times, 23 Dec 1963.

⁶
Voiced to the author by a Sabahan official in an interview in Jesselton, June 1966.

an answer, as might Kuching's proximity to and links with Singapore, where the Malayan Communist Party is reputed to have its headquarters. Another explanation is more intriguing and more plausible.

The eastern Divisions of Sarawak have a large population of densely settled Chinese smallholders, most of whom produce cash crops. Numbering some one hundred and fifty thousand in 1960, these Chinese can hardly be accurately described as rural insofar as they have access to urban facilities, particularly newspapers and education systems.¹ It was among these Chinese that CCO support was most widespread. During the Malayan Emergency it was among a similar group of Chinese, the squatter communities fearful for the security of their land tenure, that the terrorists received much of their support.² Similarly it seems that it was from the Singapore 'rural' Chinese that the Barisan received greatest support in the 1963 elections. (This group was possibly concerned that Malaysia might bring with it the introduction of Malay special rights with regard to land tenure). To utilise such groups for communist purposes corresponded with Mao Tse-tung's theories on insurrection,³ presumably well known to overseas Chinese communists. In the case of Sarawak the opportunity was almost classic: the Chinese were politically aware, culturally attuned to the New China and easily reached by communist cadres and propaganda. Their grievances (and what rural community does not have grievances against an urban, and in this case culturally alien, government?) were easily found. The Chinese were being discriminated against politically, culturally and linguistically. In addition the land holding laws reserved much of the state to the natives. Mixed land, or that which the Chinese might own, extended only to a limited distance each side of the major roads.⁴ This area the Chinese settled intensively, surrounded by largely unoccupied native reserves. The CCO had little difficulty in articulating the aspirations of these Chinese. In 1963 it had taken to arms. In the rural areas it found that both the terrain and population provided favourable conditions. In the urban areas the

1

L.W.Jones: Sarawak Census of Population 1960, Additional Tables p.29.

2

See Clutterbuck: The Long, Long War.

3

See Stuart R. Schram: The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (Praeger, New York, 1963) particularly the introduction.

4

See Sarawak Annual Report, 1962, pp.51-4 and map. Perhaps significantly CCO support was greatest where this situation was most acute: Serian Road and the lower Rajang.

radical Chinese were largely content to express their dissatisfaction by political methods, generally by supporting SUPP, although some joined the rural insurrection.

The relationship of the CCO to SUPP also requires investigation. At a local branch level there is little doubt that SUPP is often heavily infiltrated by, and sometimes synonymous with, the CCO.¹ This is understandable and not very vehemently denied by the SUPP leadership.² The SUPP leadership, however, is composed largely of moderates who claim (probably accurately) to be socialists³ and without whom the extremists within the party could not function legally. The relationship of the leadership to the mass base is more difficult to evaluate. Stephen Yong on a number of occasions asserted that SUPP accepted Malaysia once the Federation had been created, but it appeared that such sentiments were not popular throughout the party.⁴ Again, when the National Service bill was presented to the Council Negri for approval, two of the SUPP members present voted against it while others expressed approval.⁵ In 1965 the tenuous control which the moderates had over the mass base, was to be put to a much more vigorous test.

Sarawak presented the Malaysian problem in miniature. The Government would not prevent the Chinese from retaining their language and culture but would make every effort to encourage the growth among the Chinese community of the local media. To participate in the public affairs of the state, English would have to be learnt.⁶ This might have been disadvantageous for the Chinese but seemed an acceptable solution to the problem of intercommunal communication. However, to that disadvantage has to be added the undoubted discrimination practised against the Chinese politically, culturally, in government employment, in land holding and (or so it may have

1.

Sarawak by the Week, 20/64, the SUPP Lundu branch was proscribed for aiding the Indonesians with the help of smallholders. See also Robert O. Tilman: 'The Sarawak Political Scene', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1964-5, pp.412-25, and Justus M. van der Kroef: 'Communism and the Guerrilla War in Sarawak', World Today, Feb 1964, pp.50-60.

2.

Sarawak by the Week, 26/64, p.10 ff (Ong Kee Hui). Interview with Stephen Yong, Kuching, June 1966.

3.

Ibid..

4.

ST, 13 March 1964; MPD,HR, 22 May 1964, col.481 (Ong Kee Hui).

5.

Sarawak by the Week, 11/64, pp.1-2, and 16/64, p.1.

6.

The Malaysia Agreement provided for the implementation of Malay at a later stage.

seemed to the Chinese) by the security police.¹ In Sabah the Chinese were prepared to accept this system; in Sarawak the rural Chinese in particular were not. (The difference may have been due in part to Sabah's long standing economic boom and labour shortage.²) The CCO took advantage of this situation and created a mass based communal movement. One may sympathise with Chinese grievances but the extreme communal solution (and such it was) offered by the CCO was no answer. The colonial and then the native dominated governments may be criticised for creating discontent among the Chinese but in a fuller perspective the Chinese were prospering. To have allowed the competitive process full reign would have meant relegating the natives, the majority, to a position of inferiority, which would have then been no more of a long term solution than that of the CCO. The CCO revolt was not, as the Barisan contended, a national war of liberation like that of Algeria, China or Vietnam.³ It was a part of a larger intercommunal struggle for position and power within Sarawak and an expression of sectional interests.

The creation of Malaysia may be at least partly attributed to the problems (real or imaged) that the radical left wing in Singapore seemed likely to provide for Malaya. Paradoxically the problems which the Singapore radicals presented were quickly solved; those which had been generated by the creation of the Federation appeared to be more lasting. On 4 September the PAP announced that state elections were to be held and that nominations would be made on 12 September.⁴ On the latter date it was revealed that polling day would be 21 September. The main contenders for power would clearly be the PAP and the Barisan, and although it seemed unlikely that the latter would gain an overall popular majority, its widespread support was not to be disputed. The Barisan campaigned largely on the following issues: opposition to the Malaysia Agreement which, the party contended, relegated Singapore to second class status; a democratic, socialist Malaysia with proportional representation; abolition of the ISC; the removal of foreign bases and the implementation of a neutral foreign policy; and greater recognition of Chinese language educational achievements,

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In October 1964 of 245 persons under detention about 75 per cent were Chinese, Sarawak by the Week, 29/64 and 44/64.

2

Sabah Annual Report, 1963, pp.13-14.

3

Plebian Express, 23 Dec 1963.

4

ST, 5 Sept 1963.

particularly Nanyang University degrees.¹ The PAP's campaign emphasised its material achievements and the communist/Barisan threat to Singapore. If the Barisan won, it suggested, Kuala Lumpur would be forced to suspend the constitution and take repressive action, a possibility that the Straits Times agreed was likely.² The PAP went on to argue that the Barisan might win by default if the moderate and right wing vote was split, thus all who opposed the Barisan should vote for the PAP. On one occasion Lee jibed 'vote for corruption, vote for decadent government - vote for the Alliance'.³

The result of the election was a victory for the PAP which won 47 per cent of the popular vote and 37 of the 51 Assembly seats.⁴ Of the other major parties the Barisan won 33 per cent of the votes and 13 seats, the UPP seven per cent and one seat and the Alliance eight per cent and no seats. The result was hardly an overwhelming victory for the PAP. The PAP had won all eight of those seats won by the right wing parties in 1959, including those constituencies most clearly describable as non-Chinese.⁵ There seems at least some evidence for contending that the Barisan's support was greatest in the rural and Chinese speaking areas.⁶ In communal terms, if these assertions are accepted, the PAP had shifted from its 1959 position of being an amalgam of the Chinese educated and the socialist English educated, to being an alliance between the latter and Singapore's racial minorities, with limited Chinese educated support. The Barisan's emphasis on Chinese education and the support which it received from Nanyang University tend to confirm this point. As the Chinese educated seemed likely to become an increasingly smaller proportion of the Singapore electorate, as the products of the growing English language education stream reached maturity, the new PAP mass base, if it could be retained, appeared to be at once a more viable and in many respects a more realistic long term solution to the problems inherent in Singapore's communal society. But, as in the 1962 referendum, it would be idle to contend

¹ Ibid., 13 Sept; Plebian Express, 16 Sept.

² ST, 21 Sept; Plebian Express, 16 Sept.

³ ST, 13 Sept.

⁴ Singapore Gazette Extraordinary, 24 Sept 1963.

⁵ The Southern Islands was probably the most clear example, being in 1957 69.2 per cent 'Malaysian' and only 25 per cent Chinese. See M.K.Sen: 'The Geographical Distribution of Population in Singapore' (Unpub.thesis, University of Singapore, 1959) p.18.

⁶ See Osborne: op.cit., pp.35-39; and Abdul Rahim bin Karim: 'The Left Wing in Singapore', Eastern World, Jan 1964, pp.7-8.

that the PAP's victory was attributable solely to the intrinsic appeal of its electoral programme. Many Barisan leaders had been effectively removed from the political process in operation 'cold store'. The PAP had also carried out an extensive 'election campaign' throughout 1963, its leaders having visited every constituency. In addition almost simultaneously with the announcement of the election, the PAP froze the funds of seven pro-Barisan unions who could have been expected to have contributed heavily to the party's election expenses.¹ In subsequent years by similar tactics the PAP was to disarm the Barisan and effectively convert Singapore's into a one party electoral system.

This process was begun shortly after the formation of Malaysia. On 22 September proceedings were begun to deprive Tan Lark Sye, Chairman of Nanyang University and a vocal Barisan supporter, of his citizenship, and various Nanyang University students and graduates were detained.² The PAP was careful to issue a statement explaining that this was a move against communism and not against Chinese education, but the latter was later to be quietly assailed. The Government then sought to reduce Barisan influence in the rural areas and dissolved the Singapore Rural Association and the Singapore Country People's Association.³ The Barisan rallied their most effective source of support, the unions, and on 7 October Bani announced that SATU was to hold a strike in protest against the PAP threat to deregister its member unions.⁴ The strike started on 8 October but the Government, by arresting 14 of the strike's leaders and declaring it illegal (thus subjecting its pickets to police harassment) induced some wavering in the strikers' ranks.⁵ On 10 October the strike collapsed; the unions were later deregistered. Deprived of much of its legitimate support the subsequent history of the Barisan was one of decline assisted by the occasional arrest and accompanied by the occasional protest.⁶

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ST, 10 Sept 1963. It seems that the PAP also used its rehousing schemes to ensure a more effective distribution of its voters, and its control of teacher recruitment to increase its support among new voters.

2

Ibid., 27 Sept.

3

Ibid., 4 Oct.

4

Ibid., 8 Oct.

5

Ibid., 9, 10 and 11 Oct.

6

By 1966 the party was boycotting the electoral process and the Assembly, and was experiencing serious repercussions of the Red Guard upheavals in China.

In order for Malaysia to survive the undoubted regional, racial and ideological conflicts that existed within its framework, considerable tolerance would be required. Sarawak's dissident Chinese, perhaps understandably, were unwilling to practise such tolerance and resorted to arms. With regard to similar Chinese in Singapore, both the Alliance and PAP Governments were willing to utilise their extensive constitutional powers to prevent similar developments. By 1964 it appeared unlikely that either situation, unless considerably exacerbated by Indonesian or other activity, would disrupt the fundamental equilibrium of Malaysia. But while the Barisan militants and the CCO (and at the other extreme, Azahari) represented elements outside the central Malaysian political spectrum, there were forces within it, the interplay between which could lead to such a disruption. Early 1964 was to witness their evolution. It became clear that there existed a segment of Malayan opinion opposed to Malaysia, and that within the remainder there existed divergent views of the optimum structure of the future Malaysian polity. The Malayan elections of April 1964 crystallized these problems.

Among the major opposition parties it was the Socialist Front that was expected to make the best electoral showing. Certainly, one of its spokesmen was optimistic that the party might win control of three state legislatures, Penang, Selangor and Malacca.¹ Claiming to be, like the Alliance, non-communal, the Front attacked all other parties for being communal and the Alliance for its subservience to the British and for its lack of socialism.² But as Tan Chee Khoo, a prominent member of the Labour Party, pointed out, 'the issue of Malaysia has come to dominate this general election'.³ The Front opposed the method by which Malaysia had been formed and pledged that it would ascertain the wishes of the Bornean people.⁴ It criticised the Government for taking the attitude that to negotiate with Indonesia was to surrender.⁵

If the Socialist Front opposed Malaysia for reasons of principle, the PMIP was more concerned with racialist arguments. For most of the PMIP supporters neither Malaysia nor Indonesia appeared to be attractive units to join: its supporters envisaged a tranquil,

1 Enche Abdul Aziz bin Ishak: Broadcast, Radio Malaysia, 15 April 1964.

2 Ibid., and broadcasts by Miss P.G.Lim, 22 March, and Tan Chee Khoo, 19 April.

3 Tan Chee Khoo: op.cit..

4 Manifesto of the Socialist Front for 1964 General Election.

5 Miss P.G.Lim: op.cit..

traditional Islamic Sultanate. As one of the party's leaders pointed out:

Our main objectives are: to establish, to preserve, to protect and to strengthen our religion and society. Islam and the society which professed Islam existed in Malaya before people from other lands came here, before the advent of imperialism and colonialism, before the coming of socialism and communism...Our hospitality has been trampled under the feet until we become helpless and impotent, giving away our rights...until we become foreigners in our own land... it would be wrong to separate religion from politics ...support the Islamic party. 1

PMIP appeal was clearly communal.

The third political group was the pro-Malaysia opposition, best represented by the PAP. The relationship that the PAP would have with the central government had, while relations were good in 1961 and 1962, been given little consideration. During 1963 those good relations had deteriorated. The bad feeling between the PAP and the MCA, probably unavoidable in view of their competitive positions, erupted into open conflict.² In addition, the PAP's precarious domestic position had forced it to champion forcefully Singapore's interests. It struck a hard bargain in the later stages of the Malaysia negotiations,³ openly criticised Kuala Lumpur's attempted appeasement of Indonesia (which it regarded as pursuing 'international blackmail')⁴ and made no secret of its hostility to Maphilindo.⁵ Finally, rather than accept the delay in the formation of Malaysia required by the Manila Agreements, the PAP declared Singapore's independence on 1 September 1963.⁶ None of these activities endeared the PAP to the Alliance. The position was worsened when, during the Singapore elections, Lee attacked the Singapore Alliance as 'corrupt' and 'decadent' and the PAP completely eliminated Alliance representation in the Singapore Assembly. The Tunku made no secret of his disappointment with the election results.⁷

1
Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy: Broadcast, Radio Malaysia, 20 April 1964.

2
ST, 18 and 20 May 1963.

3
See Osborne: *op.cit.*, pp.43-6; Michael Leifer: 'Singapore in Malaysia: The Politics of Federation', JSEAH, Sept 1965, pp.55-6. See also Chapter Three, supra, pp.92-3.

4
ST, 10 Aug 1963.

5
Ibid., 28 Sept 1963.

6
Times, 9 Sept. An UMNO meeting strongly condemned this move, Leifer: *op.cit.*.

7
ST, 28 Sept.

The PAP was a dynamic party whose modus operandi could well conflict with that of the less urgent Alliance, and its status within Malaysia had yet to be established. Before the first sitting of the Malaysian Parliament the PAP was told there would be no 'cross benches' in the Dewan Ra'ayat:¹ the 12 PAP members would have to sit with the opposition parties who, with the exception of PANAS, had opposed Malaysia.²

During his first speech in the House; on 21 December 1963 in the budget debate, Lee clarified his party's position.³ He delivered a mild attack on the budget presented by Tan Siew Sin, the leader of the MCA, an attack which presented the kernel of his differences with the Alliance. He argued that 'this is not a budget to which any of us with aspirations to build Malaysia into a more equal society would give unqualified support',⁴ and that greater redistribution of wealth would be needed to accommodate the coming 'social revolution' in Malaysia. The PAP's intended future course of action was revealed in the following comments about the Alliance:

I do not know how long this curious partnership between a party of the 'have nots' in the rural areas [UMNO] with a party of the 'haves' in the urban areas [MCA] will go on for the benefit of the 'haves'....I believe that ultimately a party of the 'have nots' in the rural areas will find its kindred soul in a party of the 'have nots' in the urban areas. 5

He envisaged an UMNO-PAP coalition at the expense of the MCA, but such a partnership would also bring a reduction in Malay political dominance.

On another occasion PAP intentions were made even more specific. In a speech to the Singapore Legislative Assembly, Lee predicted that the 1964 elections would show a decline in MCA urban support. UMNO would recognise this decline and subsequently align with the PAP.⁶ This prophecy, though upsetting the MCA considerably, does not appear to have caused the UMNO leadership undue consternation. In early 1964 Lee led a Malaysian mission to Africa, to offset Indonesian propaganda, and seemed likely to lead a similar mission

1
Ibid., 26 Oct.

2
The Barisan provided Singapore's other three members.

3
MPD,HR, 21 Dec 1963, col.2939. See Peter Polomka: 'Mr Tan or Mr Lee?', FEER, 5 March 1964, pp.515-7.

4
MPD,HR, 21 Dec 1963, col.1940.

5
Ibid., col.2953.

6
SIA,Debs, 9 Dec 1963, col.139 ff.

to the UN.¹ On 1 March 1964 the whole position was radically changed when the Chairman of the PAP, Toh Chin Chye, announced that the party would contest selected seats in the Malayan elections.²

The UMNO reaction to this announcement, although Toh specified that the PAP would not oppose UMNO candidates, was immediate and hostile. Khir Johari, the Minister for Agriculture, declared that the Alliance would fight the PAP,³ Enche Ghaffir, the UMNO Vice-President, that the PAP was attacking UMNO.⁴ On 4 March the PAP leaders entered Malaya to prepare the campaign, on 10 March the party was registered. On 19 March the PAP manifesto was published and argued that

Since the MCA cannot rally the masses in urban areas... the danger of a pro-communist and anti-Malaysia party like the Socialist Front winning by default is considerable....The task of the PAP is to ensure that protest votes in urban areas do not become votes against Malaysia and for Sukarno. 5

The party's long term objective was the 'building of a united, democratic and socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of social justice and non-communalism'.⁶

During the campaign the PAP was anxious to reaffirm that it regarded UMNO's leadership as 'vital to the survival and success of Malaysia' although 'the Chinese leadership in the Alliance is replaceable'.⁷ In its opinion,

A Government of Malaysia which combines the strength of UMNO, with its rural Malay-mass base, with the effectiveness of PAP policies in subtly and intelligently countering Communist subversive activity in the town is the best answer to the challenge which communism poses to us. 8

The existing Alliance was inadequate, for greater socialist legislation was needed. The UMNO leadership was indispensable but its policies needed to be changed.⁹ The MCA made no attempt

¹
ST, 12 March 1964.

²
Ibid., 2 March 1964.

³
Ibid..

⁴
Ibid., 3 March, and Talib in ST, 7 March.

⁵
Election Manifesto of the PAP: 'Help PAP crush Enemies of the People'.

⁶
Ibid..

⁷
ST, 16 March (Lee Kuan Yew).

⁸
Ibid., 6 April (Lee).

⁹
Ibid., 23 March.

to get the Alliance to do this, and so rally urban support, and because of its passivity the MCA was acceptable to UMNO.¹ By showing its potential support the PAP could push UMNO in the right direction.² The Tunku needed to be protected from his friends, warned Lee.³

The PAP decision to contest the Malayan elections was a crucial one in the evolution of Malaysia. The party's arguments were to be shown to be valid, and undoubtedly if it wished to prove this to UMNO before 1969,⁴ it had to contest the elections. But by not anticipating the strong hostility shown on the part of UMNO to its move,⁵ the PAP must bear much of the blame for later events. Although in the long term its approach seemed commendable, insofar as it offered a means of politically integrating Malaya's urban masses, this was decidedly a case where more haste meant less speed.

The reaction of UMNO requires some explanation. The party's Secretary-General, Syed Ja'afar Albar, accused the PAP of sparking off communalism,⁶ and UMNO Headquarters issued a statement in which it said that the PAP, having crushed the MCA, would then turn on UMNO.⁷ The attack on the MCA was regarded by UMNO as an attack upon itself.⁸ The Tunku, who later contended that the PAP's move was a breach of an understanding that it would confine its activities to Singapore,⁹ reacted similarly: 'What the PAP wants is to displace the MCA. They say they want to join UMNO but we don't want them'.¹⁰ He later added that 'the MCA have served the Chinese interest so well...that even if there are only five members of the MCA left I will still support this organisation'.¹¹

¹
Ibid., 14 April.

²
Ibid., 18 March.

³
Ibid., 30 March. See Harvey Stockwin: 'A House Divided', FEER, 4 March 1965.

⁴
When the next Malayan elections were due to be held.

⁵
Our First Ten Years, (PAP 10th Anniversary Souvenir, Singapore, 1964) p.111.

⁶
ST, 26 March.

⁷
Ibid., 21 March.

⁸
Despite the PAP's withdrawal of support from two candidates in Johore when UMNO announced it would contest the seats.

⁹
ST, 22 Sept 1964. If true, this seems inequitable as it was not reciprocal.

¹⁰
Ibid., 15 March.

¹¹
Broadcast, Radio Malaysia, 23 April 1964.

The crux of the PAP's argument was that the MCA was doing little to represent the interests of the urban non-Malays within the Alliance, and so its support was declining. Although the PAP claimed to be non-communal, its appeal was essentially to non-Malays. For UMNO this was dangerous because the PAP was promising to take a more assertive posture vis-a-vis UMNO and so reduce Malay political dominance. - Although at an organisational level the PAP was clearly inadequate, the performances of its leaders at rallies, particularly Lee who addressed large crowds in three languages, augured greater support for the future. The tranquility of seven years of Alliance government was being threatened by a far from acquiescent non-Malay opposition party. The apparent sympathy of the PFP and United Democratic Party¹ for the PAP only emphasised this position.

The Alliance campaigned largely on a platform of firmness towards Indonesian confrontation, which did something to obscure other issues.² In an open letter to the voters, the Tunku claimed, 'I have concrete evidence that opposition parties in Malaya are not prepared to fight in the defence of our beloved nation'.³ Tan Siew Sin was also anxious to make this point: 'The issue is no more and no less than our right to live as a nation...whether we want an Indonesian Malaysia'.⁴ The election results appeared to justify the Alliance's strategy.⁵ The large increase in the Government's electoral support was greater than anticipated. The increase was widely viewed as a 'vote for Malaysia' and, while it should be noted that some 30 per cent of the electorate voted for parties which opposed Malaysia, this explanation appears satisfactory.⁷ But from the standpoint of domestic politics it is more important to determine the source of this increased support.

1

Formed in 1962 by ex-members of the MCA who had resigned in 1959. See Chapter Two, *supra*, p.36.

2

Broadcasts, Radio Malaysia, Dr Ismail, 15 April; Tan Siew Sin, 17 April; Lim Swee Aun, 19 April; Sambanthan, 20 April.

3

To A Greater and Happier Malaysia (Alliance Headquarters, 1964).

4

ST, 1 April.

5

The PMIP was also hindered by legislation preventing religious appeals to voters: MPD,HR, 13 Dec 1963, col.2226 ff. See Peter Polomka: 'Martyrs for the Malay Cause?' FEER, 6 Feb 1964, pp.312-4.

6

Francis L.Starmer: 'The Tunku and the Voters', FEER, 16 April 1964, pp.166-8; and Times, 13 Dec 1963 and 23 April 1964.

7

ST, 27 April. See also T.E.Smith: 'Malaysia After the Elections', The World Today, Aug 1964, pp.351-7; and Starmer: 'Malaysia's First Year'.

Table 13: Results of the Malayan Elections, 1959 and 1964

Party	1959			1964		
	contsd	won	% of vote	contsd	won	% of vote
All.	104	74	51	104	89	58
UMNO	70	52	36	68	59	39
MCA	31	19	15	33	27	18
SF	38	8	12	63	2	16
PMIP	58	13	21	50	9	14
PPP	19	4	6	9	2	3
PAP	—	—	—	9	1	2
UDP	—	—	—	27	1	4

UMNO had made inroads into PMIP support among Malay voters and superficially it appeared that MCA support in urban areas had increased. Yet the MCA's total vote increased only in proportion to the extra seats it contested.¹ Also it seems that in some 15 of those constituencies that it won, the MCA's victory was due to a split vote among the opposing Chinese parties and/or to the Malays.² Finally, whereas in 1959 non-Malays had composed 44 per cent of the electorate of which 19 per cent had voted for non-Alliance non-Malay parties, in 1964 the figures were 46 and 26 per cent.³ On these grounds it does appear that the Alliance was becoming increasingly Malay supported at the PMIP's expense and was losing votes among non-Malays. The PAP's influence on this development had been slight but it could grow in importance, particularly once the common threat, confrontation, had been removed.⁴

The seemingly decisive victory of the Alliance did little to alter the plans of any of the parties. UMNO members continued to rebuke the PAP,⁵ the Socialist Front continued to put forward a five point plan for a negotiated peace (which included direct elections in Borneo)⁶ and the PAP, despite the Alliance's reaction, continued to press its case. 'Although the formation of Malaysia was inevitable', argued Lee, 'its success is not inevitable'.⁷ He suggested that his

1
See Table 13.

2
See Table 14.

3
See R.K.Vasil: 'The 1964 General Elections in Malaya', International Studies, July 1965, pp.57-61.

4
The Alliance was strongest when such a clear rallying cry existed. In 1955 it had been merdeka, in 1959 Alliance support had declined.

5
MPD,HR, 21 May 1964, col.362 ff (Ali bin Haji Ahmad).

6
Ibid., cols.380-5 (Tan Chee Khoo).

7
Ibid., col.408.

party had some sympathy for the UDP and PPP and hinted that the three parties might form 'a large opposition - loyal to Malaysia'. They would 'check the lapses of political administrators',¹ for Lee feared that

the new lease on life they [the Alliance] have been given for another five years could well be frittered and squandered away if they interpret the results as a blanket approval for carrying on in the same old way. 2

He warned that communalism would have to be eradicated and argued that the MCA was losing its support among the urban non-Malays.³ The PAP had opted for a position of opposition to the Alliance and had clearly calculated the source of its support.

In the realm of domestic politics the PAP, motivated by ambition and conviction, was seeking to modify the Alliance's policies and improve its own position. A similar situation existed with regard to Malaysia's foreign policy. The PAP had a long standing interest in foreign affairs and was aware of the need to propagate Malaysia's case abroad, particularly among the Afro-Asian nations where Indonesia had been very active.⁴ In November 1963 the Malaysian representative at the UN had warned that Indonesia was getting considerable sympathy for her position from the neutralist states,⁵ and the following month Algeria had joined the Soviet Union in expressing reservations about their acceptance of Malaysia's credentials at the UN.⁶ In his 1964 New Year's Day message Lee had urged Kuala Lumpur to be more active diplomatically⁷ and later he warned that 'if our only friends in Afro-Asia are South Korea and South Vietnam then even Australia and New Zealand may find it difficult to be actively committed to our side'.⁸ Largely as a result of PAP prompting it was announced in December 1963 that Lee

¹ Ibid., col.411.

² ST, 22 May 1964.

³ MPD,HR, 21 May 1964, col.419.

⁴ Peter Boyce: 'Policy Without Authority: Singapore's External Affairs Power', JSEAH, Sept 1965, pp.87-103.

⁵ ST, 22 Nov 1963.

⁶ Ibid., 16 Dec 1963.

⁷ Ibid., 1 Jan 1964.

⁸ Ibid., 20 Jan.

TABLE 14 : THE MCA AND THE 1964 MALAYAN ELECTION

Constituency	Racial Composition of Electorate (1)			Urban-(2) MCA(3) isation		Votes Polled by Parties (4)								No. of Voters	Total Vote	Turn-out		
	Malay %	Chinese %	Other %	MCA No.	%	Socialist Front No.	%	UDP No.	%	PAP No.	%	PPP No.	%				Other (5) No.	%
A. Seats Won by MCA																		
1. Malacca Tengah	64.0	33.2	2.8	SU	+	18,568	74.1	5,241	20.9					1,236	4.9	30,569	25,045	81.9
2. Kulim Bandar Baharu	54.4	30.7	14.9	R	o	15,077	68.7	4,585	20.9					2,261	10.3	30,135	21,923	72.7
3. Alor Star	52.5	40.2	7.3	U	o	14,749	64.7	1,747	7.7	2,695	11.8			3,608	15.8	33,772	22,799	67.5
4. Muar Pantai	43.4	54.4	2.2	MU	o	16,578	73.0	6,137	27.0							30,032	22,715	75.6
5. Batu Pahat	38.3	59.9	1.8	MU	o	12,505	60.5	5,647	27.3	2,422	11.7					25,314	20,674	81.7
6. Bruas	37.0	49.6	13.4	R	+	10,587	53.3			6,719	33.8			2,550	12.8	26,270	19,856	75.6
7. Tanjong Malim	34.9	46.4	18.7	R	o	9,983	66.2	2,328	15.5					(7)		20,849	15,064	72.2
8. Larut Selatan	34.3	53.4	12.3	MU	o	18,906	63.2	3,185	10.7	5,080	17.0			2,734	9.1	40,909	29,905	73.1
9. Sepang	30.9	52.3	16.8	R	o	9,438	63.5	5,429	36.5							18,581	14,867	80.0
10. Ulu Selangor	30.3	53.0	16.7	R	o	9,412	69.2	4,199	30.9							17,750	13,611	76.7
11. Bagan	30.1	54.9	15.0	MU	+	8,925	51.5	6,564	37.9	871	5.0			983	5.7	22,793	17,343	76.1
12. Bentong	29.2	62.8	8.0	R	o	12,832	65.7	6,686	34.2							23,614	19,518	82.7
13. Telok Anson	27.7	56.3	16.0	MU	+	12,251	57.1	9,204	42.9							29,130	21,455	73.7
14. Segamat Selatan	27.5	56.3	16.2	R	o	11,355	63.3	4,956	27.6	1,619	9.0					22,678	17,930	79.1
15. Seremban Barat	27.2	56.4	16.4	MU	+	10,163	53.9	6,686	35.5	2,005	10.6					24,785	18,856	76.1
16. Kampar	26.8	64.8	8.4	MU	+	12,964	48.5	4,403	16.5			9,357	35.0			34,215	26,724	78.1
17. Sitiawan	26.7	61.3	12.0	SU	+	11,136	60.4			7,299	39.6					23,877	18,435	77.2
18. Kluang Utara	25.7	64.9	9.4	SU	+	9,138	53.5	6,674	39.0			1,276	7.5			21,503	17,088	79.5
19. Setapak	25.3	62.3	12.4	SU	+	12,292	50.4	7,888	32.3			4,214	17.2			37,365	24,394	62.3
20. Ulu Kinta	25.3	61.8	12.9	SU	+	7,351	46.3	2,172	13.7			6,345	40.0			19,729	15,868	80.4
21. Penang Utara	24.6	65.6	9.8	SU	+	16,686	52.2	10,148	31.7	5,149	16.1					39,072	31,983	81.9
22. Seremban Timor	24.1	59.6	16.3	SU	+	9,604	44.0	5,124	23.5	1,670	7.7	5,410	24.8			29,001	21,808	75.9
23. Kluang Selantan	23.1	69.4	6.5	SU	o	11,926	65.0	6,434	35.0							23,164	18,360	79.3
24. Batu Gajah	20.2	69.2	10.6	SU	+	9,843	51.3					9,127	48.7			23,723	18,790	79.2
25. Bukit Bintang	20.1	72.0	7.9	U	+	9,107	42.5	5,000	23.3			6,667	31.1	650	3.0	33,636	21,424	63.7
26. Bandar Malacca	15.6	76.2	8.2	U	+	13,789	49.4	10,658	38.2			3,461	12.4			33,148	27,908	84.2
27. Damansara	13.6	67.7	18.7	U	+	9,148	43.7	8,602	41.1			3,191	15.2			30,093	20,941	69.6
B. Seats Lost by MCA																		
28. Dato Kramat	24.6	65.6	9.2	U	*	7,707	29.6	10,102	38.8	8,236	31.6					31,304	26,045	83.2
29. Batu	13.9	78.5	7.6	U	*	9,774	43.7	10,122	45.3			2,459	11.0			32,364	22,355	69.1
30. Menglembu	12.5	80.5	7.0	U	*	16,246	40.1	3,457	8.6			20,367	50.7			45,994	40,070	87.1
31. Ipoh	10.9	72.8	15.3	U	*	8,897	35.6	2,280	9.1			13,800	55.3			33,261	24,977	75.1
32. Bungsar	9.4	79.8	10.8	U	*	9,761	27.2	12,686	35.3			13,494	37.5			58,262	35,941	61.7
33. Tanjong	3.6	85.9	10.5	U	*	6,271	20.4	8,516	27.7	12,928	42.1	778	2.5	2,219	7.3	34,731	30,712	88.4

Notes to Table 14

1

See Vasil: op.cit., p.63; and ST, in the weeks preceding the election.

2

These classifications are intended as a guide to the extent of urbanisation in each constituency and are derived from the 1957 Population Census: Report of the 1964 Parliamentary and State Elections (Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1964); and J.C. Caldwell: 'The Population of Malaya' (Unpub. Ph.D. Thesis, ANU, 1962). The constituencies are classified as follows:

- U An urban electorate;
- MU A largely urban electorate with extensive sub-urban and densely settled rural areas;
- SU A predominantly sub-urban electorate containing urban and rural voters;
- R A predominantly rural electorate with no large urban settlements.

3

The performance of the MCA classified in the following manner:

- O An MCA victory probably attained with the support of the majority of the non-Malays;
- + An MCA victory probably attained as a result of Malay support and/or a split in the non-Malay vote among the opposition parties;
- * An MCA defeat.

4

Report of the 1964 Elections; and ST, 27 April 1964.

5

PMIP unless otherwise indicated.

6

Independent Malay candidate.

7

Independent Chinese candidate polled 2267 votes or 15.1 per cent, and Independent Malay candidate polled 486 or 3.2 per cent.

would lead a mission to Africa to offset Indonesian propaganda.¹ It appears that the mission was financed chiefly by the Singapore Government.²

For five weeks during January and February 1964 the mission visited twelve African countries. Its success is difficult to assess: Lee claimed it was considerable³ but the Indonesian Observer made out a case that this was an exaggeration.⁴ But Malaysia was beginning to move into Afro-Asia and was later to reap the benefit from this change of heart.⁵ On his return it was planned that Lee, Malaysia's most articulate defender, should lead another mission to Washington and the UN; the PAP's intervention in the Malayan elections led to the cancellation of this project.⁶

In May the Philippines sought to reconvene the negotiations disrupted in March.⁷ Lopez visited Kuala Lumpur and Djakarta with this end in view. The difficulties remained the same: Malaysia would not agree to talks while guerrilla raids into Borneo continued, and Indonesia would not agree to the withdrawal of her forces as a precondition to talks.⁸ It was finally agreed, however, that a withdrawal should take place under Thai supervision: as soon as the Thais verified the withdrawal negotiations would begin in Tokyo.⁹ Sukarno's announcement that a brigade of the Indonesian army was being sent to Borneo and that Malaysia would be crushed before 1965 hardly augured well for the talks.¹⁰ Nonetheless by mid-June the three states had delegations in Tokyo and on 15 June it was agreed that talks should start when the Thai checkpoint in Borneo signified

¹
Times, 27 Dec 1963.

²
Boyce: op.cit., p.99. This was also suggested to the author by a senior Singapore Government official in an interview, Singapore, February 1966.

³
ST, 27 Feb 1964.

⁴
Ibid., 6 Feb.

⁵
Margaret Roff: 'Malaysia Revisited', Australia's Neighbours, May-June 1965, pp.1-4; 'Malaysia's Search for Identity', FEER, 13 Feb 1964, p.354.

⁶
ST, 12 March.

⁷
ST, 9 March.

⁸
Ibid., Times, 16 May.

⁹
ST, 19, 21, 25 and 26 May.

¹⁰
Times, 21 May.

that the Indonesian withdrawal had started.¹ The following day a serious incident involving raiders in Sarawak appeared to jeopardize the talks but the Indonesian claim that its forces had been ambushed while in the process of withdrawing seems to have been accepted.² On 18 June the Foreign Ministers met and it was again agreed that a summit meeting would follow a withdrawal.³

The course of the Foreign Ministers' meeting⁴ once more revealed the extent of the divergence in approach between the parties. Razak opened the meeting insisting that a solution was dependent on the withdrawal of Indonesian forces. Subandrio's reply, which followed a general tirade against the OLDEF, was not untypical:

It is important that Malaysia should realise we cannot expect the guerrillas to obey our orders, due to the status of the guerrillas. The guerrillas and volunteers have a deep political consciousness....The only basis for this question is to regard it as a political problem not a military one.

Thus, he contended, a complete withdrawal was impossible. While Malaysia was an imperfect political arrangement and a degree of indigenous insurgency existed in Sarawak, this argument of Indonesia was unacceptable unless unilateral armed intervention in the affairs of other states is to be regarded as desirable and legitimate international activity. Razak conceded that Malaysia would attend the talks if 'a general intention to withdraw' was shown. The following day the Thais reported that 32 Indonesians had retired to Kalimantan and the Tunku agreed to negotiate.⁵

On 20 June the Foreign Ministers met preliminary to a summit meeting, and the previous arguments were repeated. The Heads of Government then entered. Sukarno repeated his claim that the Manila Agreements had been broken due to British intervention, the Malaysians that the Agreements had been fully implemented. Sukarno asserted 'I say one thousand times that I cannot accept this Malaysia' and after vague references had been made to an Afro-Asian commission of conciliation, he left to attend a pre-arranged press conference. He returned only to join in the final communique

¹ Indon Herald, 16 June.

² ST, 17 June; Indon Herald, 18 June.

³ Times, 19 June.

⁴ The following account is based on information obtained from official sources in Kuala Lumpur.

⁵ Times, 20 June. It seems possible that this group of Indonesians crossed shortly before in order to be verified as 'withdrawing'.

announcing that the talks had collapsed. Subandrio announced that confrontation would continue¹ and within days the biggest clash to date was reported in Sarawak, involving some one hundred Indonesians and the death of five members of the Security Forces.²

As the last significant Malaysian attempt to negotiate a solution to confrontation with Sukarno's Indonesian government, the Tokyo discussions require examination.³ The Malaysians expected little from the talks. Their participation may be attributed to a desire not to appear intransigent, a willingness to make every reasonable effort to negotiate a settlement and, perhaps most important, to the opportunity to have the presence of Indonesian forces on Malaysian territory verified by an independent authority.⁴ The attempt may have been worthwhile for 'to many friends of Indonesia, Sukarno's stand [was] taken to confirm Indonesian belligerence and insincerity'.⁵ What the Indonesians expected, or sought, from the talks is more difficult to ascertain. Certainly they had achieved little, while their lack of flexibility, Sukarno's flippancy and the tacit admission that Indonesian controlled forces were in Sarawak, did little to improve their case.

There is good reason to regard mid-1964, along with December 1962 and September 1963, as a turning point in the evolution of Malaysia. By June 1964 the dispute with Indonesia had reached an impasse and the possibility of a negotiated settlement, not likely since the previous September, had become more remote. Internally the dispute between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore had worsened and Malaysian politics had polarised more firmly around a communal axis.

The elections turned the PAP-Alliance rivalry into a communal dispute. Despite its poor electoral showing, the PAP made it clear that it intended to build up its organisation on the peninsula and become a major political force.⁶ Its opposition to the MCA was rapidly evolving into opposition to the Alliance. Malay political

1
Ibid., 22 June.

2
ST, 23 June.

3
See Razak's report to Parliament, MPD,HR, 6 July 1964, cols.638-45.

4
Michael Leifer: 'Indonesia and Malaysia: the Diplomacy of Confrontation', The World Today, June 1965, pp.252-3; Starner: 'Malaysia's First Year', p.115; interviews with senior Malaysian Government officials, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

5
Editorial, FEER, 2 July 1964.

6
ST, 29 April.

leaders, in an effort to offset this challenge, began to campaign among Singapore's Malays, suggesting that they should be given the special rights enjoyed on the mainland.¹ Given its preponderantly Chinese electorate, the PAP could hardly agree to this demand. Despite PAP efforts to placate the Malays,² who had been hard hit by the consequences of economic confrontation,³ communal tensions grew, a process encouraged by some UMNO members, including, it has been suggested, Syed Ja'afar Albar.⁴ A Malay religious procession served to ignite the powder keg and on 21 July 1964 Singapore experienced its first race riot since 1950.⁵ Incidents occurred for the next few days and on 2 September a further riot of lesser magnitude erupted. By that stage the communal die was irrevocably cast.

Malaysia had been created largely to control the Chinese left wing of Singapore. It was apparent by 1964 that the Singapore Government itself was best fitted for that task, while the Alliance could offer only suppression. In Malaya the PAP was, despite its claims, a communal party unlikely to attain much support in the rural areas. Malaya was faced with the problem common to many Asian countries: development of the rural areas to a degree of sophistication similar to that of the urban areas. In Malaya the problem assumed racial overtones. The PAP and the Alliance were products of a different environment, and offered (imperfect) solutions to different problems. In Malaya a rural/urban and non-Malay/Malay partnership was necessary for political stability. The PAP solution might appeal to one section of the community, but only the MCA was acceptable to the other.

During the first nine months of Malaysia's existence the problems which the Federation's creation had brought into being became more clearly discernible. The prolonged and unsuccessful

¹ Ibid., 13 July.

² Times, 25 July; ST, 21 July.

³ In fact Singapore was recovering by then: SLA, Debs, 28 Nov 1963, col.76, Goh Keng Swee thought Singapore would lose 8.2 per cent of her national income due to Indonesia's trade boycott; ST, 11 Feb 1964, Lee thought 15,000 might lose their jobs; SLA, Debs, 10 June 1964, cols.11-16, Goh reported on 30 May only 2,545 were unemployed due to confrontation.

⁴ Michael Leifer: 'Communal Violence in Singapore', Asian Survey, Oct 1964, p.1115; interviews Singapore, February and March 1966. It appears that the PMIP may have cooperated with UMNO in this task.

⁵ Leifer: op.cit.; ST, 22 July 1964.

negotiations with Indonesia shed light on the latter's motives and objectives in pursuing confrontation. Djakarta had been given ample opportunity to retreat from her belligerent posture on terms which would not have involved loss of face. But Indonesia's attitude towards the negotiations, particularly on the issue of guerrillas in Malaysian Borneo, cast serious doubt on her desire to negotiate a settlement. Similarly Indonesia's reasons for confronting Malaysia seemed to change during the period. Although Subandrio claimed that Indonesia, like the Western powers, wished to check China's influence in the region (despite the Sino-Indonesian detente), and reference continued to be made to Indonesia's objection that the Manila Agreements had not been properly implemented, it became ^{more} likely that Indonesia, ^{chiefly} objected to the Western presence in the region and opposed Malaysia as a manifestation of Western influence. It also became clearer that Indonesia was pursuing a policy of international aggression unsusceptible to diplomatic solution.

Although Indonesia seemed intractable, Malaysia's resistance to Indonesian confrontation was proving successful. Despite indications of limited escalation, Indonesia's military campaign in Malaysian Borneo remained a nuisance rather than a serious threat. It seemed unlikely at that stage that it was intended to be anything more than a harassing tactic, as had Indonesia's military confrontation of the Dutch in West Irian. While Britain continued to assist the Federation, and there were no indications that the UK intended to do otherwise, Indonesian aggression could be contained. Similarly in the diplomatic sphere Malaysia was faring better than the Dutch. Malaysia had been admitted to the UN and her efforts to gain support among the non-aligned nations seemed likely to be successful. Her reasonable attitude towards negotiations appeared likely to win support, not least of all from the US.

Within the Federation more deep rooted problems had evolved. The problems which the strength of the Barisan in 1961 and 1962 had seemed to pose had been largely solved. But the problems presented by the Chinese in Malaysia were not, as Kuala Lumpur had seemed to assume, just those of communist subversion. Malaysia's problems were communal. While the CCO insurrection in Sarawak - partly racial, partly communist in origin - seemed likely to prove an irritant of unpredictable proportions, it was the PAP-Alliance rift which was most central to Malaysia's existence. The communal riots of July

had made the communal problem insoluble in the short term.

For Australia these developments were hardly attractive. The possibility of Indonesia's ending confrontation had become unlikely and an intensification of that policy more probable. The increasing anti-Western orientation and militancy of Indonesian policy, and so its increasing divergence from that pursued by Canberra, made Australia's objective of friendship with her neighbour more difficult to achieve. Also the Federation for which Australia had expressed approval as a means for checking Chinese influence in the region was itself creating grave problems of instability, problems perhaps greater than those which it had been designed to solve. But there were no indications that any but a small minority of Malaysia's population did not support the Federation and oppose Indonesia. It was against these developments that Australia's policy towards Malaysia evolved and that Menzies' statement of intent was implemented.

CHAPTER SIX

Australian Graduated Response - I

Australian policy before the inauguration of Malaysia was designed to avoid serious rupture with Indonesia, and to try to make the proposed federation acceptable to her. It became subsequently a policy of 'graduated response'.¹ In so describing Australian policy, Sir Garfield Barwick did not specify to what Australia would gradually respond. An examination of Australian policy suggests that the escalation of Australia's commitment to Malaysia was in response to the defence needs of the latter as interpreted by the former. Menzies' statement of 25 September 1963 appeared to commit Canberra firmly and unequivocally to the defence of Malaysia. The Prime Minister had described the role and importance of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in the defence of Malaysia; he had emphasised the significance of Commonwealth ties; he had pointed out that Malaysia complied with the principle of self-determination of peoples; and he had later declared that under the existing circumstances a formal treaty with Malaysia was unnecessary. The declaration had covered all possible kinds of aggression against Malaysia and had pledged that Australia would help Britain and the Federation resist. In the event, 'confrontation' did not involve conventional or positional warfare with clear points of intervention by potential combatants, the situation was more subtle. Despite the apparent firmness and clarity of Menzies' statement, Australia retained considerable room for manoeuvre. The qualification 'in the circumstances that now exist', the reference to Australia adding her forces, quite apart from the absence of a formal treaty, enabled Canberra to pursue a flexible policy. It may be assumed that Sir Robert was aware of these implications, particularly as he later claimed that the statement was the most precise that he had made.² Thus, while the statement was applauded in Australia for its firmness, the policy which stemmed from it was more ambiguous, revealing Australia as being reluctant to be drawn too deeply into the dispute while a negotiated settlement seemed possible. This policy was permitted, but hardly suggested, by the original statement of intent which

¹ Sir Garfield Barwick, Press Conference, Sydney, 17 April 1964 (DEA, Canberra).

² CPD,HR, vol.42, 21 April 1964, p.1276.

appeared to be an unqualified promise of aid.¹ During the following seven months Australia's own diplomatic efforts became less significant and its support for Malaysia much clearer. The reasons for the apparent differences between intent and action were also clarified.

Australian activity continued to be influenced by American policy. Although during late 1963 there were few announcements from official American sources concerning US policies towards 'confrontation', there does appear to have been a reluctance on the part of the Administration and the State Department to oppose Djakarta too firmly. The chief reason for this policy was fear of an increase of communist influence in Indonesia which might result from a worsening of US-Indonesian relations.² The US Government's main hope for retaining a moderating influence in Djakarta lay in the adroit use of its aid programme, but it was unable to use this tool to full effect owing to the mounting anti-Indonesian feeling in Congress.³ This is not to say that the US supported the policy which Indonesia was pursuing; indeed Rusk was reported to have expressed to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British Prime Minister, his concern over Indonesian policy,⁴ while David E. Bell had warned Indonesia of the likelihood of a cut in US aid.⁵ US policy was also reflected in the absence of American statements of support for Malaysia, the American Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, Mr Baldwin, providing a rare exception.⁶ But there were indications by November that the US was beginning to view Malaysia with greater favour, as the New York Times reported on the occasion of the recall of the American Ambassador to Indonesia, Howard Jones, to Washington for discussions.⁷ The death of President Kennedy, who was reportedly sympathetic with general Indonesian aspirations, and his replacement as President by L.B. Johnson, reportedly less sympathetic, served only to hasten this process.⁸ In November the Senate voted that the

¹ Miller: ~~speeches~~ 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', p.12.

² Dean Rusk, statement before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: US Dept of State Bulletin, 1 July 1963, vol.XLIX, No.1253, pp.24-5.

³ Leifer: ~~speeches~~ 'Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.161.

⁴ NYT, 28 Sept 1963.

⁵ Age, 24 Sept 1963.

⁶ ST, 19 Oct 1963.

⁷ NYT, 4 Nov 1963.

⁸ This at least was the assessment of one senior Australian official in an interview in Canberra, July 1966.

US should stop aid to any state 'engaging in or preparing for aggressive military efforts against the US or any country receiving its aid'.¹ Indonesia was included in that category, the debate on her aid programme provoking considerable hostility among the Senators, one of whom, Wayne Morse, described Sukarno as 'one of the most corrupt men on earth'.² Members of the Administration were not pleased at the restrictions placed on the use they might make of the aid programme, Rusk asserting that a flexible policy was essential with circumstances constantly changing.³ President Kennedy had been more specific, indicating that by use of the US aid programme the Government hoped to restrain Indonesia's pursuit of her confrontation policy.⁴ Shortly after, following complaints in Kuala Lumpur and from British sources that the US was helping Indonesia to wage her limited war in Borneo by providing her with military equipment, Washington revealed that all military aid to Indonesia had been stopped in September.⁵ Almost simultaneously the Tunku announced that Baldwin had assured him that the US would start no new aid programmes to Indonesia.⁶ Even before the death of Kennedy there were indications that there were limits beyond which the US was not prepared to go in the pursuit of Djakarta's friendship.

During October 1963 three senior Australian Ministers visited the United States - Barwick to attend the eighteenth session of the UN General Assembly, Townley to discuss the purchase of military aircraft,⁷ and the treasurer, Harold Holt, for the World Bank meeting of Finance Ministers.⁸ Each was reported to have discussed

¹
NYT, 8 Nov 1963.

²
Congressional Record, CLX, No. 180, 7 Nov 1963.

³
Rusk at News Conference, 8 Nov 1963: US Dept of State Bulletin, 25 Nov 1963, vol. XLIX, No. 1274, p. 811.

⁴
NYT, 15 Nov 1963.

⁵
Ibid., 20 Nov 1963.

⁶
Times, 21 Nov 1963.

⁷
Townley arranged for the purchase of the controversial TFX, later redesignated the F-III. There seem to be adequate grounds for seeing that purchase, at least in part, as a facet of the Government's electoral strategy of emphasising security issues. See T.B. Millar: Australia's Defence, p. 5. The present author has examined that issue at some length in an unpublished paper, 'The Politics of Defence: The TFX Decision', given at the Australian National University, 24 Oct 1965.

⁸
Holt met President Kennedy and Roger Hilsman: Age, 5 Oct 1963.

the Malaysia dispute with senior US officials. In view of this and later events there seems little doubt that Canberra was fully informed on American attitudes towards Malaysia.

Barwick, the Minister most immediately concerned with the problem, was at pains to reiterate his Government's support for Malaysia during his address to the UN General Assembly on 3 October.¹ Welcoming Malaysia to the UN he said 'it is sufficient for me to say that it became clear to my Government that the established criteria for self-determination were fully satisfied. It was on this basis that the Australian Government gave its public support to the concept of Malaysia'. He described earlier Australian policy as one of encouraging the disputants to meet 'as a means of removing misunderstandings and of enabling Malaysia to be created with the good will of its neighbours'. He limited his criticisms of Indonesian policy to saying that it filled him with 'misgivings'. In reiterating Australia's pledge to aid in Malaysia's defence he repeated Menzies' phrase 'add our military assistance', saying that Australian support 'springs from our firm conviction that the new nation as the expression of self-determination...should be free to develop itself in peace'. Subsequently Barwick had discussions with President Kennedy and the Secretary for Defence, Robert McNamara, during which the subject of Malaysia was reported to have been raised.²

On his return to Sydney, Barwick at a press conference³ reported:

Throughout the conversations I had in Washington I found a continuing and uniform note of firm approval of Malaysia....The Prime Minister's announcement that Australia...had offered...to add our military assistance to that of the United Kingdom in defending Malaysia was warmly received by the United States Government who are glad to see Australia's readiness to play her part in maintaining the peace of the area.

He added that he was very pleased that Malaysia had been admitted to the UN as Indonesia could be more clearly restrained by the Charter, while other member states, 'including the United States of America', would have definite obligations with regard to any aggression against Malaysia. He continued: 'I discussed Indonesia

1

Official Records of the General Assembly, 18th Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol.1, 1226th Meeting, 3 Oct, pp.5-9. Reprinted CNIA, Oct 1963, pp.34-43.

2

Age, 18 Oct 1963.

3

DEA, Press Release, 20 Oct 1963.

and made it plain how much Australia deplored the Indonesian policy of confrontation....Both our Governments [in Washington and Canberra] sincerely hope that Indonesian policies will be reviewed'.

At that time both Australia and the US were anxious to restrain Indonesia and to retain her friendship. Australia placed greater emphasis on the former objective and was, in consequence, prepared to take a firmer line with Djakarta. One observer contends that 'Australia pressed the U.S. very hard to use economic aid to Indonesia as leverage in the hope of bringing Sukarno to his senses'.¹ America's refusal to use its aid programme with greater severity may be partly attributed to Washington's assessment that such action would not put much pressure on a state whose economy was largely dependent on subsistence agriculture, and partly to the fact that America saw the situation in a somewhat different light. The Australian Government had supported efforts to negotiate a settlement but by October 1963 was not optimistic that, under existing circumstances, a diplomatic solution to confrontation was possible. This was attributed to Indonesian intransigence. The US Government was less prepared to accept that Sukarno did not wish to negotiate and was trying to establish a balance between suasion and friendship in its relations with Djakarta. But the effective attainment or determined pursuit of the one goal could well mean the sacrifice of the other. During the following two years Washington moved gradually to place greater emphasis on restraining Djakarta than on retaining her friendship.

During Barwick's absence in the United States the Prime Minister had announced in Parliament that the federal election would be held on 30 November 1963, a year before it was required.² Sir Robert pointed out the Government's tenuous position with its majority, after providing the Speaker, of one. He went on to assert that with Australia's 'unfirm' international position and with the Opposition differing fundamentally from the Government's foreign policy, a clearer mandate was necessary. He singled out in particular the issues of the Naval Communication Station and

Our pledge to Malaysia [which] has attracted wide international attention and is clearly of crucial importance in Australian foreign and defence policy.

1

Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.204. Government officials substantiated these points in interviews with the author, Canberra July 1966 and Sydney February 1967.

2

CPD,HR, vol.40, 15 Oct 1963, pp.1790-95.

It is most important that the other nations concerned should know whether it carries the clear backing of the Australian people. 1

A seasoned observer of Australian politics declined to accept this explanation for the election being held early, arguing rather that the decision was made following the revelation that unemployment was at its lowest since 1960, and that domestic prosperity, 'made probable a non-Labour victory'.²

As previously indicated,³ there had long been rumours that the Government would hold the federal election in late 1963 and that defence and foreign policies could be major issues. By October 1963 Malaysia was the central issue of Australian foreign policy and the Government's attitude towards it appeared to be both firmly established and popular. The Prime Minister in announcing the election took advantage of this. Asserting that Malaysia, as a non-aligned country, would refuse a treaty with Australia, he asked

Is it better for Australia to have a simple but clear declaration of intention on our part which in its very nature, preserves our own judgement as to the nature, extent and disposition of forces to be deployed, or for us to deliberately enmesh ourselves...which would limit our own freedom of action while conferring on us no reciprocal rights? 4

In this fashion Menzies made it clear that Australia was not prepared to accept an open ended commitment to the defence of Malaysia. A treaty with mutual obligations, which the ALP had proposed, would, he suggested, involve such a commitment. Even if Kuala Lumpur would accept a treaty, it was to be avoided.

Despite the Perth Conference,⁵ the ALP's policy towards Malaysia was not clearly defined. Two major questions remained unanswered: 1) what sort of treaty would a Labor Government seek with Malaysia? 2) if Malaysia refused a treaty, would Australian forces be withdrawn? The issue was further confused when the journal of the Queensland Labor Party, New Age, published an article on 25 September advocating that Australian forces should be withdrawn from Malaysia.⁶ The article received considerable publicity in

1

Ibid., pp.1793.

2

D.W.Rawson: 'Australian Political Chronicle, July-December 1963', AJPH, April 1964, pp.99-100.

3

Chapter Four, supra.

4

CPD,HR, vol.40, 15 Oct 1963, p. 1,794.

5

See Chapter Four, supra, pp.142-3.

6

'Malaysia: A Step Backwards', New Age, 25 Sept 1963.

the press¹ and was read out in full in Parliament by a Liberal member.² As one correspondent pointed out, it was 'a tailor made issue for the Menzies Government to exploit in asking whether Labor really knows its mind'.³ Nation was more charitable to Labor in asserting that the differences between the parties were essentially procedural.⁴ During the next six weeks this became apparent. But Menzies had caught Labor on a weak point in his opening salvo. His emphasis on foreign policy may be explained by the apparent weaknesses of the ALP's position and by the expected significance of the issue on the election results.

From the date of the announcement of the elections, both the Government and the Opposition were eager to clarify, and show the validity of, their attitudes towards Malaysia. In electoral terms it was apparent that a clear pro-Malaysian attitude was necessary. An Opinion Poll conducted in October indicated that 62 per cent of the electorate felt that Australia should aid Malaysia in the event of her being attacked by Indonesia, while only 17 per cent opposed such action.⁵ Menzies' was the easier task: his only problem to establish that a separate treaty was unwanted by Malaysia. He did not use again the argument (probably the main one) that a treaty was inadvisable for Australia. In retrospect the argument he did use lacks conviction. Malaysia, he contended was non-aligned and did not want treaties with 'committed' nations.⁶ When questioned about the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement he asserted that it was 'different' because the UK was the ex-colonial power.⁷ At no point was his assertion that Malaysia did not want a treaty, contested. (At a later date Malaysia would have accepted a treaty but Australia made no effort to conclude one.⁸) In any case at that stage it was not known what sort of treaty the ALP envisaged.

¹ Daily Telegraph, 1 Oct; SMH, 4 Oct; Advertiser, 12 Oct.

² CPD,HR, vol.40, 29 Oct 1963, p. 2,438.

³ S.W.Stephens in Advert, 5 Oct.

⁴ Nation, 5 Oct 1963.

⁵ APOP, Nos. 1711-1728. Of ALP voters 57 per cent supported action, of Liberal-Country Party voters 73 per cent.

⁶ CPD,HR, vol.40, 17 Oct 1963, p.1919.

⁷ Ibid., 28 Oct 1963, p.2304.

⁸ See Chapter Eight, infra.

On 21 October Calwell clarified Labor policy. In a television interview¹ he explained that in the long term the ALP opposed the commitment of 'Australian troops to the defence of Malaysia, without a clear open treaty' but 'in an emergency' a Labor Government would go to Malaysia's assistance without one. As to the terms of the proposed treaty, 'it must have some mutuality about it. In other words if we are to go to the defence of Malaysia if it is attacked, then Malaysia must do something for the defence of Australia if we are attacked'.

Late October and early November witnessed the preliminary sparring between the parties prior to the election campaign proper. Foreign policy and defence received extensive attention, the assumption at that stage being widespread that, with the economy sound, these would be major election issues.² On 22 October, during the debate on the Appropriation Bill, Calwell outlined the ALP's defence plans, adding, 'If defence is to be an issue in the coming election...when the issues are finally joined...we will prove that we have a far better defence policy than this Government'.³ Other speakers from both sides of the House laid similar emphasis on this issue⁴ and the following day Mr Fairhall, acting for the Minister for Defence, answered a question concerning the possibility of an Indonesian attack on Australia.⁵ Outside Parliament security issues also received attention, the Government being eager to exploit apparent ALP vacillation.⁶ Before the campaign formally started the two parties' views on policy towards Malaysia were clear and on 27 October in separate telecasts, the rival leaders set them out. Menzies contended that as Malaysia would not agree to a treaty it was not clear that the ALP would support the Federation;⁷

1

The Australian Labor Party: Speakers' Notes, 1963 Federal Elections, p.71. The telecast was made in both Sydney and Melbourne.

2

West Australian, 25 Oct 1963; M.Herald, 28 Oct 1963 (eds); Economist, 19 Oct 1963.

3

CPD,HR, vol.40, 22 Oct 1963, pp.2064-71.

4

Ibid., p.2084 (Whitlam), p.2082 (Jess), pp.2095-6 (Beazley), pp.2098-2100 (M.Fraser).

5

Ibid., 23 Oct 1963, p.2186.

6

Bulletin, 26 Oct 1963.

7

M.Herald, 28 Oct 1963.

Calwell declared that the ALP would not aid Malaysia unless it were clear that she in return would aid Australia.¹ Unfortunately for Labor, the press, which had previously tended to favour a treaty,² had swung to supporting the Government's position.³

On 6 November Calwell opened the ALP campaign in Melbourne.⁴ He devoted only about a quarter of his speech to defence and foreign policy. On defence, broadly ALP policy was for an increase in expenditure. On foreign policy, the party advocated joint control with America of the US Naval Communication Station, an attempt to get a nuclear free zone in the southern hemisphere, and recognition of the Peoples Republic of China. With regard to Malaysia he said that a Labor Government would seek a clear treaty, but pending its implementation would help defend Malaysia against aggression under the terms of the UN Charter. He criticised the Government for seeking to make Malaysia an election issue, 'to force the nation to divide on a question on which it is not fundamentally divided'.⁵ The press generally interpreted the speech as an indication that the ALP was unwilling to contest the election on foreign policy, preferring to concentrate on its impressive social welfare programme.⁶ Editorials expressed sympathy with this strategy. Thus there were indications that issues of security might not play a primary role in the elections.

On 12 November the Prime Minister opened the Government's campaign.⁷ Menzies paid only marginally more attention than Calwell to foreign policy and defence. After an initial attack on Labor's extra-Parliamentary policy formulating machinery ('the thirty-six faceless men'), Menzies pointed out how his Government had negotiated the ANZUS Treaty, sent forces to Malaya 'under SEATO', and 'will join the United Kingdom' in defending Malaysia. On these

1
Ibid..

2
See Chapter Four, supra, p.142.

3
The Sydney Morning Herald, in an editorial on 29 Oct for example, conceded that a treaty would be preferable, but argued that in its absence it was still in Australia's interests to defend Malaysia.

4
Labor's Policy (ALP pamphlet, 1963).

5
Ibid., p.22.

6
Herald, Advertiser, Canberra Times, Daily Mirror, Courier-Mail, SMH, 7 Nov. See also D.W.Rawson: op.cit., p.100.

7
Age, 13 Nov 1963.

issues he suggested that the ALP was ambivalent. However, some two thirds of his speech was devoted to domestic policy, and like Calwell he made promises of substantial increases in social welfare benefits, particularly in the field of education. The Government was not going to be outbid by the ALP on social welfare; further, its offer of aid to non-government schools extended the principle of 'state aid' to the mainly Catholic private schools. The Catholic vote, traditionally Labor, could be swung.¹

The press approvingly interpreted the speech as making security a major issue.² For the next few days Government leaders pressed the ALP on the issue.³ Barwick was perhaps the most forceful, contending in Adelaide that 'Labor is trying to obscure the fact that foreign affairs is the great issue in the election. The domestic issues are comparatively unimportant'.⁴ Menzies continues this assault, using Malaysia as one of his major weapons.⁵ The Government was successful if its intention was to force the ALP on to the defensive on these issues, for Calwell felt it necessary to emphasise that the ALP would keep forces in Malaysia.⁶ Perhaps significantly he stressed this in Brisbane where he shared a platform with Keefe.⁷

The election campaign had clarified the parties' stands on security issues, and had to some extent led the ALP to adopt a position closer to that of the Government. On Malaysia it had become clear that the differences between the two parties were not great, as Menzies admitted on 15 November.⁸ But the Government had propagated its case better. By the time of the final addresses Menzies was stressing security issues; Calwell concentrated on domestic issues.⁹

¹
Rawson: op.cit., p.100.

²
SMH, 13 Nov; West Australian, 14 Nov; Daily Mirror, 13 Nov was again the exception.

³
See speeches by Menzies at Brisbane (Courier-Mail, 15 Nov), Evans (Daily Telegraph, 16 Nov), and Melbourne (Age, 14 Nov); by Bury in Canberra (Canberra Times, 14 Nov); by Spooner at Tumut (Canberra Times, 14 Nov); and by Fairbairn at Wagga (Daily Telegraph, 14 Nov).

⁴
Adelaide Advertiser, 15 Nov.

⁵
West Australian, 19 Nov; SMH, 20 Nov.

⁶
Age, 15 Nov; Daily Telegraph, 19 Nov.

⁷
Times, 20 Nov, for an extensive report. See Chapter Four, supra, for Keefe's views.

⁸
SMH, 16 Nov.

⁹
Ibid., 29 Nov 1963.

On 30 November 1963 Australia voted. The results revealed that the Government had won an unexpectedly large majority of twenty two seats. Subsequent interpretations of this result have tended to assume that this victory was because 'our responsibilities in South-east Asia, particularly our commitment to the new Federation of Malaysia...would be more adequately safeguarded by the Menzies Government'.¹ Both Starke² and Sir Alan Watt³ have assumed that the election result might be interpreted as a clear mandate for the Government to pursue its foreign policy which, according to another observer,⁴ the Prime Minister chose as 'the main issue' in the elections. The New York Times came to a similar conclusion, attributing the result to 'President Sukarno's neo-colonialism [which] has raised new apprehensions in the area'.⁵ The Government was later to make similar assertions.⁶ While it would be idle to deny that foreign policy and defence were issues, it seems unlikely that they were the only major issues. The Times saw the result as a consequence of affluence moving traditionally radical voters to the right: its editorial made no mention of security matters.⁷ The extent to which security issues affected the result of the election must remain, however, in the absence of evidence, open to conjecture.⁸

But the issues engendered by the election campaign were significant. On Malaysia, both Government and Opposition supporters had been eager to establish their policies, the former criticising the ALP for its ambiguity on the subject. The Government had been firm in asserting its intention to aid Malaysia and if Menzies' statement of 25 September had left observers in any doubt the election campaign appeared to remove all signs of equivocation.

¹ Ibid., 2 Dec 1963 (ed).

² Starke: op.cit., p.204.

³ Watt: op.cit., p.ii.

⁴ A.G.Lowndes: 'Introduction', in John Wilkes (ed): Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy (AIPS, Melbourne, 1964) p.1.

⁵ NYT, 2 Dec 1963. On 20 Nov the NYT had predicted an anti-Indonesia election.

⁶ Sir Garfield Barwick's Statement at the Opening of the Seato Conference 13 April 1964, (DEA, Canberra), pp.1-2.

⁷ Times, 2 Dec 1963.

⁸ Rawson: op.cit., p.100. See Colin A.Hughes and John S.Western: The Prime Minister's Policy Speech: A Case Study in Televised Politics (ANU Press, Canberra, 1966).

Although Liberal-Country Party spokesmen had carefully described Australian intentions 'to add our assistance to that of the UK', the image of an Australian Government resolutely prepared to defend Malaysia had been created on 25 September and sustained at the hustings. This was not borne out in its policy.

During the election campaign Canberra's policy towards confrontation was, it seems, internationally dormant. At this time the brunt of the Indonesian assault was being felt in Malaysia's Borneo states and there were indications that the war there was escalating. Apart from Menzies' pledge of 25 September, by December 1963 Australia had done nothing to respond to Indonesia's harassing of Malaysia. The Australian contribution to Malaysia's defence remained the forces established in Malaya since 1955. The Borneo states were being defended by British and, after December, also by Malaysian forces. The Australian announcement of 25 September had been warmly welcomed in Kuala Lumpur and London; the absence of accompanying action was less well received. Australian forces had neither been increased nor moved from their bases in Malaya. Malaysia was undoubtedly subjected to 'subversive activity - supported or directed or inspired from outside Malaysia' but Canberra was doing little to assist her defence. On the eve of the Australian election the London Daily Mail had passed the opinion that while Australia had more interest in the integrity of Malaysia than the UK, it was doing much less to preserve it.¹ Such sentiments were to become more widespread in London.

During early December the United Kingdom found it necessary to reinforce its Far Eastern force, and moved V-bombers and more troops to Malaysia.² The Australian press began to publish reports of British hints to Australia that the latter should contribute more to Malaysia's defence, particularly by assisting in the defence of Malaysian Borneo.³ Editorials, despite the distinctly pro-Malaysia flavour of the Australian press, were not inclined to view with favour the despatch of Australian troops to Borneo, except in a

¹ Daily Mail, 29 Nov 1963.

² SMH, 3 Dec 1963 and 5 Dec 1963.

³ D.Mirror, 2 Dec; SMH, 5 Dec and 9 Dec; Advert, 6 Dec; WA, 7 Dec.

case of absolute necessity.¹ By mid-December there were clear suggestions in the London press that Australia should send her battalion at Malacca to participate in the defence of Eastern Malaysia² and such a move was widely expected.³ These reports were reinforced when the Malaysian defence minister, Tun Abdul Razak, announced that he hoped to discuss proposals for further Australian defence aid with Australian representatives.⁴ Amid further press reports from London,⁵ the Times contended that in view of the firm support the Australian Government had expressed for Malaysia in the recent election campaign, an early decision on further aid to Malaysia was expected, probably in the nature of token forces being sent to Sabah.⁶ There were indications that the Indonesians also expected such a move.⁷

By the end of December these activities appeared to be coming to a head and the Straits Times suggested that Australian forces should be sent to Borneo.⁸ Razak, while declaring there were sufficient troops in Borneo, admitted that, although the sending of Australian troops had not yet been discussed with Australian authorities, the matter was 'under review'.⁹ In early January 1964 the British Minister for Defence, Peter Thorneycroft, arrived in Malaysia for discussions and it was expected that Australia would receive a request for further assistance.¹⁰ On 2 January the Malaysian Cabinet met and was reported to have considered making such a request to Australia.¹¹ The following day the Tunku told

¹
Daily Mirror, 2 Dec; Advertiser, 6 Dec; Courier-Mail, 7 Dec; Bulletin, 14 Dec; Age, 20 Dec. West Australian, 7 Dec, proved to be the exception.

²
Guardian, 10 Dec.

³
West Australian, 14 Dec, Gary Barker reported from Singapore that 'it is considered likely that Australia and New Zealand will be asked for direct military help in keeping terrorists out of Sarawak and Sabah'.

⁴
Ibid., 18 Dec.

⁵
Daily Telegraph, 23 Dec.

⁶
Times, 23 Dec.

⁷
Indon Observer, 23 Dec.

⁸
ST, 25 Dec 1963.

⁹
Age, 24 Dec.

¹⁰
Mercury, 31 Dec 1963; SMH, 2 Jan 1964; Herald, 3 Jan 1964.

¹¹
Age, 3 Jan 1964

Parliament that Canberra had offered further aid to Malaysia in the event of an Indonesian attack.¹ The Economist reported that London had been hinting to Canberra that Australian forces should be sent to the Borneo states, but that Australia was reluctant to do this, not wishing to alienate Sukarno unnecessarily.² The journal's Canberra correspondent thought that any increased Australian assistance was more likely to take the form of financial aid, equipment and training facilities. It was an accurate prediction.

Following the meeting of the Malaysian Cabinet and its discussions with Thorneycroft, speculation was ended when the Tunku announced in Jesselton: 'I have not asked and will not ask for military assistance from either Australia or New Zealand unless there is war....I don't think we need to'.³ At the same time Thorneycroft said that 'between us, Britain and Malaysia, we have sufficient forces to do the job that confronts us'.⁴

By 6 January it was clear that Australia would not be formally asked to send forces to Borneo. There followed reports in the Australian press that both London and Kuala Lumpur did not expect to have to ask.⁵ Whether this was the case is difficult to assess. The Straits Times thought that Australia's non-participation in Borneo was unfortunate and feared that Djakarta might interpret Australian inactivity as indication of lack of Australian support for Malaysia. The paper thought that any diplomatic initiative Canberra retained was of negligible importance.⁶ Further, Thorneycroft, then in Borneo, said that though the situation was serious, Australian troops would not be requested⁷ but that more (non-Australian) troops would be sent if necessary.⁸ The Times in an editorial, 'The Defence of Malaysia', felt that though more forces were needed 'it is reasonable to expect that Britain should not have to go cap in hand to two members of the Commonwealth to seek support in defending another against attack'. It realised

¹ MPD,HR, 3 Jan 1964, vol.V, No.37, col. 3955.

² Economist, 4 Jan 1964.

³ SMH, 7 Jan 1964.

⁴ Ibid..

⁵ C.Times, 8 Jan; Times, 7 Jan 1964.

⁶ ST, 8 Jan 1964.

⁷ Ibid., 9 Jan 1964.

⁸ Times, 13 Jan 1964.

that Canberra was trying by diplomatic means to restrain Djakarta but thought there was little indication that this policy had been at all influential.¹ The Bulletin also thought that Australia had been approached but that she had held back from deep involvement while there was still a possibility of Indonesia being restrained.²

The Straits Times was probably correct in assuming that the almost unanimous call of the London press for increased Australian aid to Malaysia was due to 'gentle Whitehall prompting'.³ The Australian press had also come to this conclusion and the Government made no attempt to deny it, nor did it in Parliament when Calwell made the same accusation.⁴ It seems that after preliminary soundings by the British, Australia gave no indication that she wished to be asked for more aid, possibly explaining the reasons to London and Kuala Lumpur, and the matter was dropped.⁵ One authority suggests that the usual procedure was for Kuala Lumpur to hint that aid would be welcomed and then for Australia to make an offer. The exchange would then be formalised. Malaysia would not formally request aid unless it knew it would be forthcoming, although both she and the United Kingdom would have welcomed Australian forces in Borneo. In this case it appears that the request would not have been met.⁶

It has been suggested earlier that on the issues of confrontation and Malaysia, the views of the Department of External Affairs were often reflected by the editorials of the 'well-served' Bulletin.⁷ On 11 January 1964 the journal succinctly described Canberra's position:

The time may come when the clash [in Borneo] becomes open warfare and Indonesian infiltration a full-sized operation, in which case Australia and New Zealand must, in the interests of self-defence as well as in honourable fulfilment of their understandings with Kuala Lumpur, help Malaysia with full military aid. That time is obviously not yet. To commit Australian troops to

1

Ibid., 7 Jan 1964.

2

Bulletin, 11 Jan 1964.

3

ST, 8 Jan 1964.

4

CPD,HR, vol.41, 3 March 1964, p. 191.

5

Interviews in Singapore, Feb 1966; Kuala Lumpur, May 1966; Canberra, July 1966.

6

Interview with the author in Kuala Lumpur, March 1966.

7

See Chapter Four, supra, p.146.

Borneo is an irrevocable step...it should not be taken while...the pipeline between Canberra and Djakarta is still open and while Indonesia's increasingly severe economic situation may persuade Djakarta that the game isn't worth a candle. Avoiding a break with Indonesia - which posting Australian troops to Borneo would surely precipitate - and seeking mutual accommodation of our conflicting interests are sensible foreign policy aims. 1

The Australian Government had been silent during this course of events. On 16 January Federal Cabinet met for the first time since the election. In the statement issued by Menzies after the meeting, the section dealing with Malaysia was in fact a defence of the Australian policy of not sending forces to Borneo, appearing to indicate that there had been at least unofficial requests for such a move. In view of its significance the statement merits fairly extensive quotation. The relevant sections read:²

The Government has had the military and political situation between Indonesia and Malaysia under constant attention...including various activities in Sarawak and Sabah....

Our Australian military advisers...have given the Government their assessment as to the adequacy of the military forces already available to Malaysia... the Government earlier concluded, and still concludes, that there is no immediate need for further Australian assistance....

Australian forces of all arms already are...in Malaysia - placed there for, among other things, the defence of that country, which comprises not only Sarawak and Sabah but...Malaya and Singapore.

The Australian Government is maintaining close and most harmonious consultation with the Malaysian and British Governments...concerning the need for any further assistance from Australian forces. In addition to this, the Government is consulting with the Malaysian Government to see what it can do to contribute to the development of Malaysia's own defence effort.

The Government believes that there has been and is considerable scope in the diplomatic field to try to end border incidents....We have been most active in these matters. We have, in particular, made our position abundantly clear to the Indonesian Government, emphasising that, although we sincerely desire friendly relations with Indonesia...we also stand firmly for the political and territorial integrity of Malaysia...my statement of 25 September 1963...remains unaltered.

1

Bulletin, 11 Jan 1964.

2

CNIA, Jan 1964, pp.61-2.

The reference to the 'diplomatic field', in keeping with Australian policy generally, was clarified in the final paragraph:

The Government welcomes the forthcoming conversations between President Sukarno and...Robert Kennedy. We are most hopeful that the discussions will lead to a clearer understanding on the part of President Sukarno of the seriousness^{with} which the United States and her allies regard present developments on the Indonesian-Malaysian border in Borneo.

The next edition of the Bulletin¹ posed what it called 'The Big Question' in an article comparing the two Menzies statements of September 1963 and January 1964, asking whether they were incompatible. The article concluded they were not. Relevant to the examination of this issue, which entails a general review of Australian policy towards confrontation, is a letter written by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Holyoake, to Subandrio in January. Referring to the despatch of New Zealand troops to Borneo, a step which Wellington like Canberra had not taken, Holyoake said:

That is a step which we have been most reluctant to take because we realise the effect it could have upon relations between Indonesia and New Zealand. It is nevertheless a step from which we would not shrink if further serious deterioration in the situation in the Borneo states should follow from continuation of the confrontation policy. 2

There is every reason to believe that Canberra shared these sentiments and communicated them to Djakarta.³

The Bulletin provided a rational answer to the critics of Australian policy who felt the two statements were incompatible. The journal contended that

In the first place these critics have not paid attention to the Prime Minister's September 25 statement which stated quite clearly we would only 'add' our forces to those of Britain which by reason of its power, prestige and commitment remainsthe military guarantor of Malaysia. In the second place it also stated that we would do this if we were asked formally. We have not yet been asked. If Britain finds it can no longer cope...with the situation we will undoubtedly be asked to furnish direct military aid and will undoubtedly respond. Until that time - except for those who relish the possibility of severing Australian relations with Indonesia...caution over military commitment is eminently sensible. 4

¹
Bulletin, 25 Jan 1964.

²
External Affairs Review (Dept. of External Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand) (NZEAR) vol.XIV, No. 4, April 1964, p.24.

³
This was substantiated in interviews with senior Australian Government officials in Kuala Lumpur, March 1966; Canberra, July 1966; Sydney, February 1967.

⁴
Bulletin, 25 Jan 1964. Emphasis added.

In fact, as the Bulletin indicated, 'the use of the word "add"... implied that Australia...[would] only step in when Britain and Malaysia were fully extended'.¹

Menzies' statement of 16 January was more moderate in tone and more representative of Australian policy than that of the previous September. It more clearly indicated Australia's desire to retain some room for diplomatic manoeuvre, to retain a friendly relationship with Djakarta and to allow for the different approach taken towards confrontation by the US. One may also speculate that with the federal election handsomely won the Government no longer felt the need to represent the more bellicose elements of public opinion so accurately in tone if not in substance.²

From these events between September 1963 and January 1964 it is possible to discern and to evaluate the basic premises and objectives of the Australian Government's policy towards confrontation and Malaysia. Canberra clearly regarded Britain as the primary guarantor of Malaysia's security. Thus, throughout, Government spokesmen were anxious to emphasise that Australia would 'add' her forces to those of Britain in defence of Malaysia. A number of reasons for this attitude may be given. In the first place Australia would be unable to defend Malaysia alone in the event of a British withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Canberra was concerned to ensure that Australia was not left in such a position. The use of the word 'add' indicated that Australia would not automatically accept that obligation in the event of a British withdrawal. For similar reasons Australia's obligation with regard to Malaysia's defence was made only in association with that of the United Kingdom: it placed on Australia no direct obligation to Malaysia. Partly for these reasons a separate treaty was to be avoided. In addition, as Barwick³ and Menzies⁴ had indicated before the 1963 election, a separate treaty, particularly of the nature advocated by the ALP (that is one involving a degree of legally binding mutual obligation) could have deprived Australia of the ability to make decisions entirely alone. Whether the operation of a treaty would have led in practice to such a situation is difficult to determine, but Australia might have found the hints of December 1963 more difficult to ignore. The Australian Government wished to be involved only to the extent that it, rather than its allies, deemed necessary.

¹ Miller: op.cit., p.12.

² Ibid., p.15.

³ SMH, 21 Sept 1963. See Chapter Four, supra, p.149.

⁴ CPD,HR, vol.40, 15 Oct 1963, p.1794. See p.191, supra.

By January 1964 it seems unlikely that Canberra thought that its own diplomatic efforts could substantially aid a diplomatic settlement of the dispute, and it was less optimistic that such a settlement was possible. Growing American involvement in the role of a mediator did little to revive that optimism.¹ Djakarta had differentiated between its policy towards Australia and its hostility towards the United Kingdom and Malaysia,² and Canberra was eager to retain the friendly links with Indonesia for as long as possible. It was feared that the despatch of Australian forces to Borneo would precipitate a rupture of these amicable relations. The Australian Government also sought to avoid the involvement of Australian forces unless Malaysia and Britain could not cope with the military situation. Since independence, Kuala Lumpur had spent little on its armed forces and these were fully extended by confrontation.³ Canberra felt that for the immediate expansion of the forces defending Malaysia, the Federation should look to its own resources. The first task for Australia would be to assist this process and aid the expansion of Malaysia's own defence capacity.⁴ The statement of 16 January 1964 served to make this position clear. The Australian press recognised the Government's attitude and was sympathetic.⁵

On 28 January the Australian Cabinet met again and 'gave further consideration to the question of assistance to Malaysia in the development and expansion of its own forces'. The Malaysian authorities thought 'that certain assistance in the form of material and training would be useful', so Cabinet 'proposed to send a mission to Kuala Lumpur to discuss and assess what items within Australia's capacity to supply, may be needed'.⁶ Shortly after, the Tunku revealed that he had asked Australia, New Zealand and Canada for further aid in the form of training facilities and

1

Sir Garfield Barwick: 'Australia's Foreign Relations', Chapter 1 in John Wilkes (ed): Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy, p.21.

2

In September 1963 Indonesian forces had guarded the Australian Embassy while the British and Malaysian missions were attacked by rioters.

3

See Chapter Three, supra, pp.87-8.

4

This was indicated by subsequent Australian policy and substantiated in interviews with Australian officials in Kuala Lumpur, March 1966; and Canberra, July 1966.

5

Editorials: D.Mirror, Advert, Merc, D.Tel, M.Herald, Age, 17 Jan; Bulletin, 25 Jan 1964.

6

CNIA, Jan 1964, p.69.

equipment.¹ In Australia only the Daily Mirror of the mass circulation newspapers did not express approval, suggesting that it was inappropriate at a time when negotiations were proceeding between Malaysia and Indonesia.² Conversely, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Malaysian request was known before 16 January but Canberra had delayed, and was now further delaying, its sending of aid while the US-sponsored negotiations proceeded.³

On 25 January Barwick addressed the Australian Institute of Political Science⁴ and elucidated much of the basis of Australian foreign policy. Having outlined his own belief in the value of quiet, personal diplomacy, Sir Garfield went on to give an interpretation of the recent events in Southeast Asia. He referred to the 'high degree of sensitivity' to be found in the ex-colonial states of Asia, a sensitivity which was 'the direct product...of emotional reactions to newly acquired political freedom, unsupported by adequate economic strength....A manifestation of this deep emotional satisfaction on accession to freedom and independence is the great and understandable desire to see others similarly freed'.⁵ He talked also of the traditional animosities existing between some Asian states, and the problems faced by some of them to maintain their unity and their very existence with internal racial and regional diversity. In this situation, for Australia 'the goal must be a tranquil area, steadily rising in political and economic strength, accepting us as a co-operative member of the region'.⁶ In pursuit of that goal, 'our method...must be predominantly by diplomacy'. It was with this philosophy that Barwick was approaching the problems of confrontation. He examined this issue more specifically:

We shall no doubt from time to time find ourselves supporting one of our neighbours rather than another ...because we believe that the views and policies of that one which we support are right and more conducive to a goal of peaceful co-operation....But...we should only make such a choice after the most extensive efforts to comprehend the conflicting views and claims and... to encourage the parties themselves to find some grounds for accommodating them...after a period of

1
Times, 31 Jan 1964.

2
D.Mirror, 31 Jan; also SMH, Country Mail, Daily Telegraph, 30 Jan.

3
SMH, 29 Jan 1964. See Chapter Five, supra, p.158 ff.

4
Barwick: 'Australia's Foreign Relations', pp.3-27.

5
Ibid., p.15.

6
Ibid., p.16.

careful evaluation and of conscious effort at understanding and...of encouragement of efforts by the parties themselves to find a solution of differences - we have announced our support of one nation, Malaysia, though that support could involve us in conflict with Indonesia.¹

He went on to point out Indonesia's difficulty of maintaining national unity, her leaders' acute sensitivity and her desire 'for recognition on the international field'.² Faced with this situation, Sir Garfield argued,

the policy we should follow is clear - it could be a policy of friendship pursued with patience and understanding and without easy discouragement. At the same time wherever the vital interests of ourselves or our allies or our friends are concerned we should be firm and unequivocal...we should not accept the view that these difficulties [of Indonesia] justify unacceptable international conduct. There must be no interference in the affairs of others and no expansionism. Our own territorial integrity and that of our territories ...must be clearly indicated as inviolable. These two lines of policy we have been pursuing. It may, of course, emerge that seeking friendship...and pursuing an inflexible determination to defend what and whom we believe to be right may on occasions prove incompatible. If they do the latter must prevail and we shall find ourselves on a collision course. I would hope that day does not arrive. 3

The fundamental thesis propounded by Barwick was that Australia should be careful in judging the behaviour of states with different cultural and normative patterns which she must make every effort to understand. In the case of Indonesia this had been done, and her activities in relation to Malaysia viewed with considerable sympathy, but they remained unacceptable to Canberra. Australia sought amicable relations with Indonesia, but such relations would be worth little if Djakarta proved to be intractably aggressive or expansionist. With some reluctance, Canberra had decided it could not sacrifice Malaysia in the interests of retaining Indonesian goodwill. This attitude is to be seen against a background of a fear of the larger threat from China, which Barwick described in the following terms: 'We must accept...for the present that China constitutes the greatest threat to the security of the region in which we live. Indeed there is no other major threat at this time'.⁴ Australia supported

1
Ibid., p.17.

2
Ibid., pp.18-19.

3
Ibid., pp.19-20.

4
Ibid., p.22.

Malaysia because it was 'in the interests of the security and stability of the region'.¹ China constituted a threat to all states of Southeast Asia (and Australia) and disputes between Southeast Asian states only reduced the capacity of the region to resist Chinese pressure. Australia would reluctantly support Malaysia militarily if it became necessary, to preserve long-term regional stability and to discourage aggression.

Following Menzies' statement of 16 January 1964 the Australian Government made little reference to confrontation while negotiations were being carried on between the disputants.² It was hopeful, but thought it unlikely that a settlement could be negotiated.³ The apparent collapse of the talks in March led almost immediately to Australia breaking its silence and announcing increased assistance to Malaysia. In the interim the Parliamentary session was opened.

On 25 February the Governor-General delivered his opening speech to Parliament. He described the mounting threat posed to Australia from the north evidenced by confrontation and communism, and said:

My Government will continue to support the political and territorial integrity of Malaysia....Australian relations with Indonesia have of course deeply concerned my ministers. Government policy towards Indonesia continues to be one of friendship, pursued with patience, frankness and realism. The major interests we have in common should if possible be preserved. But my advisers continue to make it clear to Indonesia that we have commitments in relation to Malaysia which we will honour. 4

At question time this policy was elaborated a little. Asked by J.F.Cairns whether, after claiming to be seeking during the previous election a mandate for a firm policy towards Malaysia, the Government was now vacillating on its commitment to Malaysia, Menzies replied that a clear policy was being pursued but that provocation of Indonesia was being avoided.⁵

The debate on the Governor-General's speech revealed the breadth and variety of opinion to be found in Parliament towards the issue of confrontation. Broadly two themes were discernible: that 1) it was in Australia's interests for Malaysia to be preserved, and that

¹ Ibid., p.20.

² See Chapter Five, *supra*, pp. 159-62.

³ Barwick: *op.cit.*, pp.20-1.

⁴ *CPD,HR*, vol.41, 25 Feb 1964, p.11.

⁵ Ibid., p.24.

2) although Indonesia might be pursuing a dangerous policy at present, in the long run friendship with Djakarta should be Australia's objective. Thus an ALP member could criticise Indonesia, asserting that the PKI dominated its foreign policy,¹ while a Government backbencher could contend that Djakarta was really concerned about aggression from Peking and its long term interests were similar to Australia's.² Further, it was an Opposition member who was most appreciative of Barwick's policy, arguing that

Australia is fortunate to have a Minister for External Affairs who...retains a great deal of balance on the question of our relations with Indonesia. We must have a great deal of patience. 3

Another ALP member also felt that Australia should avoid a direct confrontation with Indonesia, saying that 'the dispute...should go to the UN'. However, he was more concerned with Australia's military weakness than Indonesian friendship.⁴ Finally, Sir Wilfred Kent-Hughes, one of the most vociferous anti-communists in the House, alleged that there was a carefully planned pincer movement between Peking and the PKI to conquer Southeast Asia, and asserted that Indonesia had only agreed to the Bornean cease-fire in order to send reinforcements to the area.⁵

A diversity of opinion was thus to be found on the issue on both sides of the House. At this time Labor was still far from united in its policy but Calwell does seem to have expressed majority opinion within the party when he claimed that the Government, having taken a strongly pro-Malaysian stand during the election campaign, had then moderated its public stance.⁶ His contention that Australia's commitment to Malaysia was not clear (as evidenced, he argued, by the Government's reluctance to become involved in Borneo) and his conclusion that a treaty was therefore necessary, would appear to have been founded on a misinterpretation of Canberra's diplomacy. He asserted that the Government had based its policy on the assumption that Britain would retain its military presence in Southeast Asia. Arguing that the UK was likely to withdraw, he contended that Australia should conclude a separate treaty with

1
Ibid., 26 Feb 1964, p.59 (Duthie).

2
Ibid., p.83 (Jess).

3
Ibid., p.79 (Cross).

4
Ibid., 5 March 1964, p.302 (Benson).

5
Ibid., 4 March 1964, pp.261-5.

6
Ibid., 3 March 1964, pp.191-6.

Malaysia to allow for that contingency. In fact the Government had taken account of such an eventuality and had based the nature of its formal commitment to Malaysia largely on this consideration. It would seem that the Government's association with Britain was a more effective method of avoiding being left with a bilateral obligation to defend Malaysia after a British withdrawal than would be a formal treaty, which would remain in force after such a withdrawal. Calwell summed up his position:

It has now become clear that the Prime Minister's treatment of the Malaysia issue during the election campaign was little short of an electoral fraud... he took the pose of a strong man...he claimed that the Labor Party did not believe in Malaysia....To that accusation I replied...that we support... Malaysia to the extent that it will promote... stability in South East Asia and will strengthen the area against Chinese aggression,...But Indonesia's policy of confrontation cuts across these objectives. We need an anti-communist Malaysia, but we also need an anti-communist Indonesia. 1

The objectives which Calwell was advocating for Australia differed little from those which the Government was pursuing: only the means differed. By the following year these divergences were to diminish and a bipartisan approach to Malaysia, already developing in 1964, evolved.

The reluctance to be directly involved in confrontation was not, then, limited to the Government but included the ALP and sections of the press.² But broadly the idea prevailed that while the negotiations, then taking place in Bangkok,³ had some chance of success, 'Australia can do no more...than to reaffirm her determination to stand by Malaysia. This country hopes to retain friendly relations with Indonesia....What Indonesia has to understand is that Australia means what she says'.⁴ Canberra was aware of the danger, that in attempting to placate Djakarta, the latter might interpret Australian policy as indicating an intention to avoid opposing Indonesia at all costs.⁵

By 6 March 1964 the Malaysia-Indonesia-Philippines negotiations being held at Bangkok had apparently reached an impasse. This was regarded as sufficiently serious in Kuala Lumpur for the Cabinet

1
Ibid., pp.191-2.

2
Ad. News, 5 March; Herald, 5 March.

3
See Chapter Five, supra, p. 161.

4
Age, 4 March 1964, editorial.

5
Interview with senior Australian Government officials, Canberra, July 1966.

to implement the National Service scheme arranged the previous year.¹ It was most unlikely that this was done without consultation with the ANZAM powers, in view of Malaysia's limited training facilities.² It was considered that negotiations were unlikely to bring an end to confrontation.

On 11 March Barwick in a long Parliamentary statement described the Australian Government's attitude to the situation.³ Having outlined the events leading up to the Bangkok talks, he continued:

The facts are not in dispute. There are in the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak...infiltrators from Indonesia ...over the period of the cease-fire...new infiltrations have occurred....These elements have been brought together, grouped, trained and supplied by Indonesia.... The Indonesian Government has acknowledged responsibility for these groups....Indonesia has thus resorted to the use of force to achieve its aim of preventing the successful creation of Malaysia which [does not]... threaten Indonesia...[this is] a breach of the [UN] Charter.

...Indonesian policy now seeks to use the continued presence of the guerrillas as a tactical weapon to secure advantage and concessions in any discussionsThis is a situation which Malaysia, as I think rightly, believes it cannot accept....Without firm and acceptable arrangements for their withdrawal it is difficult to see how a discussion can take place. ...It is greatly to the credit of the Malaysians that they have been willing to take part in ministerial talks to arrange a proper or effective cease-fire. Their patience...merits our full commendation. The course which Indonesia is following merits international disapprobation.

The Australian Government regarded with approval the policy being pursued by Kuala Lumpur. Barwick went on to describe Australian policy:

I am sorry thus to speak of Indonesia. I have constantly sought to promote the friendship of the two peoples and have been astute to seek and to study Indonesia's point of view. But Indonesia cannot expect that Australia can do other than condemn breaches of accepted international...conduct. Australian policy towards Indonesia will continue to be one of seeking to promote sound, friendly relations without sacrifice of Australian vital interests.... We have publicly stated our support for Malaysia and our disapproval of Indonesia's policies....We have made Australia's position quite clear through diplomatic channels and by direct communication... with Ministers in Indonesia,...Britain, America.

¹ ST, 19 Nov 1963, and 11 March 1964.

² Times, 11 March 1964.

³ CPD,HR, vol.41, 11 March 1964, pp.472-86.

This statement was rather firmer in tone with regard to Indonesia than those previously made by Barwick. The press generally saw it in this light, applauding Sir Garfield's 'firm but friendly warnings'¹ and appreciating his

taking a stance devoid of the clubbish prejudices which have characterised the Prime Minister on the international scene and at the same time more farsighted than the domestic electioneering of his party would lead one to expect. 2

The Government was also thinking in terms of United Nations involvement in the dispute. But its approach was rather different to that of the ALP. Barwick pointed out 'that the Malaysians have already notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations of Indonesian breaches of the...cease-fire'. He thought this to be 'a wise course', particularly as the dispute might later be considered by the UN, but warned that the 'timing and nature of an approach to the United Nations is clearly a matter for Malaysian decision'. Again the germs of a bipartisan policy were to be discerned.

That Barwick's statement of 11 March did represent a shift in the Government's position towards a more tangible commitment to Malaysia became clearer when, within a week, the first additional Australian aid to Malaysia, aid specifically in response to the needs created by confrontation, was announced. On 17 March the Minister for Defence, Paul Hasluck,³ told the House of Representatives that in accordance with Menzies' statement of 28 January a defence missions had left Australia on 9 February and after two weeks of discussions in Malaysia had informed the Australian Government of 'the types of assistance that the Malaysian authorities considered would give them the earliest and most direct support'.⁴ He continued:

After considering the report the Government has decided to provide substantial quantities of ammunition, engineering equipment, general stores and various small sea-going craft....Training courses will also be provided in Australia on a greatly increased scale for Malaysian...[armed forces'] personnel.

1
See editorials, Age, Daily Mirror, Herald, Advertiser, SMH, Courier-Mail, 12 March; West Australian, 13 March; Bulletin, 21 March

2
Nation, 21 March.

3
Hasluck had taken over the portfolio following Townley's death in 1963.

4
CPD,HR, vol.41, 17 March 1964, pp.522-3.

It would appear that Canberra had avoided any increase in its commitment so long as Indonesia appeared prepared to negotiate: the apparent collapse of the talks brought escalation. In conformity with the general direction of Australian policy described earlier, the first Australian effort was designed to assist in increasing Malaysia's own capacity to resist an attack. As suggested by the original Australian commitment of 25 September 1963, it was only when this capacity was fairly fully extended that Canberra was prepared to use Australian forces. The new Australian assistance was welcomed by the press on two grounds: that it was an additional commitment¹ and that by increasing Malaysian capacity it might help prevent the necessity for Australian forces being sent to Borneo.²

On 19 March Calwell opened a short debate on Barwick's statement; inevitably the debate encompassed that made by Hasluck.³ Calwell repeated his contention that 'as far as the Menzies' Government is ...concerned foreign policy is an instrument of electoral strategy'.⁴ But the broad agreement between the two sides of the House was again revealed, Calwell advocating that while Australia should seek to remain on good terms with Indonesia, it could also defend Malaysia. His criticism of the Government was that after seeking to make Malaysia an election issue it had done little to implement its declared policy. Did the recently announced £3 million aid require a mandate, he asked.⁵ The theme was pursued by Beazley who contended: 'The proposed sending of £3,000,000 worth of equipment to Malaysia is an anti-climax to the picture of strong support and positive policy suggested during the election campaign'.⁶ But if the Government was still open to accusations of ambiguity in its attitude to Malaysia (a position here contended to be inherent in the subtle nature of its commitment), the ALP was far from unanimous in its approach, a fact which the press was quick to publicise.⁷ Thus in the debate, while Benson could criticise

1 Courier-Mail,
Eds, Age, 18 March; SMH, Ad. News, 19 March 1964.

2 Bulletin, 21 March 1964.

3 CPD, HR, vol.41, 19 March 1964, p.676.

4 Ibid., p.677.

5 Ibid., p.680.

6 Ibid., p.686.

7 E.g. Alan Reid: 'Two Labour Foreign Policies?', Bulletin, 28 March.

Australia's giving military training to Indonesia,¹ and both he and Coutts could complain at the paucity of Australian aid to Malaysia,² Cairns asserted that Indonesia was not hostile to, and posed no threat towards Australia.³

Until that time Indonesian criticisms of Australian policy had been limited. The new Australian aid to Malaysia announced on 17 March provoked from Indonesia the sort of comment, albeit restrained, which Australian policy was seeking to avoid. Suadi, the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra, accused Australia of interfering in Asian problems which must, he said, be solved by Asians.⁴ A few days later Subandrio, on a visit to Paris, said the friendly relationship which existed between Indonesia and Australia could not be expected to continue if Australia followed Britain's lead in the Malaysia dispute.⁵ But the repercussions on Indonesian-Australian relations of Australia's increased aid to Malaysia were limited. This was not to be the case so clearly the following month, when a more substantial Australian contribution to Malaysia's defence was announced.

On 16 April Hasluck announced in Parliament further Australian assistance to Malaysia, 'in response to a request received from the Malaysian Government'.⁶ He pointed out that in pursuit of the Government's policy to help defend Malaysia, 'Australian forces stationed in Malaya as part of the strategic reserve have already undertaken appropriate tasks in pursuance of this policy'. The fighter squadrons of the RAAF stationed at Butterworth 'were placed some time ago on operational readiness for air defence', RAN vessels had been available 'for patrol and escort duties' and

Elements of the Australian army battalion in Malaya have just completed a further tour of duty in security operations against terrorists in the northern border region of Malaya, thereby freeing Malaysian forces for other tasks. 7

¹
CPD,HR, vol.41, 19 March 1964, pp.693-4.

²
Ibid., p.700.

³
Ibid., p.726.

⁴
Mercury, 7 April 1964. Both the Age, 8 April, and SMH, 11 April, criticised this statement, indignantly pointing to Australia's direct interest in Asian affairs.

⁵
~~West Australian~~ West Australian, 9 April 1964.

⁶
CPD,HR, vol.41, 16 April 1964, pp.1192-3.

⁷
In 1960 the Australians had suspended their activities on the Thai border, see Chapter One, supra, pp.22-3. Their reinvolvement reflected Canberra's desire to have Malaysian forces fully committed to opposing Indonesia.

While Malaysian air space had been violated over the peninsula,¹ and sporadic acts of piracy had occurred in the Malacca Straits,² these incidents appeared unlikely to become so serious as to require the intervention of Australian forces. Those forces were a part of the deterrent against significant escalation by Indonesia. In the same way the activities of the Australian army were of the nature of indirect assistance to Malaysia in her struggle against Indonesia. But the Government had increased its commitment.

The Malaysian government...sought assistance by Australian forces in countering the threat of seaborne infiltration of insurgents along the coasts of Sarawak and Sabah, for engineering construction in the Borneo States...and for some air transport support.

In response to these requests Australia announced that 'two RAN coastal minesweepers will be made available at once for patrols off the coast of the Malaysian Borneo states', 'an army engineer squadron...will be provided to construct air strips, roads and bridges in the Borneo states', four RAAF helicopters would be used on the Thai-Malaysian border in anti-terrorist operations and air transport assistance would be given in 'freight flights from Malaya to Borneo'. The Minister concluded by saying that the moves were being made 'not because of any lack of desire on our part to live in a neighbourly fashion with Indonesia, but because...we support the political independence and territorial integrity of Malaysia'.

Australian editorials generally viewed these moves with approval³ but only the Daily Mirror realised immediately that they introduced a qualitatively different element to Australia's support for Malaysia.⁴ In Indonesia this fact was more quickly appreciated. Subandrio warned that any war over Malaysia could no longer be localised: for this he blamed Australia.⁵ The Indonesian Herald in an editorial reiterated this view warning that 'Australia's very existence hinges on the good will of Indonesia'.⁶ Suadi said that though these moves were seen as a threat to Indonesia she would not

1

See Table 15.

2

See Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.I.

3

West Australian,
Sydney Sun, M.Herald, SMH, 17 April; ~~WK~~ 18 April 1964.

4

Daily Mirror, 17 April 1964.

5

Sun-Herald, 19 April 1964.

6

Indon Herald, 20 April 1964.

retaliate.¹ The qualitative difference evoking this stronger reaction involved the fact that Australian forces would now be engaged in Borneo where they might come into combat with Indonesian

TABLE 15:
Indonesian Activities Against Malaysia,
April 1963 - April 1964²

<u>Period</u>	<u>Land Incidents</u>		<u>Sea Incidents</u>		<u>Air Incursions</u>	
	<u>Sarawak</u>	<u>Sabah</u>	<u>Borneo</u>	<u>West Malaysia</u>	<u>Borneo</u>	<u>West Malaysia</u>
<u>1963</u>						
April	3			1		
May	1			1		
June	4					
July	5			1		
August	10			1		
September	7					
October	6					
November	2			1	4	
December	2	2			5	
<u>1964</u>						
1-24 Jan	9 ^a	8		1	5	
25 Jan-5 Feb	2	4		8	8	
6-28 Feb	8	7		6	8	
March	7	1		9	4	1
1-16 April	3	3			1	3

^aIncluding one landing by sea.

forces. Such a conflict appeared to be covered by the terms of the ANZUS Pact. Before examining the repercussions of the new measures it is necessary to look at US policy towards the Malaysian-Indonesian dispute.

On 11 June 1963 Dean Rusk had described the basis of US policy towards Indonesia before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations:

Indonesia occupies a strategic position of crucial importance....Its natural resources...are among the most extensive in the free world. The Sino-Soviet

1

Age, 25 April 1964.

2

Compiled from, Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.I (Ministry of External Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, 1964) and contemporary press reports, largely in the Straits Times.

bloc is making a major effort to draw Indonesia within its orbit...It is within this context that US policy towards Indonesia must be consideredOur best policy objectives towards Indonesia are to work...to prevent communist control. 1

During 1963 Washington had regarded Malaysia as the responsibility of the ANZAM powers. During his visit to the US in April 1963 Razak had received only vague moral support, while later the US appeared to show greater enthusiasm for Maphilindo than for Malaysia.² Although Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia appeared to temper any US enthusiasm for Sukarno, Indonesia remained for Washington a strategically vital state and one to be kept if possible on friendly terms with the US.

US active involvement in the dispute began after Howard P. Jones had completed his discussions in Washington during November and December 1963.³ Jones was widely assumed to be sympathetic with Sukarno. Another member of the diplomatic corps in Djakarta described Jones' attitude in the following terms:

Jones was acutely aware of the fact that if your country disagreed with or criticised Indonesian policies, President Sukarno would be most upset and possibly unfriendly. Jones' remedy was to avoid all disagreement and criticism. 4

On his return to Djakarta Jones handed Sukarno a note from President Johnson. At the time it was thought that the note contained a warning to Indonesia to moderate her policy.⁵ Dean Rusk was later to tell the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the note did warn Indonesia that the US viewed her policy with disfavour.⁶ This, combined with the extension of the activities of the US Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean,⁷ appeared to indicate that Washington, fearing an intensification of the dispute, was moving towards intervention.

1 US Dept of State Bulletin, 1 July 1963, vol. XLIX No.1253, pp.24-5.

2 Ibid., 15 July 1963, vol. XLIX No.1255, p.82 (U.Alexis Johnson); ibid., 9 Sept 1963, vol. XLIX No.1263, p.392 (Roger Hilsman).

3 Jones saw President Kennedy on the eve of the latter's assassination, then remained to consult with President Johnson.

4 Interview, July 1966. A subordinate of Jones agreed with this interpretation: interview, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

5 NYT, 3 Jan 1964.

6 Age, 25 March 1964.

7 Times, 23 Dec 1964.

On 13 January 1964 the US National Security Council met in Washington and discussed confrontation. After the meeting it was announced that the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, was to go to Tokyo to meet Sukarno and discuss the issue.¹ The choice of Kennedy would appear to have been partly a result of domestic politics, but Kennedy had met Sukarno before when attempting to mediate in the West Irian dispute.² In any case the conflict does appear to have become more serious and Thorneycroft spoke of the likelihood of war. The US may have feared being drawn into such a conflict by her ANZUS allies.³ The priorities of the UK and the US at that stage were different: the former was chiefly concerned to protect her ex-colonies, the latter to contain communist influence in the area. As previously indicated, and as evidenced by Menzies' statement of 16 January, the Australian Government, although viewing the Kennedy mission as being unlikely to succeed, was prepared to give the US attempt to mediate every support, a negotiated settlement being the aim of both Washington and Canberra. Only the Mirror of Australian papers rated the mission's chances of success very highly:⁴ other editorials expressed doubt that Indonesia could be persuaded to moderate her policy.⁵

Throughout 1963 there had been press reports that the US was pressing Australia to play a greater role in Southeast Asian military affairs. During Roger Hilsman's visit to Australia in January 1964 he had made public hints to this effect.⁶ At the same time the US was inclined to see Indonesia 'as a strategic counter-balance to China. The inadequacies of Sukarno's Administration were admitted, but it was assumed not to be perpetual, meanwhile it had to be suffered up to a point'.⁷ It would appear that the point was being reached. Australia was playing an increasingly active role in the affairs of her Near North but in the British

¹
NYT, 14 Jan 1964. See Chapter Five, supra, p.158 ff, on the Kennedy trip and subsequent negotiations.

²
Robert Kennedy had met Sukarno in February 1962, before the Dutch-Indonesian negotiations began in the US.

³
Daily Telegraph, 13 Jan 1964.

⁴
Daily Mirror, 28 Jan; Sydney Sunday Mirror, 19 Jan (editorials).

⁵
Courier-Mail, 17 Jan; Mercury, Canberra Times, 23 Jan; Age, SMH, 24 Jan; West Australian, 25 Jan; SMH, 29 Jan.

⁶
Times, 27 Jan 1964. See speech by Hilsman to the Australian Institute for Political Science, in Wilkes: Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy, especially p.47 ff.

⁷
Times, 6 Feb 1964.

rather than the American sphere of interest. That such a division of spheres existed was indicated after Douglas-Home visited Washington. The joint communique, which he and President Johnson issued on 13 February, contained the following passage:

The Prime Minister re-emphasised the United Kingdom's support for the United States' policy in South Vietnam. The President re-affirmed the support of the United States for the peaceful national independence of Malaysia. 1

The Washington correspondent of the Times reported that 'the anxieties he [Douglas-Home] had about the US approach to Malaysia have been allayed'; it was thought that if the talks initiated by Robert Kennedy failed and Indonesia renewed confrontation, then the US would stiffen its policy towards Indonesia.² That this proved to be the course of events adds credence to the report. To the extent that the US was recognising the significance of the position of the ANZAM powers it appeared that it accepted the increased effort of Australia in Malaysia. But Washington felt that every effort should be made to achieve a negotiated settlement and was optimistic that the Bangkok talks might produce the desired result.³ The aims of the ANZUS powers were similar, their positions differed. America would avoid a direct commitment to Malaysia but would not discourage a restrained Australian commitment to the embattled Federation.

In early April it was announced that Barwick would attend the SEATO Council meeting to be held later that month in Manila.⁴ The presence of Dean Rusk would provide the first opportunity for Australian-American consultations at a ministerial level since the Australian elections and the accession of President Johnson. On the eve of his departure, Barwick conceded that Malaysia would be one of the topics raised at Manila and that the situation with respect to Indonesian confrontation 'had deteriorated' since he last spoke on the subject, on 11 March.⁵ Public statements at the SEATO

1 US Dept of State Bulletin, 2 March 1964, vol.L No.1288, p.337.

2 Times, 14 Feb 1964.

3 Rusk on 14 Feb 1964, US Dept of State Bulletin, 2 March 1964, vol. L No.1288, p.334.

4 SMH, 2 April 1964.

5 Press Conference, 10 April 1964 (DEA, Canberra).

Conference cast little light on the problem of Malaysia. On 16 April Barwick gave a press conference at Manila on completion of the Conference. He was asked about the applicability of the ANZUS Treaty to the Australian commitment to Malaysia. Barwick, who was aware that Australia was to commit an engineer squadron to Borneo, replied:

The ANZUS Treaty says that if Australians are attacked in the Pacific area, and Borneo is in the Pacific area, the Treaty comes into operationI did not need US assurances on this. I have had conversations with the Americans long since. It is quite clear this situation...both Australia and...Indonesia are quite clear on what I just said to you on the operation of the Treaty. 1

On his return to Sydney on 17 April both Barwick's statement at Manila and that of Hasluck in Parliament were known to and had been well publicised by the Australian press. At his press conference in Sydney Barwick was again questioned on the applicability of ANZUS to Australian forces in eastern Malaysia. He replied:

I said [at Manila] that the Treaty expressly covered attacks on Australian military personnel or aircraft or ships in the Pacific area. Borneo was for this purpose within the Pacific area....America is not in doubt about this. 2

He was careful to point out that if the Australian engineers in Borneo were fired on this would not bring automatic American involvement, but he said that Washington had been given prior notification of the move and he agreed that it did increase the chances of US involvement. He added that he had told Sukarno of this during his visit to Djakarta the previous September. The Minister repeated most of these points in a television interview that evening.³

The first reaction of the Australian press was of firm approval, the assumption being made that Barwick had received assurances, with regard to US policy, from Rusk at Manila.⁴ Only the Daily Mirror questioned this interpretation, positing that perhaps Barwick was trying to involve a reluctant US in the dispute.⁵ The

1

Press Conference by Sir Garfield Barwick at Manila, 16 April 1964 (DEA, Canberra).

2

Press Conference by Sir Garfield Barwick at Sydney, 17 April 1964 (DEA, Canberra).

3

SMH, 18 April 1964.

4

Sun-Herald, 19 April; SMH, 18 April; C. Times, 21 April; Douglas Wilkie in Melbourne Sun, 20 April.

5

Daily Mirror, 21 April.

ALP took up this theme in Parliament and on 21 April Barwick was asked by Labor members whether the US shared his interpretation of the ANZUS Treaty. On each occasion the Minister repeated that there was no difference of opinion, but did not divulge whether Washington had specifically informed Canberra of this fact.¹

On the same day Barwick made a statement on the SEATO Conference. He made no reference to ANZUS, but did elaborate on Australian policy towards Malaysia. Discussing the new defence aid, he said:

These necessary developments do not in any sense reduce our determination to support efforts for a peaceful settlement. But all the small and middle powers of South East Asia have, with Australia, a vital interest in upholding the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another country and the principle of respect for the political and territorial integrity of other nations....

Australia's own decisions are governed by...[these] principles...and not by any intrinsic hostility to Indonesia or its peoples. 2

Calwell opened the short debate on the statement and, having censured SEATO, again criticised the Government's Malaysia policy as an 'election-time, ersatz for one'.³ He continued with a detailed criticism of that policy which

is based on three assumptions each of them false and inadequate to the point of disaster....No government should publicly acknowledge and encourage the assumption that it will act automatically on the request of another government not bound to it by any treaty....Is the Australian response graduated to an Australian appraisal of the situation, or to the Malaysian Government's appraisal of its needs?

Calwell was mistakenly asserting that the Australian Government would accede to any request made by Kuala Lumpur. In fact Canberra had carefully framed its diplomacy to enable Australia, not her allies, to make any appraisal necessary. But again Calwell's objectives were little different from those of the Government. A second assertion of Calwell's was similarly ill-founded: 'Any policy based on the assumption that Britain is, or may be, or can be or wishes still to be a military power in South East Asia is bound to fall to the ground'. The Government was carefully

¹ CPD, HR, vol.42, 21 April 1964, pp.1231 (Cairns), 1234 (Harrison), 1235 (Uren).

² Ibid., p.1262 ff.

³ Ibid., pp.1271-6.

guarding against such a contingency. His final criticism was that the Government appeared to believe that it could rely on US support for its Malaysia policy, but that 'the American Government just does not see the Malaysian dispute as coming under ANZUS, or even involving it'. This contention will be later examined in more detail but it is worth recording the views which Menzies expressed during the debate.¹ Having reaffirmed Australia's policy based on his statement of 25 September 1963, the Prime Minister asserted that the US had always supported Malaysia but had seen its defence as primarily a Commonwealth responsibility. He repeated Barwick's interpretation of ANZUS, reading relevant sections from the Treaty, but warned that 'it is a great mistake to talk dogmatically of what the United States of America will do'.

These further statements of Barwick and Menzies only appeared to emphasise the qualifications necessary to the contention that ANZUS was applicable to the Malaysian dispute. The following day, in an editorial, the Sydney Morning Herald asked whether Rusk had given any assurances on the matter at Manila.² In Parliament Labor members asked further questions which received answers³ from Barwick similar to those of the previous day. Alan Fraser referred in the House to press reports from the United States that Washington was reluctant to be drawn into the dispute and was concerned at Australian forces being sent to Borneo.⁴

The controversy was terminated on 23 April. At question time, replying to Calwell, the Prime Minister gave what appears to have been the definitive version of the Australian Government's position.⁵ He said that the US had been 'advised' that Australia was sending men to Borneo and that

at the conference in Manila, Mr Rusk...expressed satisfaction at it. There is no reason whatever to suggest that the United States government does not want our forces there. There is every reason to believe that it does.

Referring to reports that US State Department officials had declined to comment on what they described as a 'hypothetical situation', the

¹ Ibid., pp.1278-80.

² ~~SMH~~ SMH, 22 April. See also D.Mirror, 22 April.

³ GPD,HR, vol.42, 22 April 1964, p.1303 (Reynolds), 1306 (Galvin).

⁴ Ibid., pp.1368 ff. Reports in C.Times, SMH, 23 April 1964.

⁵ GPD,HR, vol.42, 23 April 1964, p.1381.

Prime Minister pointed out that they had indicated the same sections of the Treaty as he had,¹ 'and said that they covered the matter'. But he gave no indication of a specific assurance by Washington that the US thought ANZUS applied to Australian operations in Malaysia.

On the same day, 23 April 1964, it was announced that Barwick had resigned his portfolio to become Chief Justice of the High Court.² The Adjournment Debate in the House that evening centred on that topic. Calwell, who opened the debate, contended that 'the circumstances in which Sir Garfield Barwick has been appointed ...are unusual and remarkable'. He conceded that Barwick was well suited for the appointment but felt that 'the appointment could have been delayed' particularly as he (Barwick) had already arranged an important overseas tour. Calwell concluded that 'there will be speculation, connecting this...decision with the controversy in which the Minister has been engaged, namely the American commitment under the ANZUS Pact'.³ There was indeed to be such speculation in the press, the tone of which Cairns anticipated that evening, saying

I submit...there is a significant difference of view between...Barwick and the Prime Minister ...and the government of the United States of America in relation to the presence of Australian troops in Borneo. 4

It was because of this, Cairns argued, that Barwick had to resign to show Washington that his opinion did not necessarily represent that of the Australian Government. Alan Fraser was more succinct: 'Barwick made a mistake and had to pay the price'.⁵

The Government gave but one answer to these criticisms and allegations. Menzies explained that once having decided on Barwick's appointment, the Government deemed it wrong for him to be kept in a politically controversial position any longer than necessary.⁶ But

¹ Articles IV and V. See ^{CPD,HR, vol.42,} ~~ibid.~~ 21 April 1964, p.1280 and p.221, infra.

² SMH, 24 April 1964; CPD,HR, vol.42, 23 April 1964, p.1463 (Menzies).

³ CPD,HR, vol.42, 23 April 1964, pp.1464-6.

⁴ Ibid., pp.1467-8.

⁵ Ibid., p.1470.

⁶ Ibid., pp.1466-7.

the statements by Australian Ministers on the ANZUS Treaty and the subsequent resignation of Barwick evoked a brief controversy, examination of which throws much light on Australia's position with regard to Malaysia by April 1964.

On his return from Manila Barwick had described Australian policy in the following terms:

the course that the Government has followed has been out of graduated response as it were to the situation and I have maintained diplomatic conversations with the Indonesians and have pointed out progressively where all this might end up....If this thing grows I am sure Australian involvement will increase. I have tried to make it very plain to Indonesia diplomatically, in the hope that it will deter them. 1

At this level it would appear that the defence moves of 16 April 1964 were designed to be part of a graduated Australian response to Indonesian aggression. One observer represented the moves as 'a qualitative change in Australia's commitment, "escalation" in a word'.² To what extent did the moves announced by Hasluck on 17 April represent a change in Australia's commitment to Malaysia?

Hasluck revealed that the RAAF forces had been put in operational readiness to defend Malaya, but this had been cited by the Government as one of the primary tasks of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve since its inauguration in 1955.³ There had been minor violations of Malaysian air space and territorial waters by Indonesia, but these activities were hardly serious enough to warrant the involvement of the Commonwealth forces. The use of Australians on the Thai border was, similarly, only a continuation of the anti-guerrilla activities they had been engaged in periodically since their arrival on the peninsula. As to the forces in Borneo, Hasluck had previously revealed in Parliament that 19 Australian officers had served there with the British forces since 1962 and that three were there in April 1964.⁴ But Djakarta had viewed the new Australian posture as being significantly different.

Both Britain and Malaysia seemed anxious to involve Australia as much as possible, particularly in Borneo, partly to diversify the forces defending Malaysia, partly because they were aware of

1 Barwick Press Conference at Sydney, 17 April 1964 (DEA, Canberra).

2 Peter King: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1964', AJPH, Dec 1964, p.282.

3 See Chapter One, supra, pp.19-22.

4 CPD,HR, vol.41, 9-10 April 1964, p.993.

the implications this would have with regard to the US position owing to the ANZUS Treaty.¹ It is worth speculating on the military necessity for such action. As indicated in Table 15 all violations of Malaysian air space occurred in Borneo until March, at which time the RAAF was alerted. The incidents on the peninsula were minor, however, involving the dropping of supplies.² Similarly the use of the RAN in Borneo waters was probably not urgently required in military terms. The only case of sea infiltration in Borneo had been recorded in January 1964 and, though serious, was not repeated.³ It was the dispatch of Australian army engineers to Borneo which attracted most attention. In the underdeveloped Borneo states there was no doubt of the need for the sort of construction work they were to undertake; it is their immediate military utility which needs to be questioned. Could their redeployment be attributed to political motivations, perhaps connected with ANZUS?

On 4 June, 180 Australian army engineers were landed in Sabah to help construct a road from Keningau to Pensiangan in the Interior Residency.⁴ It was reported that the Department of External Affairs had said they had orders to return the fire if attacked.⁵ Presumably because Indonesian forces were most active in Sarawak it was assumed that in Sabah the Australians would be unlikely to become involved in hostilities.⁶ This was hardly the case. Although up to April all but two of the incursions into Sabah had occurred near Tawau on the east coast, one of these had been near Pensiangan.⁷ On 16 February two groups of Indonesians, 21 and 11 strong, were located moving north across the border. On 19 February they were intercepted near Pensiangan by Security Forces and were repelled leaving two dead and two captured. The prisoners admitted that they had known of the cease-fire agreement and had infiltrated after it had been concluded.⁸ At the same time there were reports of a

1 Interviews, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966 and Singapore Feb 1966.

2 Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.I, p.82. The supplies seem to have been dropped to non-existent forces.

3 Ibid., p.11.

4 ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Daily Telegraph, 5 June 1964.

5 Ibid..

6 King: op.cit., p.285.

7 Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.I, pp.71 and 83.

8 See Chapter Five, supra, pp.159-61.

build up of Indonesian forces at Lumbis and Labang, about four miles inside the Indonesian border.¹ Pensiangan was about 15 miles from the frontier and the main settlement in the region. Its only access route was by 'bridle path' from Keningau (itself well connected by road and air) some 60 miles to the north. In 1963 the Sabah Government planned to build a road between the two villages.² In view of Pensiangan's isolation and its vulnerability, the military desirability of such a road would seem clear. Further, the Australian forces would hardly be in a 'safe' region. In fact on 6 September a group of Indonesian regular soldiers moved towards the village and, in a fight with Security Forces, lost five dead while wounding four members of the Security Forces.³ The 180 engineers were serving a definite, though limited, military purpose in a dangerous area.

Both Barwick and Menzies had been careful to assert only that the ANZUS Treaty applied, not that the United States would act. The sections of the Treaty relevant to such a contingency read:

Article IV

Each party recognises that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes...

Article V

For the purposes of Article IV, an armed attack on any of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of any of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific. 4

From these articles it would appear that the only contestable assertion in the Australian statements was whether Malaysia, and so Borneo, fell within the 'Pacific Area'. Barwick had asserted that it did. This was not indisputable, however, particularly since during the 1958 Formosan crisis Menzies had said that the Formosan region (though clearly within the Pacific Area) was not considered as coming under the ANZUS Treaty.⁵

1 Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.I, p.62.

2 Sabah, Annual Report, 1963, pp.166-7 and map facing p.166.

3 Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.II, p.44.

4 CNLA, July 1951, pp.403-4.

5 Menzies, Press Conference at Canberra, 10 Sept 1958 (P.M. Dept).

Barwick's statement of 16 April was not the first on the subject of ANZUS and Malaysia. On 19 March, Jeff Bate had asked the Minister whether Australia had 'definite treaty arrangements' with the US 'for mutual support in the event of Australia being committed to action in accordance with...Australia's assurances of support for Malaysia'. Barwick replied:

In various statements I have pointed out the strength of the ANZUS Treaty...which covers this country not only in the event of Australia itself being attacked but also in the event of our troops, naval vessels or service aircraft being under attack in any part of the Pacific area. I would have thought that those statements would answer...the question. 1

But after the despatch of forces to Borneo it seemed possible that Australia might seek to invoke the Treaty in a situation not previously envisaged and not in accord with US policy. This was really a 'hypothetical question' as the US had suggested: the possibility of Indonesian activity reaching the stage where US military assistance was required (in Malaysia, not New Guinea which was already explicitly covered) or would be requested seemed to be remote in April 1964.

In view of Barwick's resignation and the allegations concerning the reasons for this act an investigation of his statements seems useful. At a later date, 20 May 1964, Paul Hasluck, Barwick's successor as Minister for External Affairs, when questioned on the relevance of ANZUS to Australia's commitment to Malaysia, referred to Menzies' statement of 23 April 1964. Questioned by Cairns on the subject he replied that

The Prime Minister made a carefully considered statement on behalf of the Government setting out the position as it was seen by Australia. We have received clear indications from the United States that the Prime Minister's statement accorded completely with American views. 2

It was Menzies' statement which was seen as being definitive. The simplest explanation for this would seem to be the seniority of his position. But in one respect his statement did differ from those of Barwick: the Prime Minister did not specify that Borneo was within the Pacific area, and so covered by the ANZUS Treaty. But he did hint that this was the case and there seems no reasonable grounds for arguing that Barwick and Menzies expressed different interpretations. Barwick's contentions were neither modified nor repudiated, either

1
CPD,HR, vol. 41, 19 March 1964, p.655.

2
Ibid., vol. 42, 20 May 1964, p.2118.

by Canberra or Washington. It appears that Washington did accept that its obligations under the ANZUS Treaty related to the Australian commitment to Malaysia.¹ But, as Whitlam was later to report,² the US was not pleased that the Australian Government had made such an issue of the matter. Private diplomatic warnings of US support for Malaysia were thought to be more useful than public statements involving the sort of controversy which Barwick had, however inadvertently, excited.

The final issue with regard to the events of April 1964 that requires examination is the assertion that Barwick, by voicing his opinions on ANZUS, was seeking to put pressure on the US to adopt a more forceful posture towards Indonesia. The original Australian statement of support for Malaysia had been made after consultation with the US³ and in December 1963 Dean Rusk was reported to have expressed US approval for Australian policy towards Malaysia.⁴ Washington was aware of the significance of Canberra's policy for the American position. Following his visit to Southeast Asia, Robert Kennedy was asked at a White House press conference on 28 January 1964 whether he saw 'a possibility that the US will be unwillingly drawn in' to the Malaysia dispute. He replied, 'we have treaty obligations under the ANZUS Treaty and I think that the war has been escalating...and will spread if it continues. But I won't go beyond that'.⁵ At the same time, in Australia Roger Hillsman was showing even more clearly US appreciation of the situation, saying that 'America would come to Australia's aid if Australia were attacked while honouring its undertaking to defend Malaysia'.⁶ On another occasion he asserted similarly that 'if there is aggression on Australian troops in the treaty area then the United States would be committed to Australia's aid'.⁷ In addition there is Barwick's testimony that he told Sukarno in September 1963 that America could become involved in Malaysia's

1

At a press conference at Canberra on 19 July 1964, Menzies, who had just returned from the US, said that Washington accepted his statement as 'definitive' (P.M. Dept, Press Release).

2

Interview with E.G. Whitlam, 12 August 1964 (ALP Press Release).

3

CPD,HR, vol.40, 10 Oct 1963, pp.1653-4 (statement by Menzies).

4

Times, 23 Dec 1963.

5

US Dept of State Bulletin, 17 Feb 1964, vol. L No.1286, p.241.

6

~~CPD,HR, vol.40, 10 Oct 1963, pp.1653-4~~ Daily Telegraph, 29 Jan 1964.

7

Quoted by Ian Allen, CPD,HR, vol.42, 21 April 1964, p.1285.

defence.¹ It would seem that Australian policy was not out of step with that of the US. In May this became clearer when the semi-official Indonesian Herald reported that both Australia and the US had warned Djakarta that the ANZUS Treaty might be invoked if the Malaysia dispute escalated.² The movement of Australian troops to Borneo was at least partly a warning to Indonesia that the US, however vicariously, would oppose Indonesia's policy towards Malaysia.

The implications which had been attributed to Menzies' statement of 25 September 1963, that Australia would firmly support the UK and Malaysia in resisting Indonesian pressure on the Federation (and Government statements during the election campaign appeared to reaffirm those implications), were not borne out by subsequent Government policy. During the first seven months of Malaysia's existence Canberra pursued a cautious policy. Certainly, Australian forces remained in Malaya, but this was only a limited indication of a resolve to defend Malaysia. The inclusion of the Borneo states in the Federation was at that time the major ostensible reason for Indonesian opposition to the plan, and it was mainly in the Borneo states that military confrontation was being waged. The reasons for Australia's reluctance to commit forces to Borneo lay in the reasoning that Britain was primarily responsible for Malaysia's defence and (as Holyoake publicly admitted in the case of New Zealand) in the nature of Canberra's relationship with, and assessment of the situation in Indonesia. The extent to which Canberra's desire to remain on good terms with Djakarta was a product of Barwick's being Minister for External Affairs cannot be properly assessed. Certainly he had placed considerable emphasis on the need for Australia to understand and befriend Indonesia in his public statements and diplomatic activities during both the West Iria³ and Malaysia disputes. Whether a similar estimation of Australian interests would have been arrived at by Cabinet without his influence is difficult to determine. His successor to the portfolio, Paul Hasluck, proved to be more reticent, which, coupled with the change, indeed deterioration, in circumstances

1
Sir Garfield's press conference at Sydney, 17 April 1964, quoted Chapter Four, supra, p.148.

2
Indon Herald, 18 May 1964.

3
See Hanno Wiesbrod: 'Sir Garfield Barwick and Dutch New Guinea', Australian Quarterly, June 1967, pp.24-35.

makes direct comparison between the policies pursued by each impracticable. Barwick had pursued a policy which led, after his retirement from politics, to direct Australian military intervention in the defence of Malaysia. It seems unlikely that had he remained in office a significantly different policy would have been pursued.

Before the creation of Malaysia, Australia had been optimistic that Djakarta could be persuaded to accept Malaysia; subsequently Canberra placed greater emphasis on deterring and warning Indonesia. Australia adopted a position somewhere between that of Britain, which was providing an effective military deterrent against major escalation on the part of Indonesia, and the US, which was reluctant to become materially involved in the dispute but was prepared to use what political pressure it could to restrain Djakarta. Australia, with whom both Britain and America were associated under separate arrangements (both of which were applicable to Malaysia), was satisfied with and would assist the determined military efforts of Britain, and would encourage greater diplomatic pressure from the US. In practice Australia did not immediately become a guarantor of Malaysia; Australia increased its material aid to Malaysia as indications mounted of increased Indonesian diplomatic intransigence and military activity. This Australian policy would be likely to carry more weight if it were known to be militarily underwritten by the US. The dispatch of Australian engineers to Sabah placed the US in a position of vicarious military support for the Borneo states. But the parallel policies which both the US and Australia were pursuing, although with differing emphases, of seeking to retain a friendly link with Djakarta and to use that link to moderate Indonesian policies, contained the seeds of conflict and incompatibility. This was later to become clearer, particularly in the case of the US: in order to make one of the policies successful it was necessary to jettison the other. During late 1964 Washington came to place greater emphasis on seeking to modify Indonesian policies, and US-Indonesian relations deteriorated. In this respect Howard Jones' assessment of the situation was accurate. In Australia, Barwick had laid down the guidelines for such a situation: Australia sought Indonesia's friendship but would not sacrifice her own interests or those of her friends to that objective. In 1963 Australia had been anxious to use compromise, suasion and diplomacy to settle the Malaysia dispute; in 1964, less convinced that Indonesia could be persuaded to accept Malaysia, Australia assumed a greater direct responsibility for preserving the integrity of Malaysia and deterring open Indonesian aggression.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Australian Graduated Response - II

By mid-1964 the principal features of both the Malaysian issue and Australian policy towards it were apparent. During Barwick's tenure of the External Affairs portfolio, Australia had sought to avoid direct military involvement in Malaysia's defence against Indonesian confrontation. Following, but probably unrelated to Hasluck's succession to Barwick,¹ this policy was modified. Factors largely beyond Australia's control contributed to the change in Canberra's posture: Indonesia became increasingly isolated diplomatically, the US adopted a more clearly pro-Malaysia policy and Indonesia became more inclined to align with the anti-American states of the region. Perhaps most importantly, moreover, Indonesia escalated the military aspects of confrontation and rendered it more difficult and less useful for Australia to continue her non-participation in the military defence of Malaysia.

By May 1964 Australian public opinion did not expect a diplomatic settlement to the Malaysia dispute, at least in the near future.² Despite Hasluck's visit to Djakarta in June, the Government appeared to be of similar frame of mind.³ The collapse of the Tokyo summit conference⁴ was not greeted with surprise either by official or unofficial opinion, but was taken rather as further indication of Indonesia's lack of desire to reach a settlement and as a portent that confrontation might be intensified.⁵

Against that background, Menzies visited the US in late June. The policy adopted by Washington was an important factor in the dispute, particularly while in Indonesia there existed some hope that Afro-Asian sympathy for Djakarta's policies might lead the US to intervene and seek a settlement to the Malaysian problem

1

Senator S.D. Paltridge replaced Hasluck as Minister for Defence on 24 April 1964.

2

Age, Mercury, 15 June 1964; M.Herald, 21 May; SMH, 25 May; Peter Boyce: C.Times, 17 June.

3

For the Press, Press Release 54, 21 June 1964 (DEA, Canberra). This point was substantiated by Government officials in interviews with the author, Canberra, July 1966.

4

See Chapter Five, supra, pp.181-2.

5

Age, SMH, C.Times, 22 June; ~~Mercury~~ West Australian, 23 June.

favourable to Indonesia.¹ Australia wished to dispel this assumption by sustaining the pro-Malaysia emphasis of US policy. To influence Afro-Asian opinion to Malaysia's advantage was largely beyond the power of Canberra, but direct dealings with the US were possible. During his visit Menzies pleaded Malaysia's case. On 25 June he met Johnson amid reports that he was seeking firmer US support for Malaysia and warning the US that Indonesian aggression was as serious a threat to the stability of the region as Vietnam.² That such reports were accurate became clear when Menzies addressed the American-Australian Association in New York, on 29 June.³ Having asserted Australia's desire to be 'good neighbours' with Indonesia, he went on:

Malaysia represents one of the frequent triumphs of British policy in this century...the classic example of how a colony achieves its independence and self-government...with a healthy economy... why should we have to listen to all these silly words like 'neo-colonialism'?...The only threatening party, I regret to say, is Indonesia itself.

The Prime Minister continued by delivering a gentle warning to the US not to repeat its efforts at mediation along the lines of Robert Kennedy's conciliatory mission:

Unless there is the utmost good faith on both sides, then [a] conference will hurt one and help the other - ~~such~~ such a conference may turn out to be, in itself, an appeasing process which gives an advantage to the aggressor.

He then applauded the Tunku's readiness to negotiate, providing Indonesian forces were withdrawn from Malaysian territory, and continued by asking

But what happens when the conference goes on? Does anybody here really believe that Indonesian forces are not still finding their way into Borneo? ...before we put too much pressure on Malaysia to concede something here or there, or go into unconditional conference, we ought to remember that there are conferences and conferences.

Menzies, having sought a firmer pro-Malaysia policy in Washington, then continued to London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference. The Tunku had already made it clear that he would seek

1
Leifer: 'The Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.251.

2
Courier Mail, Daily Telegraph, 24 June; Herald, Canberra Times, 25 June;

3
CNIA, June 1964, pp.47-50.

support from the Conference for Malaysia.¹ He envisaged diplomatic rather than military support² and it was expected that his efforts would receive strong support from Australia.³

The communique issued after the conference indicated that Malaysia had achieved at least a degree of sympathy. The communique declared that the delegates

assured the Prime Minister of Malaysia of their sympathy and support in his efforts to preserve the sovereign independence and integrity of his country and to promote a peaceful and honourable settlement of current differences between Malaysia and neighbouring countries. 4

The impact of this rather tepid blessing for Malaysia⁵ was not improved by Ceylon's later refusal to allow facilities in that country to be used by British forces participating in the defence of Malaysia.⁶

The Australian role at the conference and the purpose of Menzies' overseas tour were elucidated by the Prime Minister on his return to Australia. At a press conference in Canberra, on 19 July 1964,⁷ he admitted that American and Commonwealth support for Malaysia were issues that were 'very prominent in my mind and about which I spoke perhaps more than on any other single topic'.⁸ With regard to his visit to Washington, he said:

I did want to know first whether my statement on the ANZUS pact in the Parliament...was accepted by them, and the answer was yes, it was accepted by them completely and so far as the State Department was concerned, it had circulated it among its people as a definitive statement of the position. 9

The Prime Minister went into greater length in describing the Commonwealth Conference at which he said there had been various

¹ ST, 13 July 1964.

² Ibid., 25 June and 15 July.

³ Daily Telegraph, SMH, 10 July.

⁴ CNIA, July 1964, p.26.

⁵ Leifer: op.cit., p.254; See also T.E.Smith: 'Further Troubles For Malaysia', The World Today, Oct 1964, p.415; Frances L.Starmer: 'Malaysia's First Year', Asian Survey, Feb 1965, p.115.

⁶ ST, 6 Aug 1964. The facilities were also denied to Soviet assistance en route to Indonesia.

⁷ P.M. Dept., Press Release, 19 July 1964.

⁸ Ibid., p.10.

⁹ Ibid., p.9.

disagreements:

The first related to the problem of Malaysia. Now this of course has tremendous importance for us and I made a number of contributions on this point emphasising the importance of Malaysia and emphasising ...we ought to make it clear that the aggression against Malaysia was to be condemned and that we supported Malaysia in her resistance to it.

...I was emphasising...at least everybody should give moral aid to Malaysia...we got a result on that which I thought pretty good....There was a good deal of discussion about the word 'support' to which there was opposition originally in some quarters. 1

He had sought diplomatic support for Malaysia and felt that it had been given.

Almost simultaneously with the Commonwealth Conference, the ANZUS Council met in Washington with Hasluck representing Australia. Its communique gave some opportunity to assess the accuracy of Australia's interpretation of the relevance of ANZUS to the Malaysia dispute. The communique, having 'noted with grave concern the continuing threat to peace in South and South-East Asia posed by aggressive North Vietnamese and Communist Chinese regimes', went on:

The Council reaffirmed its continuing support for Malaysia. It noted that two of its members are now giving aid, both in forces and material, to assist Malaysian defence. The Council recognised that in this region, as elsewhere, force must not be employed in violation of the territorial integrity of other nations. It expressed the hope that the independence of Malaysia would be respected and that peaceful relationships with neighbouring states would be restored. 2

The communique, which was warmly welcomed in the Australian press,³ was the clearest declaration of US support for Malaysia yet made. But it was hardly a declaration that the US would participate in the military defence of Malaysia. As one experienced American commentator wrote, 'the cautious wording on Malaysia resulted not from any disagreement but from a wish to defer a decision about how and when the US would respond if that situation deteriorated'.⁴ To judge by the ANZUS Council communique and Menzies' statements, that interpretation was accurate.

1

Ibid., pp.1-2.

2

CNIA, July 1964, pp.40-1. See also Starke: The ANZUS Treaty, p.202.

3

Daily Telegraph,

West Australian, SMH, THE AGE, 20 July (eds); Bruce Grant in Age, 20 July.

4

Max Frankel: NYT, 20 July.

The Tunku had made no secret of his desire for greater assistance for Malaysia from the US, stressing in particular Malaysia's need for finance, equipment, training facilities and helicopters.¹ After the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference the Tunku visited the US where his prime objective, he said, was not to seek aid but to elicit a firmer US policy towards Indonesia.² But following his first meeting with the President the latter offered to discuss US military assistance to Malaysia at a future date.³ It appeared that Washington was moving towards a more clearly pro-Malaysian posture.⁴ The joint communique issued by the President and the Prime Minister after their meetings of 22 and 23 July indicated as much. It revealed that they 'reaffirmed their support of the cause of freedom in Laos and Vietnam'. The President thanked Malaysia for its assistance to the South Vietnamese Government and 'made clear that all South-East Asian countries including Malaysia could rely on the firm intent of the United States to resist Communist aggression against free nations'. He also

reaffirmed the support of the United States for a free and independent Malaysia, and for Malaysia's efforts to maintain her security, preserve her sovereignty [and]...agreed to provide military training in the United States for Malaysian personnel and to consider promptly and sympathetically credit sales...of appropriate military equipment for the defence of Malaysia. 5

The communique, even more than that of the ANZUS Council, was interpreted as indicating a hardening of the US position following the failure of the negotiations initiated by Robert Kennedy.⁶ The Malaysian Minister of Information and Broadcasting reflected Kuala Lumpur's satisfaction: 'if we had any doubt in the past of the American attitude or policy on the question of confrontation, that doubt has been entirely dispelled'.⁷ In August a Malaysian mission

¹ Age, 7 July; ST, 13 July.

² ST, 22 July.

³ Times, 23 July; ST, 24 July.

⁴ NYT (ed) 24 July.

⁵ ST, 25 July.

⁶ Age, 24 July; Aust, Merc, 25 July; Bruce Grant: Age, 28 July.

⁷ Siaran Akhbar, 8/64.

visited the US to evaluate military equipment¹ and during the next few months US support for Malaysia appeared to increase.² There were various possible reasons for this: suspicions of Indonesian intransigence were seemingly substantiated by the events leading to the breakdown of the Tokyo summit meeting; Djakarta concluded a new arms purchase agreement with the Soviet Union; and perhaps most importantly, Indonesia increased the scale of her military attacks on Malaysia.

Shortly after the collapse of the Tokyo talks the British commander in Borneo alleged that Indonesia had increased the strength and activity of her forces in the area.³ In August such allegations appeared to be substantiated when Indonesia launched her first⁴ attack on the Malayan peninsula, landing 40 infiltrators in Johore. Sukarno had already promised to crush Malaysia before 1965⁵ and may have thought increased activity was necessary in order to attain that objective. The outbreak of communal violence in western Malaysia might have encouraged Indonesia to anticipate a cordial reception from sections of the Malay community. Above all, the landings coincided with Sukarno's 1964 Independence Day Address in which he outlined a more anti-Western approach to regional security problems.

By August 1964 US-Indonesian relations were clearly becoming strained, particularly after the Tunku's visit to the US. Indonesia began to move more openly into alignment with the anti-American cause in Southeast Asia. On 11 August the Indonesian Herald criticised America for evolving a grand Southeast Asian strategy, centred on Malaysia and South Vietnam, which ignored Indonesia. On the same day Indonesia raised her mission in Hanoi to Embassy status and Saigon severed relations.⁶ In his Independence Day Address of 17 August Sukarno described the Indonesia position more thoroughly.⁷ Having declared his admiration for Marxism⁸ and

¹
ST, 28 Aug.

²
On 13 August the US Senate voted to stop US aid to Indonesia.

³
Times, 20 July.

⁴
There had previously been sporadic acts of terrorism by Indonesian agents.

⁵
Indon Herald, 21 May 1964.

⁶
Ibid., 12 Aug.

⁷
A Year of Living Dangerously, Address by President Sukarno, 17 Aug 1964 (Indonesian Embassy, Canberra). See also Peking Review, 21 Aug 1964, pp.28-9.

⁸
A Year of Living Dangerously, p.8.

revolutionary ardour¹ he went on to express his view of the Malaysia situation in rather a new light:

We cannot talk about 'Malaysia' without talking about the situation in South-east Asia as a whole...it has now in fact become the focal point of world contradictions. Contradictions between socialism and capitalism. 2

The region was struggling for its independence and 'no devil can prevent Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia from becoming friends...Korea's "West Irian" and Vietnam's "West Irian", namely, the southern parts of those countries, are not free as yet'. He said that he had previously told representatives of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam that they had his support and that he condemned the US bombings of North Vietnam following the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin. He admitted 'if there had been no Johnson-Tunku joint communique then I would never have voiced these words', but the US 'prefers Malaysia to the Republic of Indonesia'. Sukarno appeared to be dividing the powers of the region into two groups. The division depended essentially on the states' relations with America: on that criterion Indonesia and Australia were joining opposing camps.³

On 17 August Malaysia informed the UN Security Council that 'a group of approximately 40 infiltrators from Indonesia made a clandestine landing on the western shores of Johore...in a clear act of naked aggression'.⁴ On 2 September, simultaneously with further race riots in Singapore, possibly instigated by Indonesian agents provocateurs,⁵ 30 Indonesian paratroops were dropped near Labis in Johore. In a further letter to the Security Council, Malaysia requested 'an urgent meeting of the Security Council under Article 39 of the Charter', to consider the Indonesian act of 'blatent and inexcusable aggression against a peaceful neighbour, an act which in itself is a breach of the peace and involves a threat to the peace and security of the area'.⁶ It appears that

1
A Year of Living Dangerously, p.11.

2
Ibid., p.15.

3
See Justus M. van der Kroef: 'Indonesian Communism's Expansionist Role in Southeast Asia', International Journal, 1964-5, pp.188-205; and 'Indonesian Communism and the Changing Balance of Power', op.cit.

4
Malaysian Communications with the United Nations Security Council on Indonesian Aggression (Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1965) p.3.

5
See Hyde: Confrontation in the East, p. 99 ff.

6
Malaysian Communications with the Security Council, p.4.

the British (and Australian) Government had favoured such a move at an earlier stage but that Kuala Lumpur had been reluctant to risk a rebuff by the UN.¹ The new attack on Malaya, a state which Djakarta had recognised in 1957, made it more difficult for Indonesia to present her case in a good light.

On 9 September the debate in the Security Council opened and Dr Ismail efficiently argued Malaysia's case, in the course of which he produced captured Indonesian weapons.² In a typical defence of the Indonesian position, Dr Sudjarwo denied the validity of 'legal arguments, particularly when they are based on the so-called international law...of the colonial powers'. He admitted Indonesian complicity in the 2 September landings, but argued:

our people rose to action. They volunteered as guerrillas ready and willing even to enter the enemy's territory...[they] have entered so-called 'Malaysian' territory in Sarawak and Sabah. They have been fighting there for some time. This is no secret...now this fighting has spread to other areas in 'Malaysia' such as Malaya...Indonesia's acts...for the cause of freedom, can certainly not be termed aggression. 3

This public admission of Indonesian infiltration into Malaya, which had been anticipated by a similar statement by Nasution,⁴ seemed unlikely to win friends for Indonesia in the UN.

The US was far from sympathetic with Sudjarwo's argument, Adlai Stevenson⁵ saying 'it is this specific act of violence which my delegation specifically deplores'. He argued that 'this Council cannot condone the use of force in international relations outside the framework of the Charter' and should 'call for the cessation of armed attack on Malaysia'. While US support for Malaysia was important, it was the attitude of the non-aligned members of the Council, Brazil, Ivory Coast, Morocco and Bolivia, that would largely determine the debate's outcome. On 14 September the Brazilian delegate said that Indonesia 'should not resort to the threat of force'. Similarly the Ivory Coast Delegate thought that

1
ST, 8 Aug.

2
Malaysia's Case At The United Nations Security Council (complete record of hearings, Kuala Lumpur, 1965) pp.2-8.

3
Ibid., p.15.

4
AGE, 8 Sept 1964, for text of interview with Nasution.

5
The US representative at the UN.

6
Malaysia's Case At The United Nations, p.37.

the Indonesian action was contrary to the UN Charter and that the Council should 'regret and deplore' it.¹ Morocco took a similar attitude. After efforts to produce a resolution acceptable to both parties had proved unavailing a draft resolution proposed by Norway was debated. It was opposed by the Indonesian delegation which particularly objected to the following two sections:

The Security Council....

2. Deplores the incident of 2 September 1964....

4. Calls upon the parties to refrain from all threat or use of force and to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of each other. 2

The draft resolution was rejected by the Soviet veto, but it received nine affirmative votes.³ Though far from a clear condemnation of Indonesian policy, the results of the Security Council debate were seen as 'a considerable victory [for Malaysia] in the wider diplomatic battle'.⁴ The Tunku was reported to be 'delighted'⁵ and the result was widely construed as a vindication of Malaysia's case.⁶

Although Malaysia had won a significant victory at the UN, it remained to be seen to what extent she would alter the 'lethargy and even apathy'⁷ with which she had previously propagated her case among the Afro-Asian states. On 4 September Ghazali bin Shafie, Secretary to the Department of External Affairs, indicated that a greater effort might be made, complaining that

the Indonesians appear to have succeeded to a large extent in misleading people in Asia, Africa and Europe and the Americas into believing that what is taking place here...does not constitute acts of war and aggression. 8

Whether Malaysia could effectively change this situation was put to the test in October.

1
Ibid., p.55.

2
Ibid., p.87.

3
Czechoslovakia voted with the Soviet Union.

4
Leifer: 'The Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.255.

5
SMH, 19 Sept.

6
Age, 19 Sept; Advertising Mercury, 21 Sept; West Australian, 22 Sept; Economist, 3 Oct; FEER, 10 Sept (ed).

7
Harvey Stockwin: 'Escalation', FEER, 17 Sept 1964, pp.506-7.

8
Ghazali bin Shafie: Communism and Sukarno's Aggression (Kuala Lumpur, 1964) p.1.

In July 1964 at a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Cairo, it had been agreed that a conference of non-aligned nations should be held in Cairo in October.¹ During that preliminary meeting Subandrio had made efforts to get support for Indonesia's policy towards Malaysia.² In October it was announced that Malaysia would not be invited to send a delegation³ but three members of the Malaysian Department of External Affairs went to Cairo for the conference, lobbying delegates and propagating their case in the local press.⁴ In addition the Tunku sent a letter to the delegations requesting diplomatic support.⁵ Indonesia also did not ignore the Malaysia dispute. Sukarno, who led a delegation of about 140, delivered the first speech after Nasser's inaugural address. In a general attack on neo-colonialism and the West, he vehemently criticised Malaysia.⁶ The conference would indicate the degree of Afro-Asian sympathy for the Indonesian position. The Times of India described a division of opinion between those delegations, including India, the UAR and Yugoslavia, who desired a peaceful settlement to disputes (except those involving imperialism), and those delegations less concerned with peaceful co-existence, led by Indonesia. The Indonesian delegation declared that there could be no co-existence between neo-colonialist Malaysia and Indonesia.⁸

The resolutions passed by the conference represented a setback for Indonesian strategy. Although economic exploitation and foreign bases were condemned, the final resolution was most significant. It declared that peaceful co-existence between states with differing social and political systems 'is both possible and necessary'. States should abstain from the use or threat of force

¹ Indon Herald, 14 July.

² Agm, 21 July,

³ ST, 1 and 2 Oct.

⁴ ST, 5 Oct; Dj.D.Mail, 6, 10, 13 Oct; Interview with a senior Malaysian government official, Kuala Lumpur, May 1966.

⁵ ST, 8 Oct.

⁶ Indon Herald, 9 Oct.

⁷ Times of India, 9 Oct.

⁸ Indon Herald, 10 Oct.

against the territorial integrity of other states: 'A situation brought about by the threat or use of force shall not be recognised'. This was regarded by Malaysia's supporters as something of a triumph.¹ The Indonesians also claimed that it supported, albeit tepidly, their own position.² It did seem that Kuala Lumpur had not taken sufficient advantage of the situation.³ The extent to which Indonesian propaganda had been effective was indicated by an article in a Yugoslav journal.⁴ Its author, with information both muddled and incorrect, supported the Indonesian position. There was still some danger, though it was receding, that Malaysia might lose its case by default.

Despite these reservations, in the latter part of 1964 international support for Malaysia had increased. The US had become involved both directly and via her ANZUS allies, and greater Afro-Asian acceptance of the Malaysian case had been shown in New York and Cairo. For Canberra these points were important. US involvement was sought by Australia for a number of reasons: as a deterrent against Indonesia, as reinforcement for the Australian position and to expand the terms of reference of the ANZUS Treaty. Afro-Asian approval of Malaysia made US support for the Federation more likely and direct Australian military involvement less difficult.⁵ One Australian official argued that 'we did not want to commit Australian troops to fighting Asians in Asia unless we were sure that the rest of Asia understood and sympathised with our reasons'.⁶ If the political reasons for Australian non-participation in the military defence of Malaysia were becoming less important, Indonesian escalation of confrontation made Australian involvement more likely.

1

ST, 17 Nov (Razak); M.Herald, 12 Oct; D.Tel, 13 Oct; Frances Starnes: 'A Role for the Non-Aligned', FEER, 29 Oct 1964, pp.248-50; Leifer: *op.cit.*, p.256; G.F.Hudson: 'The Neutrals and the Afro-Asians', The World Today, Dec 1964, p.547; NZEAR, Oct 1964, p.47.

2

Indon Herald, 12 Oct and 3 Nov.

3

See Harvey Stockwin: '9-2 Against?' FEER, 15 Oct 1964, pp.131-3.

4

Ales Bebler: 'Malaya, Malaysia and the Malaysians', Review of International Affairs, Vol.XV Sept 20 1964, pp.12-13.

5

ST, 20 Jan 64, for Lee Kuan Yew's assessment, quoted Chapter Five, *supra*, p.177.

6

In an interview with the author, Sydney, February 1966.

Following the collapse of the Tokyo summit meeting on 20 June 1964,¹ it seemed possible that Indonesia would increase the level of military activity² and reports soon followed that the Security Forces in Borneo had sought permission from the civilian authorities to launch retaliatory strikes against Indonesian bases.³ By August it was estimated that there were 11,000 Indonesian troops and about 2,000 Indonesian and Sarawakian volunteers in the Borneo theatre of operations.⁴ But it was the Indonesian attacks on Malaya which were the most serious aspect of increased Indonesian activity and seemed most likely to bring about Australian military participation. On 19 August the Australian Minister for Defence was asked whether Australian forces might be used to repel the attacks on Malaya. The Minister, having indicated that Malaysia had not yet requested such action, replied:

Australian forces are stationed in Malaysia as part of the strategic reserve and have already undertaken various tasks in the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Malaysia...our forces would be available by the consent of the Australian government if requested by the Malaysian government to take part in assisting to deal with armed infiltration...at the present time the Malaysian forces have the situation well in hand and that stage has not yet arisen. I want to make it perfectly clear to the Senate that should such a request be made...the Australian government would acquiesce in that request. 5

It seemed likely that Malaysia would make a request. Shortly after, the Tunku said that Australian troops might be used in a more active role⁶ and Critchley that Australia would send more troops to Malaysia if asked.⁷

The Australian press had reacted to both the likelihood of increased Indonesian activity in Borneo⁸ and to the landing of Indonesian forces in Malaya⁹ with unreserved hostility. The possibility of Australian military involvement, however distasteful in itself, was viewed with approval. The landing of Indonesian

¹ See Chapter Five, supra, pp.181-2.

² Leifer: 'The Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.254.

³ Dennis Bloodworth: 'The War in Borneo', Bulletin, 27 June 1964; SMH, 25 July.

⁴ 'The Malaysian Campaign', Times, 12, 13, and 14 Aug 1964.

⁵ CPD, Senate, vol.26, 19 Aug 1964, p.101.

⁶ SMH, 22 Aug.

⁷ Age, 24 Aug.

⁸ SMH, 2 July; Age, 3 July; Merc, 4 July.

⁹ Age, 19 and 25 Aug; Aust, 24 Aug; SMH, 26 Aug (editorials).

paratroops on 2 September only served to increase such feelings. The Melbourne Herald, in an editorial typical of the press's reaction, estimated that the dispute had gone 'past the point where our deep desire to avoid a clash with Indonesia can keep us out of the Malaysia crisis without grave long-term risks'.¹ A few editorials called for retaliatory action against Indonesia.² The landings of 2 September also brought non-British units from the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, stationed near Malacca, into action. On 4 September after a request from the Malaysian Government, New Zealand troops moved against the infiltrators.³ Australian forces were at that time on patrol near the Thai border: if they had been at Malacca they too would have been involved.⁴ An Australian-Indonesian military engagement had been averted, or at least postponed, for the time being.

The British regarded the Indonesian moves against the Malayan peninsula with some apprehension and sent reinforcements to Malaysia, including infantry groups from Germany, naval vessels from the Mediterranean fleet, and RAF units, including four Vulcan bombers, from the UK.⁵ Coupled with US attacks on North Vietnam, these redeployments increased suspicions that retaliatory action against Indonesia was imminent.⁶ Although this was denied by the Malaysian Government,⁷ President Johnson admitted that press reports 'concerning great power involvement in the dispute' were accurate,⁸ and it appeared that the UK was considering retaliatory strikes. Dean Rusk was non-committal,⁹ but Lee Kuan Yew tacitly admitted that retaliatory action was possible.¹⁰ In fact the tension abated, for there were

¹ Herald, 4 Sept. See also editorials, Age, Daily Telegraph, Mercury, Courier-Mail, 4 Sept.

² Canberra Times, 4 Sept; West Australian, 5 Sept; Age, 7 Sept.

³ Statement by the New Zealand Prime Minister, External Affairs Review (New Zealand), Sept 1964, pp.19-20.

⁴ Ibid.. See reports in Age, 5 Sept, and Sunday Mail, 6 Sept. This was confirmed by an Australian Government official in an interview in Kuala Lumpur, March 1966.

⁵ ST, 10 and 11 Sept; Times, 11 Sept.

⁶ Times, 11 and 12 Sept; NYT, 12 Sept.

⁷ Times, 14 Sept.

⁸ NYT, 14 Sept.

⁹ NYT, 15 Sept.

¹⁰ NYT, 14 Sept.

no further Indonesian attacks on Malaysia in September. By early October the infiltrators had been dealt with, only twelve remaining at large of the original 75 Indonesians and 21 Malaysian Chinese.¹ Whether Britain seriously considered retaliatory action at that stage or the press reports were a result of deliberate leaks designed to warn and deter Djakarta, is difficult to determine. It was reported that Australia and the US did not favour such strikes, but this was not publicly admitted. Questioned by Calwell on the subject Hasluck asserted that 'we have been in close, constant and effective consultation with the government of the United Kingdom' and that 'for our part in Australia we want to make it clear to the President of Indonesia that unprovoked aggression on the territory of Malaya must be countered and will be countered'.² The distinction made between peninsular and Bornean Malaysia indicated that Canberra was less reticent about becoming militarily involved in the defence of the former.

Despite the open hints of retaliation, Indonesia further increased military activity in Borneo. On 5 and 6 October one of the biggest clashes of the entire campaign took place in Sarawak between some 120 infiltrators and Security Forces, the latter calling in artillery support.³ At the same time, during his Armed Forces' Day speech, Nasution described the intensification of confrontation and warned that it was reaching a 'critical point'.⁴ On 29 October this threat was translated into action when 52 Indonesian troops and volunteers⁵ landed at the mouth of the Kesang river about 20 miles from Malacca. Malay fishermen notified the police almost immediately. In order to establish a cordon around the infiltrators the Security Forces moved quickly. The Commonwealth Brigade, stationed close at hand, went into action and within 36 hours, 50 of the group had been captured.⁶ Australian troops were among the Commonwealth forces and, as Menzies pointed out, Australian troops had been deployed against Indonesians for

¹
ST, 6 Oct.

²
GPD,HR, vol.44, 30 Sept 1964, p.1628. Emphasis added. See Boyce: 'Defence of Malaysia', p.7.

³
ST, 7 Oct.

⁴
Indon Herald, 6 Oct; Dick Wilson: 'The Struggle For Borneo', FEER, 15 Oct 1964, pp.134-6.

⁵
The force included two Malaysians.

⁶
Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.II, p.5.

the first time.¹ The Australian press again was in almost complete agreement with the Government's action, viewing it as regrettable but necessary, and apprehensively awaiting the Indonesian reaction.²

It is difficult to criticise this first military action by Australians. The Reserve had been in existence for nine years and one of its primary duties had been the defence of Malaya, and then Malaysia. Canberra had chosen to make a de facto distinction between those two responsibilities but could have hardly ignored the landings of 29 October. In a military sense the collision course Barwick had feared³ had been taken: the clash had occurred.

On 2 November Tun Razak announced that two and a half million pamphlets had been dropped on Indonesian territory in Sumatra and the Rhio islands, where the bases used by the infiltrators were located.⁴ This was the sum total of the Security Forces' retaliatory activities. The pamphlets were messages from the unsuccessful infiltrators captured in Malaya who portrayed the landings as failures and Indonesian propaganda about Malaysia as inaccurate.⁵ The action had two general purposes: 1) to dissuade further volunteers from landing in Malaya; and, more important, 2) to show Indonesia that air strikes could be quickly and efficiently mounted against its territory. The policy was applauded by the Australian press and Government.⁶ It seemed unlikely that retaliatory strikes would be mounted while the Indonesians maintained their limitations on military activity.⁷

For Canberra the direct involvement of Australian forces was a significant landmark in the policy of graduated response. If the Australian pledge to Malaysia was to mean anything, the action was unavoidable. The anticipated hostile reaction from Indonesia did not materialise. The Indonesian Herald made the most hostile comment in contending that Indonesia was fully encircled and that 'the fortification of Darwin into an air-strike base makes the

1
Defence Dept., For The Press, No 1038, 29 Oct 1964; CPD,HR, vol.44, 30 Oct 1964, p.2557. Senator Paltridge; For The Press, 30 Oct 1964.

2
Sun-Herald,
Editorial: Age, 30 Oct; C.Times, 31 Oct; SMH, 1 Nov; Advertiser, 2 Nov.

3
See Chapter Six, supra, p.206.

4
ST, 3 Nov.

5
Pamphlets and information from Malaysian Government sources.

6
Age, M.Herald, 3 Nov; SMH, 4 Nov.

7
SMH, 6 Nov.

southern flank of Indonesia the more vulnerable'.¹ The Djakarta Daily Mail² passed a similar opinion but relations between Djakarta and Canberra appeared to be unaffected. So far the Australian policy of supporting Malaysia while retaining good relations with Indonesia had succeeded. But Sukarno's command that confrontation be further intensified³ did not augur well for the future.

During 1963 Australian interest in defence and foreign policy had increased significantly, largely in response to Indonesian activities. During early 1964 a similar process was discernible. In January the Australian Institute of Political Science held its annual summer school on these issues and the conference was both well attended and well publicised. There was general agreement among the conferees that Australia was inadequately defended.⁴ During the following months such diverse authorities as Alastair Buchan,⁵ the Democratic Labor Party,⁶ and the Returned Servicemen's League⁷ argued that a large increase in defence expenditure was necessary. There were indications that the Government was sympathetic to these arguments,⁸ and rumours that it was considering the introduction of a system of two years selective national service training.⁹

In Parliament a similar concern with Australia's defence was evident and there were frequent questions on the armed forces.¹⁰ Members from both sides of the House expressed their anxiety at the inadequacy of Australia's forces, and Government back benchers argued for the introduction of conscription.¹¹ These demands appeared to

¹
Indon Herald, 6 Nov.1964.

²
Dj.D.Mail, 18 Nov.

³
Ibid..

⁴
See John Wilkes (ed): op.cit..

⁵
SMH, 24 March 1964. Buchan is Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

⁶
Canberra Times, 2 March.

⁷
West Australian, 6 March. See Daily Telegraph, 13 March, for statement by the Graziers Association.

⁸
Age, 7 March, for Hasluck's reply to the RSL, and 9 March, for statement by Forbes, Minister for the Army.

⁹
SMH, 8 May; Age, 19 May.

¹⁰
For example, CPD,HR, vol.42, 5 May, p.1552 ff (Hayden), pp.1556-8 (Benson and Jones), p.1551 (Daly); 6 May, p.1561 (Cairns); 20 May, p.2119 (Whitlam).

¹¹
Ibid., vol.41, 26 Feb, p.75 (Turner); 3 March, p.169 (Cockle); 4 March, p.268 (Falkinder); 5 March, p.293 (Reynolds); vol.42, 12 May, pp.1739-51 (debate on national fuel policy).

have some force as the Government admitted that its efforts to increase the size of the army were lagging.¹ On 18 June Paltridge announced the implementation of measures designed to remedy this deficiency. Conditions of service in the army would be improved and the CMF, which could now be asked to serve overseas, would be enlarged.² The press expressed only partial approval of these measures, feeling generally that conscription would be necessary to raise the army's strength sufficiently.³ And in a Gallup Poll 69 per cent of those Australians approached favoured the introduction of two years' conscription, while only 24 per cent opposed such a measure.⁴

Except in relation to conscription, Labor's posture was in keeping with the public mood. This was of some significance with the Senate election due to be held at the end of the year. Calwell, in July, was unequivocal in his demands for increased defence expenditure:

We still await an explanation of how an unarmed Australia is to honour her commitment in Malaysia....If increased taxation is required to provide Australia with the defence she needs...and lacks at present, then that taxation must be imposed. 5

He too was thinking in terms of the 'worsening international situation' with increased Indonesian activity against Malaysia.⁶ It seemed that a bipartisan policy towards Malaysia had been largely adopted, as Whitlam conceded at a press conference.⁷

But by August 1964 Indonesia was losing the unrivalled primacy that it had enjoyed in 1963 as a threat to Australian interests in the mind of both the public and the Government. Since the early 1950s the potential threat of China had loomed large for official and non-official opinion alike.⁸ Indonesia had provided something

1 Ibid., vol.41, 25 Feb, p.23 (Forbes); 26 Feb, p.38 (Hasluck); vol.42, 12 May, p.1734 (Forbes).

2 Defence Dept., For The Press, 18 June.

3 C.Times, M.Herald, C-M, Ad.News, 19 June; Merc, 20 June; SMH, 24 June.

4 APOP, June 1964.

5 Speech by A.A.Calwell to the ALP Conference, July 1964 (ALP Information Release, No.17) p.10.

6 Ibid., p.11.

7 Interview with E.G.Whitlam, 12 August 1964 (ALP Information Release, No.16) p.5.

8 See Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China; and Chapter One, supra.

of a diversion. The Commonwealth forces in Malaya, seen vaguely as a part of the grand SEATO design of preventing communist and Chinese expansion southwards, had been forced to counter pressure from a different direction. But in the background loomed China. In this context Australia did not want to see an increase in the power of the PKI, for that, Canberra reasoned, would mean an extension of Chinese influence. Until late 1964 the Australian Government had given little indication of fearing that Indonesia would become a communist state. By then the view of Sir Wilfred Kent Hughes, that Peking and Djakarta would unite in a pincer movement designed to envelop Southeast Asia,¹ appears to have gained some currency. Concurrently, a new menace to Australia's Southeast Asian strategy had developed.

If Canberra had been seeking greater US support for Malaysia, Washington had similarly desired greater Australian assistance for its own efforts in Vietnam. In 1962 Australia had sent 30 instructors to South Vietnam and had provided aid to the value of £A3.5 million.² Since then, despite increased US involvement and American hints that her allies might do more in Southeast Asia, the Australian contribution to South Vietnam had not been increased. On 8 June 1964, Paltridge announced that following a SEATO Council recommendation Australia would send another 30 instructors, 20 advisers, six Caribou transports and a mission to investigate Saigon's non-military requirements.³ On 21 June, Hasluck, on his return from Southeast Asia, laid primary emphasis on the threat to South Vietnam:

South Vietnam is absolutely vital for the peace and security of the whole South-East Asian region. Until this struggle is won there can be no lasting peace or development in the region....There can be no doubt that the North Vietnamese regime is directing, supporting and controlling the insurgency in South Vietnam. Part of this [is] simply Annamite aggressiveness and the desire to dominate their neighbours, but part is the determination of China to establish Chinese hegemony throughout South-East Asia, working in the first place through the agency of her North Vietnamese puppets. 4

In Canberra's view the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam

¹
CPD,HR, vol.41, 4 March 1964, pp.261-5.

²
CNIA, May 1962, p.36 (statement by Townley, 24 May 1962).

³
Age, 9 June 1964.

⁴
CNIA, June 1964, p.45.

was analagous with Singapore's left wing and the PKI: they threatened to extend Chinese influence. As such they represented a threat to Australian security and should, if possible, be contained.

The conflict in South Vietnam had been steadily escalating, although until 1964 the US maintained that it was providing only training assistance and equipment, not fighting forces, to the Saigon Government. In August 1964 the position changed dramatically when units of the US Seventh Fleet fought an engagement with North Vietnamese vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin and then attacked their bases. On 11 August Hasluck expressed Australian support for the US action, arguing that 'the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin are part of a long sequence of aggression in South East Asia' and that 'there is no current alternative to using force as necessary to check the southward thrust of militant Asian communism'.¹ That the Australian commitment to Malaysia was a part of that policy may be gauged from Menzies' statement a week later: 'we have a particular interest in the preservation of Malaysia, having regard to the threat of Communist aggression which presses down on us or in our direction from the north'.²

During the debate on Hasluck's statement the Government's position was clarified. Menzies admitted that he had been trying to increase American interest and involvement in Southeast Asia;³ Malcolm Fraser spoke of Australia being prepared to 'stand up and be counted' with the US;⁴ and McMahon argued that 'if South Vietnam falls, the neighbouring countries...will come under the political domination of Communist China' and so Australia would be threatened.⁵ At the same time as Indonesia was moving towards an anti-American position, Australia was adopting a position of greater support for the US. Jeff Bate expressed the position succinctly on 19 August:

¹ CPD,HR, vol.43, 11 Aug 1964, p.20.

² Ibid., 18 Aug 1964, p.283.

³ Ibid., 13 Aug 1964, pp.184-5. Menzies said 'we will remember vividly how anxious we were only a few years ago about the possibility that...South East Asia might be overlooked' by the US. More recently he said that he 'felt there was a growing realisation' in Washington 'of the importance of South East Asia. This was a matter of some satisfaction to us'.

⁴ Ibid., p.195.

⁵ Ibid., pp.231-2.

The Australian people want defence and security in depth. First, we want to stand firmly by Britain in Malaysia and to have Britain stand firmly by us. Secondly we want to stand by the Americans and to have the Americans stand by us. Thirdly we want to stand on our own feet and have a defence force of our own. 1

In August public demands for a greater defence effort continued² and the Treasurer, Harold Holt, warned that further taxation increases in addition to the budget might be needed.³ Army recruitment was proving to be a matter for some concern, for though a target of 28,000 men by 1967 had been set, in August the army's strength was less than 24,000 and recruiting figures hardly gave grounds for assuming that the target would be met. On 2 September Forbes revealed that the army had grown from 22,639 in June 1963 to 23,493 a year later.⁴ Recruiting figures for 1964 were as follows:⁵

	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Wastage</u>
Jan	568	188
Feb	314	151
March	258	193
April	246	229
May	168	215
June	148	186
July	280	273

The situation was not improved when on 29 September Forbes revealed that during August wastage had exceeded intake by 212 to 166.⁶

During the Parliamentary session interest in defence persisted. As one commentator observed:

The ALP directed its attention throughout the session to attacks on the government's defence record. The spokesmen made it clear that this issue was to form the basis of the [Senate election] campaign later in the year and tried to develop an image of their party as a responsible force in matters of national security. 7

1
Ibid., 19 Aug 1964, p.359.

2
Age, 19 Aug; Advert, 21 Aug; Aust, 22 Aug; SMH, 28 Aug; WA, 24 Aug; Age, 20 Aug, reported two disquieted backbenchers.

3
Age, 17 Aug.

4
CPD,HR, vol.43, 20 Aug, p.437.

5
Ibid., 2 Sept, p.929.

6
Ibid., vol.44, 29 Sept, p.1613.

7
Ian Wilson: 'Australian Political Chronicle, September-December 1964', AJPH, April 1965, p.89.

Australian concern over the Vietnam situation was growing,¹ a process which appeared to be gathering momentum. In Parliament sympathy for Indonesia had decreased and apprehension at her policies had increased following the raids on Malaya. During the debate on the Appropriation Bill neither Government nor ALP supporters were inclined to excuse Djakarta's behaviour.² Galvin expressed a widely held sentiment, when arguing for increased defence expenditure, that 'we are in danger today' and if Indonesia further escalated confrontation Australia had very little force with which to oppose her.³

It was against this background that the Government carried out an extensive defence review and in late October it was revealed that its military advisers were about to present their report.⁴ In early November Cabinet considered that report,⁵ on 10 November Menzies announced in Parliament the results of the Cabinet's review.⁶

The Prime Minister preceded his announcement of the new defence measures with an analysis of Australia's strategic situation. Arguing that limited armed conflicts could break out at any time in Southeast Asia, he went on:

the range of likely military situations we must be prepared to face has increased as a result of recent Indonesian policies and action and the growth of Communist influence and armed activity in Laos and South Vietnam.

He expressed concern that Australian troops had for the first time been engaged in combat with Indonesians, but was clearly satisfied that Malaysia had won some support for her case in the Security Council and at the Commonwealth and the Cairo Conferences. Indonesia, he argued, was seeking to dominate northern Borneo and it might be necessary for Malaysia to strike back. As Sukarno moved to a more clearly pro-communist posture, Australia would have to accept the possibility of having to defend New Guinea. Menzies

1

Fred Alexander: op.cit., p.1.

2

CPD,HR, vol.44, 30 Sept, p.1669 (Uren); p.1732 (Chipp); pp.1748-9 (Calwell) and pp.1756-7 (M.Fraser).

3

Ibid., 20 Oct, p.2109.

4

Advert, 22 Oct.

5

Age, 5 Nov.

6

CPD,HR, vol.44, 10 Nov 1964, pp.2715-24.

feared an extension of communist influence in Southeast Asia and while 'Malaysia is a non-communist nation, and is willing at all times to resist the Reds...we in Australia...want Malaysia preserved because we want the Communist powers as far away as possible'. In this light Indonesia should not be allowed to drive the Commonwealth forces out of Malaysia, but war with Indonesia would be avoided if possible as only the PKI would benefit. Overall, since the defence review of May 1963, argued Menzies, there had been 'a deterioration in our strategic position'.

Because of these political changes the Government had concluded that 'we can expect a continuing requirement to make forces available for cold-war and anti-insurgency tasks' and needed to increase the army from 22,270 to 37,500 men. Recruitment had proven to be inadequate and so a system of two years selective conscription would be introduced. Various forms of equipment for the RAN and the RAAF would be purchased, and the PIR increased to 3,400 by mid-1968. In view of the new programme, defence expenditure would be as follows:

As of	1963-4	1964-5	1965-6	1966-7	1967-8
22 May 1963 (estimated):	237.5	253.4	269.6	277.0	269.5
Revised due to new measures: ^a	260.5 ^b	296.8	336.4	341.0	337.8
Revised after 10 Nov 1964 review:			370.0	421.7	429.1

^a Purchase of 24 F-111s, financial aid to Malaysia, etc..

^b Actual expenditure.

All figures in £Amillions.

The review received an enthusiastic welcome in the press, most editorials viewing it as being designed to strengthen Australia's capacity vis-a-vis Indonesia.¹ The Australian, for example, argued that 'the Australian Government has never made such a firm and direct denunciation of Indonesia and her policies as was made by the Prime Minister last night'.² Subandrio seems to have come to a similar conclusion and on 12 November warned Australia not to try and bully Indonesia.³ Generally the new defence programme was greeted 'by some with relief if not enthusiasm, by others with resignation'.⁴

1

C-M, Age, D.Tel, C.Times, SMH, 11 Nov. Holt argued similarly, CPD,HR, vol.44, 12 Nov 1964, p.2930.

2

Aust, 11 Nov 1964.

3

D.Mirror, 13 Nov; see also SMH, 5 Dec.

4

Fred Alexander: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, July - December 1964', AJPH, April 1965, p.2.

The ALP reaction to the review was mixed. Calwell criticised the Government for allowing the country's defences to be so inadequate, and the review for the fact that its measures would not be implemented for two years or more. His criticism of conscription for overseas service was on more traditional grounds.¹

The political climate, particularly with elections imminent, made some such increase in defence expenditure useful, if not necessary, politically. The extent to which the situation in Vietnam rather than Malaysia, provided its strategic rationale is hard to evaluate: it would seem that the two conflicts were beginning to be seen as a part of a more general situation of instability in which it might be necessary for Australia to intervene. It had also been reported that Hasluck was 'more disposed to a firmer policy with Indonesia than his predecessor'² and that he might be more 'hard-headed'.³ He made no full length Parliamentary statement of his position for some time, but by the end of the year he had made known his views on Australian foreign policy.

The October issue of Foreign Affairs contained an article by Hasluck.⁴ He argued that Australia should resist any aggression in the region to her north and that 'peace and stability cannot be achieved by neutralism but by combining with like minded nations to defeat aggression'. Australia had no quarrel with Indonesia, but Djakarta's efforts to crush Malaysia had to be countered, particularly as Australia was 'disturbed by the rise of a strong communist party [the PKI] looking towards Peking'. Similarly South Vietnam must be defended against aggression 'to halt the southward move of Mainland China', for

if aggression succeeded in South Vietnam resistance throughout southern Asia would crumble and many countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma could come under the domination of China.... Behind all that is happening or will happen looms the fact of China.

Due to the fact that 'at present no balance to the power of China can be found in Southern Asia' outside forces must create that balance.

¹
CPD,HR, vol.44, 12 Nov 1964, p.2926.

²
Alexander: op.cit., p.3.

³
King: op.cit., p.289.

⁴
Paul Hasluck: 'Australia and South-East Asia', Foreign Affairs, Oct 1964, pp.51-63.

Australia could not afford to see Asia dominated by one power and so would support US efforts to create such a balance. The Australian interest in Malaysia (and Vietnam) was essentially to prevent the extension of Chinese influence, by helping prevent the rise of pro-Peking indigenous political forces and by encouraging the continuance of British and US policies.

On 12 November Hasluck, who was in London for discussions with the new British Labour Government, propounded a similar thesis.¹ On this occasion, with the Labour Government's desire to reduce defence expenditure making the reduction of British commitments in Asia possible, the Minister changed the emphasis of his argument. 'Foreign policy and defence problems cannot be looked at simply in a regional context', he said. In Asia it was essential to contain China. Australia was aiding Malaysia and SEATO with this end in view and hoped to do so 'with Britain seeing herself as part of the world as well as part of Europe'.

Continuing to Washington, he repeated the argument that China was the major threat to peace.² In Vietnam, he contended, there 'is an active struggle against the southward spread of Communist dominance in Asia'. He also discussed with members of the US administration problems of 'unprovoked attacks by Indonesia against Malaysia'.

Australia was becoming more concerned at the threat which it felt from China and saw the insurgency in Vietnam as an aspect of Peking's expansionist policy. The explosion of China's first atomic weapon only increased that concern.³ Malaysia was to be defended as a firmly anti-Chinese-communist state. But Indonesia's friendship was to be cultivated due to that state's strategic importance and to avoid giving the PKI an opportunity to increase its anti-Western influence. Unfortunately, as Australia became more worried about China so it seemed did Indonesia increase its sympathy for Peking. For the first time a member of the Australian Cabinet, Hasluck, had referred to Canberra's apprehensions at the growing strength of the PKI.

¹ CNIA, Nov 1964, pp.30-33.

² Ibid., p.33-5.

³ Hints of Sino-Indonesian cooperation in nuclear policy were hardly welcomed by Canberra. On the Chinese test see Hasluck's statement 17 Oct 1964, CNIA, Oct 1964, pp.33-4; on Sino-Indonesian cooperation Ra'anani: ~~op.cit. p.41-2~~. 'The Coup the Failed', pp.41-2.

Australian domestic politics continued to be increasingly centred on security issues. The Senate elections were to be held on 5 December¹ and both the press and the ALP predicted that defence would be a major issue.² The 10 November defence review was regarded as Menzies' opening salvo in the campaign.³ The ALP's readiness to make its opposition to conscription a major issue won the party little sympathy, the press regarding the measure as necessary in view of Indonesia's actions against Malaysia.⁴ McMahon anticipated a Government posture of great firmness when he asserted that 'we are not prepared to stand by and watch while unprovoked aggression is carried out against Malaysia'.⁵

The campaign for the Senate election centred more clearly on defence than that for the 1963 general election, an emphasis that had been anticipated by public opinion polls taken in November. Asked what they thought would be the major issue in the coming election, 30 per cent of the sample answered conscription, and a further 27 per cent, defence. In a second survey 76 per cent of those approached thought it to be 'very important' to prevent Indonesia crushing Malaysia, and another 10 per cent thought it was 'important'.

On 19 November Sir Robert Menzies opened the Government's campaign. He heavily stressed security issues, referring to the defence review of 10 November and his opinion that in Southeast Asia 'the position has deteriorated'. He particularly emphasised Indonesian attacks on Malaya, suggesting that at any time Indonesia might turn its attention to East New Guinea.⁶ In general he seemed 'willing to contest the election simply on the record of his administration and the plans for defence as amended in the previous weeks'.⁷ His approach received widespread press approval.⁸

1

CFD, HR, vol.44, 15 Oct 1964, p.2033.

2

Courier-Mail, 6 Oct (Whitlam); SMH, 16 Oct (Galwell). See editorials, Canberra Times, 1 Oct; Australian, 17 Oct; SMH, 19 and 27 Oct. Age, 27 Oct, declared that 'problems of defence, thrown into sharper focus by the uneasy developments in Vietnam and the Malaysia dispute ... remain to be solved'.

3

See particularly, Daily Mirror, 11 and 12 Nov. See also, Mercury, 16 Nov.

4

Courier-Mail, Advertiser, West Australian, 14 Nov; Sunday Telegraph, 15 Nov; Daily Mirror, 17 Nov; Herald, 19 Nov.

5

Australian, 17 Nov.

6

Sir Robert Menzies: Report to the Nation (supplied by the Prime Minister's Department).

7

Ian Wilson: *op.cit.*, p.91.

8

Daily Telegraph, SMH, Canberra Times, Advertiser, Courier-Mail, Age, 20 Nov 1964.

The following day Calwell opened the ALP campaign in Brisbane, placing similar emphasis on defence.¹ Asking for 'the nation to elect a "watchdog" Senate' to 'censure, check and challenge' the Government, he charged

the Menzies Government with having allowed the defences of Australia to run down to danger point...with treating defence as a political football...with attempting to cover its neglect and deficiencies by producing, at the 11th hour, a scheme to conscript the youth of this nation for overseas service in peacetime. The Labor Party opposes this proposal...as ineffective, inefficient, unwarranted, unjust, foolish, unfair and immoral.

But the ALP's long-term objectives were little different from the Government's, it was the effectiveness of the Government's means that Calwell challenged:

Australia should be able to fulfil its role, in partnership with its allies, the United States and Great Britain, in its own defence and in the common defence against aggressors....I charge the Government with having failed to develop a realistic foreign policy whereby Australia could play an effective part in countering the malignant activities of international communism.

Although the press applauded Calwell's willingness to make defence a major issue, it was unsympathetic with his other proposals, particularly those for an obstructionist Senate and the abolition of conscription.²

As the campaign progressed defence became more clearly the major issue of the election. The Prime Minister talked of 'communist aggression from the north and aggression at present unhappily from Indonesia', adding 'we stand firm against it'.³ He made various other references to the threat which he said that Indonesia posed to Australia and her territories.⁴ The Minister for Defence adopted a similar posture, saying that 'the fact that Australian troops have actually been engaged in action in Malaya against Indonesian raiding parties apparently means nothing to Mr Calwell'.⁵ The Country Party⁶ and the DLP⁷ laid similar emphasis on defence.

¹ Protest! Labor's Leader's Opening Speech, Senate Elections 1964 (ALP, 1964).

² C. Times, SMH, 21 Nov; Age, C-M, Advert, M. Herald, 23 Nov.

³ Defence Dept, Press Release, 23 Nov 1964.

⁴ Age, 24 Nov; SMH, 26 Nov and 1 and 3 Dec; Age, 27 and 28 Nov.

⁵ Age, 23 Nov.

⁶ C. Times, 24 Nov.

⁷ SMH, 25 Nov.

The election results brought few surprises. The ALP returned fourteen Senators and maintained its position; the Government also returned fourteen Senators but lost one seat to the DLP which returned two Senators. The popular vote of the Government was slightly larger than in 1963.¹ But the significance of the elections lay only partly in the results. Whether or not security issues had affected voting behaviour, the major political parties had assumed that they would. Further, Indonesia's behaviour was viewed as part of a larger upheaval to Australia's north and, as a threat to stability, as a threat to Australia. The increase in defence expenditure, which had doubled in three years, was accepted, while the ALP attempt 'to stir up an emotional protest against conscription failed utterly'.² To the extent that the elections indicated a 'mood' in Australia, it was one of apprehension at events in Southeast Asia and determination to participate in them and affect their course. A firmer stand on Malaysia would be acceptable.³

During late 1964 the tendency for the international situation in Southeast Asia to polarise around the conflicts in Malaysia and Vietnam continued. Although the active participants in the two disputes remained separate, in Australia there was a tendency to directly relate the two issues. On 20 September Hasluck had indicated for the first time that the Government viewed the situation in Vietnam as the greater threat to Australian security,⁴ an opinion which the press had generally endorsed.⁵ The NLF was viewed as being controlled from Hanoi which was in turn controlled by Peking. At the same time, the US was moving towards greater involvement in Malaysia's defence and during November an American mission visited Malaysia to discuss military aid. On 23 November a joint communique was issued in which the US offered to

1

Statistical Returns, Senate Election, 1964 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1964). The discrepancy between the Government's increased popular vote and reduced representation is attributable to the system of proportional representation.

2

Editorial: Age, 7 Dec 1964. Electorally this had probably been unwise of the ALP as a Gallup Poll in November had indicated that 71 per cent approved of conscription.

3

Alexander: *op.cit.*, p.3.

4

Age, 21 Sept.

5

Daily Mirror, 21 Sept; Age, ~~20 Sept~~, SMH, 22 Sept.

- (1) Assist in arranging for the purchase in the United States of military equipment, principally aircraft, on medium term credit arrangements, and
- (2) To provide training for a number of Army and Air Force personnel. 1

That the US was also beginning to liken the Malaysia conflict to that in Vietnam was indicated when the mission's leader, P.W.Mannard, excused the small American contribution to Malaysia's defence by citing the large US effort in Vietnam. This was, he argued, a direct contribution to Malaysian security.² The Indonesian Herald viewed the mission's activities as an expression of US hostility towards Indonesia, and warned that relations with Washington might have to be reappraised.³

December brought further indication of increasing US sympathy for Malaysia when the new British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, visited Washington for discussions. The joint communique issued on his departure included the following:

The President and the Prime Minister reaffirmed their determination to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East and the Far East. In this connection they recognised the particular importance of the military effort which both their countries are making in support of legitimate governments in South-East Asia, particularly in Malaysia and South Vietnam which seek to maintain their independence and resist subversion. 4

As indication of US support for Malaysia this was no doubt reassuring for Canberra, but another section was equally auspicious. The US and the UK 'affirmed their conviction that the burden of defence should be shared more equitably among the countries of the free world'.

On 28 December, Malaysian-US relations appeared to suffer a setback when Razak announced that Malaysia had rejected the US offer of credit for military purchases. He revealed that the terms offered had been 5 per cent interest with repayment in four years; they had been rejected after being twice referred to Washington. Razak was clearly upset that they should have been based, as he saw it, on profit motivation when Malaysia was 'almost the last bastion

¹ US Dept of State Bulletin, vol.LII No.1334, Jan 18 1965, pp.75-6.

² ST, 23 and 24 Nov.

³ Indon Herald, 26 Nov 1964.

⁴ US Dept of State Bulletin, Dec 28 1964, vol.LI, No.1331, p.904.

of democracy in this area'.¹ The US pointed out that the terms 'were standard for the purchase of military equipment under arrangements whereby the US Government guarantees loans extended by banks'. With the US heavily committed in Vietnam and the ANZAM powers aiding Malaysia, Washington saw no need to change this arrangement.² But the Malaysians were extremely unhappy about the American decision. The Straits Times lamented that 'staunch and friendly Malaysia had been told in effect that she is not worth helping'.³ An Alliance Whip, Senator Tan, accused the US Government of trying to make a profit from Malaysia, while the Malaysian People's Action Front, usually an ally of the Alliance, called for a boycott of US goods.⁴ There were even anti-American demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur.⁵ The Alliance Government was also upset, Razak complaining that Malaysia could be crushed while the US devoted her energies to Vietnam.⁶

Although this incident caused some acrimony in the short term, there is no reason to think that it indicated a lessening of US interest in Malaysia, particularly as the terms of the loan were later renegotiated. As McMahon said in mid-January on his return from the US, Washington was taking the threat to Malaysia more seriously.⁷ The original US inflexibility may have been attributable to an ignorance in Washington of the significance of the loan.⁸ The intensity of the Malaysian reaction was probably due, conversely, to the importance attached by Malaysia to American support.

As Malaysia was gaining increased support in the West and Afro-Asia,⁹ Indonesia moved more clearly towards a pro-communist posture. In August 1964 for the first time a communist, Njoto, was

1
ST, 29 Dec.

2
US Dept of State Bulletin, Jan 18 1965, vol.LII No.1334, p.75.
See also NYT, 30 Dec 1964.

3
ST, 30 Dec (ed).

4
C. Times, 1 Jan 1965.

5
Age, 2 Jan.

6
ST, Times, 18 Jan.

7
SMH, 12 Jan.

8
Suggested in interviews with US officials.

9
Razak had led a second mission to Africa seeking, apparently successfully, further support: ST, 2 Dec.

brought into the Indonesian Inner Cabinet.¹ In October Sukarno visited Moscow to make further arms purchases² and on 29 October it was announced that Czechoslovakia was to sell jet training planes to Indonesia.³ The following month Sukarno visited North Korea and in a joint communique with President Kim Il Sung, pledged opposition to Malaysia and support for a unified Korea devoid of foreign troops.⁴ Later in the month Chen Yi visited Indonesia and amid many displays of cordiality⁵ pledged China's opposition to Malaysia.⁶ During the visit Sukarno heavily attacked the UN demanding that the body be 're-tooled'.⁷ In December remaining British assets in Indonesia were taken over,⁸ anti-US riots broke out in Djakarta⁹ and the PKI followed Peking in declining to attend a meeting of Communist Parties in Moscow.¹⁰

Indonesia's alienation from the West became more apparent when on 31 December 1964 Sukarno announced her withdrawal from the UN.¹¹ Despite the protests of a number of African and Asian states, on 20 January 1965 Subandrio officially informed U Thant that Indonesia was withdrawing from the UN,¹² ostensibly because Malaysia had been elected for a half term to sit on the Security Council.¹³ Few states expressed approval of Djakarta's move; even the Soviet Union was reticent. The Asian communist states, non-members of the UN, were enthusiastic and their ties with Djakarta appeared to be strengthened.¹⁴ It was reported that Radio Indonesia had hinted

¹
SMH, 28 Aug.

²
SMH, Age, 2 Oct; C. Times, 3 Oct; eds: West, Australian, Daily Telegraph, 5 Oct.

³
Times, 30 Oct.

⁴
Indon Herald, 5 Nov.

⁵
C. Times, 30 Nov.

⁶
SMH, 4 Dec.

⁷
Age, 27 Nov.

⁸
SMH, 1 Dec.

⁹
Age, 5 Dec.

¹⁰
Aust, 17 Dec. See John O. Sutter: op.cit., pp.531-4.

¹¹
CNIA, Jan 1965, pp.40-1.

¹²
Ibid., pp.41-3.

¹³
See Leifer: 'The Diplomacy of Confrontation', pp.256-7.

¹⁴
See Uri Ra'anani: op.cit., pp.39-43. Mongolia may be regarded as being in the Soviet bloc.

that a Peking-Djakarta military pact might be concluded.¹ Subandrio visited China in January 1965 saying he was seeking Chinese aid to defeat a British attack² and at the end of the visit it was announced that China would give Indonesia developmental aid worth \$100 million.³

The Australian press was alarmed at these events and anticipated an intensification of confrontation. In addition the spectre of a Peking-Djakarta axis, with full military trappings was not relished.⁴ The Government was more reserved. On 9 January McEwen, the Acting Prime Minister, issued a statement expressing Australian 'disappointment' at Indonesia's withdrawal from the UN⁵ but otherwise the Government was silent. It appeared that the Government was biding its time and awaiting developments.⁶

One of the major reasons for Canberra's seeking to avoid military clashes with Indonesia had been 'the hope that Australia's future good relations with Indonesia might not be prejudiced for all time by the Malaysia issue'.⁷ In fact the clashes in Malaya had led to only mild criticism of Australia in the Indonesian press, criticism which had quickly abated.⁸ In December HMAS Teal had been involved with some seaborne infiltrators and had killed three Indonesians. The incident received considerable publicity in Australia.⁹ Indonesia chose to ignore the action. But by December there were indications that the conflict in Borneo might escalate. During November the small-scale guerrilla raids had decreased and 6 November the Tunku warned that Indonesia had substantially increased her forces in Borneo.¹⁰ Later in the

¹

Age, 11 Jan 1965.

²

Ibid., 21 Jan 1965. See Sutter: op.cit., pp.533-4.

³

Age, 29 Jan.

⁴

SMH, Advertiser, Courier-Mail, Daily Telegraph, Mercury, Australian, 4 Jan; Emery Barcs: 'Mao's Mussolini?' Bulletin, 23 Jan 1965.

⁵

CNLA, Jan 1965, pp.43-4.

⁶

See 'When the Cock Crowed', Bulletin, 16 Jan 1965.

⁷

Alexander: op.cit., p.2.

⁸

The Indonesian Herald toned down after its editorials of 13 October and mid-November.

⁹

Age, Mercury, Canberra Times, 15 Dec 1964; Australian 16 Dec. See Malaysian letter to the UN Security Council, 31 Dec 1964, Malaysian Communications with the Security Council, p.17.

¹⁰

ST, 7 Dec 1964.

month Razak reported that Indonesian reinforcements had continued to be sent and Dr Ismail suggested that in the event of further escalation Malaysia would be forced to retaliate.¹

By January the Australian press thought it very likely that Indonesia would increase her military pressure on the Federation.² London appears to have been of a similar opinion. The British Defence Ministry announced that 'in view of Indonesia's intensification of her policy of attacking Malaysia', the UK was to send reinforcements to the area. An infantry battalion was being sent to Borneo and more than a thousand troops would be added to the general Malaysian theatre, while six more naval vessels would bring the strength of the fleet to some eighty vessels.³ As the Australian asked, 'how long can Australia continue its token support without being asked to⁸⁹ into action?'⁴

On 4 January the Malaysian Cabinet met to discuss the situation. Following the meeting the Tunku issued a statement which indicated his Government's concern. The Cabinet had decided, he said: to 'ask our allies under the defence agreement to review the latest position and send reinforcements if necessary'; to notify the UN of the latest developments; to increase Malaysia's defence effort; and to inform the Security Forces 'to be prepared to take retaliatory action under the rule of hot pursuit'.⁵ In answer to a question he conceded that he had not yet discussed the matter with Australia but would 'naturally welcome' greater assistance.⁶ It was widely assumed that Australia would shortly be increasing her military commitment to Malaysia.⁷ Both Senator Paltridge and Government officials in Canberra admitted that if more aid were requested by Malaysia then the request would be favourably considered.⁸

¹
ST, 25 Dec 1964.

²
SMH, Age, Canberra Times, Mercury, 1 Jan; Canberra Times, SMH, 4 Jan; Alan Dobbyn in Sun-Herald, 3 Jan; Creighton Burns in Age, 4 Jan 1965.

³
Times, 2 Jan. See also statements by Healey, UKPD, HC, vol.705, 19 Jan 1965, col. 35Q, and Wilson cols. 38-9Q.

⁴
Australian, 4 Jan. See also Mercury, 4 Jan; West Australian, 5 Jan; SMH, 6 Jan 1965.

⁵
ST, 5 Jan. See also the Malaysian letter to the Security Council reprinted, Malaysian Communications with the Security Council, p.20.

⁶
Age, 5 Jan.

⁷
Australian, Malay Mail, 5 Jan; SMH, 6 Jan; Mercury, Canberra Times, Daily Telegraph, Australian, 7 Jan; Canberra Times, SMH, 9 Jan; Sun-Herald, 10 Jan 1965.

⁸
Australian, 8 Jan; and Age, 5 Jan 1965.

It was under these conditions that it was announced that Paltridge was to visit Southeast Asia.¹ On 19 January he left Sydney and was expected to report from Kuala Lumpur on Malaysia's defence requirements.² At a final press briefing he said he expected Australian military involvement in Southeast Asia to increase in the forthcoming year but, significantly, stressed that Vietnam was the biggest problem in the area.³ On 21 January Paltridge met Razak who said afterwards that he had told Paltridge that Malaysia would like Australia to send more forces. Paltridge said he would put the request to Canberra after he had been to Borneo to observe the situation and had assessed whether the presence of Australian forces there was necessary.⁴

While Paltridge was in Malaysia, Menzies went to London to attend the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. On 29 January he met Harold Wilson and discussed the situation in Southeast Asia.⁵ On 1 February the Cabinet Committee of Defence and Foreign Affairs met in Canberra and discussed Paltridge's report on Malaysia.⁶ The following day Menzies attended a working luncheon in London with Wilson, and Healey, Stewart and Bottomley, British Ministers for Defence, Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations respectively. The New Zealand Prime Minister, who also attended the meeting, said later that confrontation was a major topic for discussion.⁷

These activities culminated in a statement issued by the Acting Prime Minister, John McEwen, on 3 February. The statement revealed that

members of Cabinet had been closely following recent developments in the Malaysian area and...viewed with concern the substantial continuing build-up of Indonesian forces in Borneo and steady increase in infiltration...into Malaya and Singapore....The developments had already required the British Government to deploy considerable reinforcements to the area. ...the Australian Government had concluded that the deployment of additional Australian field units into Borneo in the defence of Malaysia was now necessary....

¹ SMH, 13 Jan.

² Ibid., 14 Jan.

³ Ibid., 20 Jan.

⁴ Ibid., 22 Jan and 27 Jan.

⁵ Aust, 30 Jan.

⁶ Ibid., 2 Jan.

⁷ Ibid., 3 Jan.

An Australian force is now to serve in this area, in company with Malaysian and British forces. This would be the Australian battalion in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya. On this arrangement this battalion would now serve in Borneo in rotation with Malaysian and British units. In addition, an Army Special Air Service unit from Australia would be made available to carry out appropriate military tasks in the defence of Malaysia...further aid proposals for the development of the Malaysian Armed Services were also under examination.... The Australian Government would continue to use all its influence for a peaceful outcome in full awareness that the progress and economic development of the region of South-East Asia depended on conditions of security and stability. 1

The final step in the Australian policy of graduated response had been taken.² The press, which regarded the move as 'logical'³ and 'necessary',⁴ indicated that the new move was, as had been the entire policy, accepted within Australia. Some concern was evidenced in editorials about the seemingly inevitable clashes which might occur with Indonesians, but the possibility was viewed with resignation.⁵ The Straits Times indicated Malaysia's satisfaction:

The significance of Canberra's gesture...does not lie only in the physical reinforcement of our capacity....The underlying message is that Australia means to honour the pledge ...to defend Malaysia to the hilt. 6

The reasons for Canberra's decision to commit troops to Borneo, a move which it had previously been reluctant to make, require examination. In the first place it did appear that the military situation had changed. Malaya had been attacked and it seemed likely that Indonesia would intensify the conflict in Borneo. According to the Malaysian Government, Indonesian forces in Borneo had been substantially reinforced by additional units from Java, until by late February they numbered between thirty and forty thousand, of whom some twelve thousand were on the Sarawak border.

1
CNIA, Feb 1965, pp.98-9.

2
See King: op.cit., pp.285-6. See also T.B. Millar: 'The Defence of Asia', Bulletin, 6 March 1965.

3
Canberra Times, 4 Feb; Daily Telegraph, 5 Feb.

4
Age, 4 Feb.

5
SMH, Herald, Mercury, 4 Feb; Australian, Daily Telegraph, West Australian, Advertiser, 5 Feb; Sydney Sunday Telegraph, Sun-Herald, 7 Feb 1965.

6
ST, 5 Feb.

It thought this indicated a 'radical change in the pattern of military "confrontation" ' and was

inconsistent with any attitude other than the launching of a large scale operation, which in the immediate present appears to be waiting for the seasonal monsoon rains to taper off which is due in a short time. 1

Kuala Lumpur feared that Indonesia might attempt to set up a 'liberated area' in Sarawak. Paltridge agreed that a considerable Indonesian build-up had taken place,² and Subandrio later admitted this.³ With Indonesian forces more numerous and increasingly composed of seasoned regulars,⁴ the need for reinforcing the Security Forces in Borneo was clear. Also, in political terms, the dangers of a serious rupture in Australian-Indonesian relations seemed less likely in view of the mild Indonesian reaction to previous Australian actions.

Again, the move was consistent with the stated intentions of Australian policy. Canberra had expected Malaysia itself to bear much of the military burden and the Federation had strengthened its defences with that objective in mind. On 26 November 1964, Tan Siew Sin had allotted 25 per cent of budgetary expenditure to defence,⁵ and Malaysian resources were clearly extended. In the same way Britain, Malaysia's guarantor, was being sorely taxed. The British Labour Party had emphasised its desire to continue to play a 'world role', had accepted its military responsibility to members of the Commonwealth and had approved Britain's commitment to Malaysia.⁶ But the Labour Government had encountered a serious balance of payments problem and the Cabinet was concerned at Britain's large defence budget and the £stg 320 million which was being spent on overseas military commitments.⁷ British resources were being stretched, and the new Government was anxious to share

1

Malaysian letter to the Security Council, 28 Jan 1965, Malaysian Communications with the Security Council Review, pp.22-4. See also statement by Bottomley, UKPD,HC, vol.706, 9 Feb 1965, cols.190-2.

2

C.Times, 25 Jan.

3

Age, 15 Feb.

4

Malaysian letter, op.cit..

5

ST, 27 Nov 1964.

6

Times, 12 Sept 1964, for Labour's election manifesto. See also ST, 18 Nov 1964, on Razak's discussions in London on the subject.

7

Economist, 21 Nov 1964.

rather than abandon its overseas military and financial burdens. The 1965 Defence White Paper in February made this clear:

It would be politically irresponsible...if our bases were abandoned while they were still needed to promote peace in the areas concerned....In meeting this world wide role we have a claim upon our alliesWe aim at a wider recognition of our common interests and at closer cooperation with our allies in carrying out our tasks. 1

Wilson later claimed that Australia deployed forces in Borneo after he requested it.² While this may have been unduly modest, Wilson's representations were no doubt influential. Australia thought it to be in her interests to encourage the British to remain in the area and in this context a stronger Australian commitment to Malaysia was useful.

Similarly, US policy allowed Australia to become more heavily involved in Malaysia's defence. An American military presence in Asia had long been the foundation stone of Australian policy, an American underwriting of Australian commitments a sine qua non.³ America's tacit acceptance by 1965 of a commitment to Malaysia, particularly through her ANZUS Treaty obligations to Australia and New Zealand, was no doubt comforting for Canberra.⁴ Further, it helped stave off domestic criticism, for Whitlam, on return from the US, conceded that Barwick's assertions concerning ANZUS were correct.⁵ Whitlam added, however, that Barwick

was incorrect in the number of times he said it. There is no dispute that ANZUS would operate if attacks were made on Australian troops in any place where they are at present. The Americans feel, however, that it is not necessary for Australian External Affairs Ministers to say this as often as they do. 6

Australia had wished to avoid full involvement in the dispute and to hold the threat of her own military engagement in reserve, partly for its deterrent value.⁷ There was no indication that

1

Statement on Defence Estimates 1965 (HMSO, cmd. 2592) p.9. See also T.B.Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1965', AJPH, Dec 1965, p.274.

2

UKPD,HC, vol.705, 4 Feb 1965, col.1281. See also T.B.Millar: *op.cit.*, p.268.

3

See Chapter One, supra, especially on the formation of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in 1955.

4

Sir Alan Watt: 'The Australia Commitment to Malaysia', World Review, July 1964, pp.3-12.

5

Whitlam: interview 12 Aug 1964, *op.cit.*.

6

Ibid..

7

Peter King: *op.cit.*, p.285-6.

an effective deterrent value had been achieved: if Australian pledges of military assistance were not to lose their credibility, a firm stand had become necessary.

It had been clear that the Government would encounter little domestic criticism if it took a firmer stand with regard to Malaysia. This had already been indicated in the press, Parliament, the elections and opinion polls. On 18 February 1965 the Parliamentary Executive of the ALP unanimously adopted a resolution which fundamentally endorsed the Government's policy. It contended:

Indonesia is the aggressor against Malaysia and is not respecting Malaysia's independence...the violation of Malaysian territory by force must be opposed.... The action taken by Australia to assist Malaysia's defence up to this point is justified. 1

The resolution went on to reaffirm the ALP's desire for a 'clear and public' treaty and suggested the Government should initiate further discussions between Kuala Lumpur and Djakarta. But the differences between ALP and Government policy were slight: the ALP policy of seeking a treaty was being softened,² both agreed 'that Indonesian-Australian friendship is not only possible but essential to the well-being of both countries', and the ALP proposal for 'a four power guarantee of Indonesian security'³ appeared to be but a temporary addition to Labor's platform. The ALP had swung full circle from its Hobart resolution of 1955 and was accepting ten years later the underlying assumptions of 'defence in depth'. Whether this posture would prove acceptable to the majority of the party remained to be tested at the 1965 Federal Conference.

During the latter part of 1964, although Malaysia had been subjected to increased military pressure, her international position had improved considerably. In July 1964 various Commonwealth nations had been reluctant to declare their support for Malaysia.⁴ Later in the year, probably due to Indonesia's open attacks on Malaya, non-aligned states had shown greater sympathy for Malaysia at both the UN Security Council hearings and the Cairo Conference. Similarly the US had moved to a position

1 Indonesia and Malaysia (Information Release No. 3/65, ALP 1965).

2 In interviews leading members of the ALP conceded that this was sought by sections of the party for electoral purposes.

3 Op.cit..

4 See P.J.Boyce and R.K.Davis: 'Malaysia Tests the Commonwealth', Australian Quarterly, Sept 1965, pp.59-68.

of clearer support for Malaysia; as a consequence (or so Sukarno claimed) Indonesia adopted a more militantly anti-Western posture.

These trends only served to increase Australia's readiness to support Malaysia militarily. It seems unlikely that Hasluck's succession to Barwick significantly altered the course of Australian policy. Although Hasluck's public statements lacked Barwick's frequent references to the need for Australia to understand and if possible befriend Indonesia, this was probably due as much to the change in circumstances as to the change in personnel. During 1964 the Western-supported Government in Saigon had suffered a steady deterioration of its position and the insurgents seemed likely to seize complete control of the country. Canberra again became preoccupied with a possible extension of Chinese influence. Similarly, as Indonesia became more and more anti-Western and the PKI's influence grew, Australia became more concerned to check Indonesian policy. This tendency was reflected during the Senate election campaign when Government spokesmen linked the new defence measures to the threat which they contended Indonesia posed to Australia. They received widespread support for these contentions even from the ALP.

McEwen's announcement, in February 1965, of Australia's intention to deploy combat forces in Malaysian Borneo marked the culmination of Canberra's policy of graduated response. The 'collision course' of which Barwick had been apprehensive had been set and the clash had occurred. Under the circumstances of late 1964 and early 1965 it would have been difficult to avoid. It was a consequence of decisions taken much earlier: the Australian decision to accept an obligation to assist in the defence of Malaya and then Malaysia, and the Indonesian decision to confront Malaysia. And in a wider sense the two states were moving in different directions as a result of their policies towards China. Australia sought 'containment' of China, essentially by the US; Indonesia was increasingly seeking the eviction of Western influence from Southeast Asia and friendship with Peking. A collision course had resulted.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Australia and Malaysia: Problems of Regional Security

The situation which existed in Southeast Asia in early 1965 presented an unpleasant prospect for Australia. In Indonesia the power of the PKI appeared to be increasing and confrontation gave no sign of abating. In Malaysia the internal tensions engendered by the formation of the Federation had not subsided: the Federal Government was at logger-heads with that of Singapore while within Sarawak a less widespread but more violent conflict was being waged. Both situations had been inadequately reported by the Australian press, and their significance underestimated by Government and Opposition alike. More consideration was given to the growing possibility that a long term British military presence in the area could not be counted on. Indications that the UK might reassess its commitments in the region were too numerous to ignore. Equally, Australia's relationship with the US required re-evaluation. The policy of seeking a voice in US Asian policies, of cultivating American goodwill by support for those policies, and of urging on Washington greater attention to Southeast Asian security problems, seemed likely to involve greater burdens if it were to have hope of success. Whereas since the Korean War the alliance with America had demanded little of Australia, in the strictly material sense,¹ in 1965 verbal declamations seemed unlikely to be sufficient indication of loyalty to the alliance: the insurance premium would have to be paid. Australia's increased defence effort, initiated in 1963 in response to Indonesian policies, assumed a new rationale. Australian apprehensions at Chinese policies, apprehensions which combined the traditional concern about Asian threats to Australia with more recent fears of a communist movement monolithic and expansionist, were again assuming a dominant role in Australian strategic thinking. The insurgents of South Vietnam were regarded as part of a Chinese directed communist drive to conquer Southeast Asia. Malaysia was to be supported because its political system was designed to check the power of parties unsympathetic

¹See Chapter One, supra.

with the West, because its Government was friendly to the West, hostile to Peking, and permitted the stationing of Commonwealth troops on its territory, and finally because Indonesian aggression should not be allowed to succeed. As Djakarta increasingly aligned with Peking, the PKI assumed a stronger voice in determining policy and Sukarno more clearly sought the expulsion of Western influence from the region, so Canberra began to see the Malaysia and Vietnam issues as aspects of the same conflict. But while in 1965 it was Vietnam which occupied Australia's energies, political, military, and nervous alike, it was the conflict in the archipelago which produced most startling developments.

During 1965 Western policy in Southeast Asia was concerned with solving three sets of problems, 'those of the containment of Chinese power, those of the ambiguities and harassments of Indonesian policy, and those of the uncertainties and weaknesses of the minor countries'.¹ Concerned with both major conflicts in the region, the Australian Government aligned itself more clearly in 1965 with the position of the US and with that of Malaysia against Indonesia. In respect of Indonesia Australia retained, as Menzies said, a desire for cordial relations, but had been forced to take a firmer stand to prevent the success of open aggression.² The Indonesian reaction to the impending deployment of Australian forces in Borneo was, at least in the first instance, mild. Subandrio spoke of Indonesia being 'angered';³ the Indonesian Herald urged Indonesia to strengthen its southern defences;⁴ and Kosasih, the new Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, warned that the new deployment of Australian forces could increase tensions;⁵ but no serious protest was made. The Australian Government, grateful for this restraint,⁶ could continue to pursue its policy of judicious firmness and a desire for friendship: Indonesia had not made those objectives contradictory.

¹ Coral Bell: 'South East Asia and the Powers', The World Today, April 1965, p.137.

² SMH, 6 Feb.

³ C. Times, 12 Feb.

⁴ Indon Herald, 11 Feb.

⁵ SMH, 5 Feb.

⁶ This was admitted to the author by senior Australian Government officials in interviews, Canberra, July 1966. See also Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', p.268.

But while Australia had increased its commitment to Malaysia, its participation in Vietnam, which Hasluck had argued was the more serious threat to Australian security, remained of a token nature. On his return from London, on 11 February, Menzies explained that he had offered further assistance to Malaysia:

I had occasion to point out in London that we have... three or four or five particular interests in this part of the world....I took the opportunity of discussing with Mr Wilson and some of his Ministers in London, ways and means of reconciling the views [of and] ...getting some order of priority as between Great Britain, the US, New Zealand and ourselves. Because there will arise times when you must balance an actuality like the fighting in and around Malaysia with a contingency such as obligations that might arise under SEATO. 1

The Prime Minister appeared to be arguing that Australia should at that stage limit her active participation in the disputes of Southeast Asia and, by implication, that the Malaysia commitment would be afforded highest priority.² A majority of press editorials accepted this interpretation.³ Alone, the Sydney Morning Herald suggested that Australia's aid to Malaysia might have to be partly determined by events in Vietnam.⁴

During late February and March Australia's attention focused largely on Vietnam⁵ where the US had increased its involvement in the war by bombing North Vietnam. The annual ANZAM Defence Committee talks passed relatively unnoticed, the British representative, Lord Mountbatten, merely reiterating Britain's intention to retain the East of Suez policy, her desire for greater cooperation with her allies and her satisfaction with Australian efforts in Malaysia.⁶ Similarly Paltridge, on his return from the US in March, reported that both America and Britain were 'satisfied' with the increased Australian defence effort.⁷ The implication of the statement with

1
Press Conference by the Prime Minister, 11 Feb 1965 (Prime Minister's Dept.).

2
Bell: op.cit., p.147; T.B.Millar; 'The Defence of Asia', Bulletin, 6 March 1965.

3
In an editorial in the Sun-Herald, 14 February, it was argued that 'there can be no doubt that the first priority must be to aid Malaysia against the predatory Indonesians'. See also Age, 12 and 16 Feb; Advertiser, 12 Feb.

4
SMH, 12 Feb.

5
L.J.Hume : 'Australian Political Chronicle, January-April 1965', AJPH, Aug 1965, p.211 ff.

6
SMH, 3 March.

7
Ibid., 1 and 11 March.

regard to earlier British and American opinions on the matter went unnoticed. On 18 March the Australian battalion from Malacca relieved British troops in forward positions in Sarawak's First Division,¹ the Army Special Air Service unit having arrived in late February.² Australia was finally fully committed to maintaining what she had long regarded as part of her forward defence perimeter.

It was against this background that, on 23 March 1965, Hasluck gave his first full statement on foreign affairs to Parliament.³ During the speech he made explicit the various trends already evident in Australian strategic thinking. Having expressed concern at China's new-found nuclear capacity and her actions which, he contended, had revealed 'an aggressive intention to dominate the life of other nations', he said:

In many cases closer examination reveals that troubles which may seem local and trivial at first sight have been promoted or expanded as the result of influences controlled by great powers. Whether or not any such incident in its beginning was purely local, it would be unrealistic to assume that any great power...could ignore it.

In that context 'South Vietnam is part of a pattern'; the insurgency was 'not a local rebellion caused by internal discontent but the application of the methods and doctrines of communist guerrilla warfare first evolved in China and then successfully used in North Vietnam'. Hasluck contended that in the event of an NLF success similar revolts would break out elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In an exposition of the 'domino theory'⁴ he declared:

If the United States did withdraw, the same conflict would be renewed somewhere else. Within a brief period the struggle now taking place in South Viet Nam would be shifted to Thailand. If in turn there was abandonment of Thailand it would shift to Malaysia, to Indonesia, to Burma, to India and further.

Australia fully supported US policy, for if America withdrew 'the Communist powers would be free to conduct a wider war on an advancing front of subversive guerrilla activity'. Australia sought friendship with a stable and developing Southeast Asia and would not oppose change of political systems if such changes had popular

¹
ST, 19 March.

²
Age, 27 Feb.

³
CPD,HR, vol.45, 23 March 1965, pp.230-8.

⁴
See Rhoads Murphey: 'China and the Dominoes', Asian Survey, Sept 1966, pp.510-515.

support. But she was opposed to aggression whether by 'aggressive nationalism or aggressive communism' and would support the intervention of non-Asian states to oppose it.

Hasluck's analysis of the Malaysia problem differed little, at first, from previous Government statements on the subject. 'We wish to live in harmonious relationship with Indonesia', he declared, 'but, unfortunately, Indonesia has embarked upon policies we are bound to oppose, and which we will oppose'. But he also expressed concern at

A new disturbing element in the situation created by Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia [which] has been created by some evidence of increasing contacts between the Indonesians and the Chinese Communists...they are a further reminder that, in all our thinking about Asia, we have to consider quite starkly the growing power of Communist China.

From this it would appear that at the same time that Indonesia was increasingly regarding the region as divided into two power blocs, so was Canberra; but whereas Djakarta was moving towards Peking, for Australia neutralism was 'not a practical choice...we stand firmly with Britain and the United States'.

From support for an 'orderly act of decolonisation', the Australian commitment to Malaysia had become also an integral and immediate part of Australia's strategy of containing Chinese influence, which was then seen as emanating from Indonesia.

Hasluck's statement was favourably received by the press, which particularly approved his emphasis on China as the primary threat to Australian security,¹ and to a lesser extent, his moderation on Indonesia.² On the same day that Hasluck made his statement the first Australian casualties occurred in Borneo, an event hardly likely to improve Indonesia's image in Australia. But although one editorial suggested that it was 'stupid' to continue to seek good relations with Djakarta,³ thus agreeing with a Liberal back bencher who had threatened to resign unless all Australian aid to Indonesia was stopped,⁴ the Government's position remained unchanged.⁵

¹ Daily Telegraph, Age, MPEA, 25 March; G. Times, 24 March (eds).

² Aust, 26 March. Yet on 24 March the Sydney Morning Herald complained that Hasluck had paid insufficient attention to the Sino-Indonesian ontente.

³ SME, 25 March.

⁴ Sir Wilfred Kent-Hughes.

⁵ CPD, HR, vol.45, 24 March 1965, pp.259-60, for a statement by Hasluck.

By and large, despite its undoubted hostility towards Indonesia, the Australian community supported the Government's efforts to avoid a complete break with Djakarta, but was increasingly pessimistic about its being successful in this regard.

The Parliamentary debate on Hasluck's statement was most informative for the light it cast on the ALP's posture. Although on 18 February the ALP had expressed qualified approval for US policy towards Vietnam,¹ in his opening speech Calwell was more critical. He argued that while it was in Australia's interests to maintain the American presence in the region, the US was likely to suffer a humiliation in Vietnam and might then withdraw from the region. Australia should work for a negotiated settlement.² This ambiguity reflected a division of opinion within the party. As on the Malaysia issue in 1963, ALP policy on Vietnam was undetermined. The issue was further complicated by a growing struggle within the party on the issue of Calwell's successor. On Malaysia, the ALP's approach was closer to that of the Government. Calwell agreed that Canberra should contribute militarily to Malaysia's defence and also continue her aid programme to Indonesia, but argued that Australia should take a greater diplomatic initiative to end the dispute. The Parliamentary debate revealed a general consensus of opinion on the Malaysia issue. Members generally supported the Government's policy,³ expressed varying degrees of concern at Indonesia's friendship with China and the increased power of the PKI,⁴ yet remained desirous of good relations with Indonesia.⁵

By March 1965 the Government's policy towards Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia undoubtedly had the support of most articulate Australian opinion. Although on the one hand members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party, particularly Kent-Hughes⁶ and King,⁷ and the Sydney Morning Herald criticised the Government for

¹ Vietnam (ALP Information Release 18 Feb 1965).

² CPD,HR, vol.45, 23 March 1965, pp.239-41.

³ CPD,HR, 23 March 1965, p.246 (Malcolm Fraser); 25 March, pp.358-9 (Holten), p.362 (Galvin), pp.363-5 (Chipp), p.372 (Benson).

⁴ Ibid., 23 March, pp.243-4 (Malcolm Fraser); 25 March, pp.358-9 (Holten), p.372 (Benson), p.375 (Kent-Hughes), p.389 (MacKay).

⁵ Ibid., 25 March, p.362 (Galvin), pp.391-2 (Benson), p.395 (Haworth).

⁶ Ibid., 24 March 1965, pp.259-60.

⁷ Ibid., 30 March 1965, pp.430-1.

not being firm enough with Indonesia, and on the other hand the ALP sought a greater diplomatic effort, criticisms were rarely fundamental. There was far less consensus about, or appreciation of, the internal problems of Malaysia.

On 26 February Hasluck announced that Lee Kuan Yew would visit Australia the following month,¹ and interest in Malaysian politics revived. The doubts which had been commonly, but not very strongly expressed in the Australian press during 1961 and 1962 regarding the possibility of Malaysia succeeding, had been forgotten during the following two years. Indonesian policy had attracted most attention. The riots in Singapore of mid-1964 had led to a certain amount of reassessment but hardly on the scale suggested, perhaps prescriptively rather than descriptively, by the Bulletin:

The riots have at least had one salutary effect in this country in dampening some of the mindless enthusiasm with which Australia continues to regard Malaysia as the most orderly trouble-free country in Asia. 2

There was little indication that the riots were seen in Australia as anything but an isolated racial clash unrelated to a significant political struggle.³

In Malaysia, Lee particularly had not been so complacent. Always acutely aware of the fragile nature of Malaysia and its dependence on racial harmony for success,⁴ Lee was spurred by the race riots to intensify his political activities. He accused UMNO extremists of starting the riots and warned that Malaysia could well lose international support as a result.⁵ The system of Malay political dominance could not be maintained indefinitely but had, he suggested, about a decade to adjust itself: 'if we let these ten years run out, and nothing more permanent is put in its place then I say the sands of time will have run out on us'.⁶ He continued to make himself unpopular with the Alliance and in September introduced a

1
CNIA, Feb 1965, p.101.

2
Bulletin, 8 Aug 1964.

3
See Chapter Five, supra, and 'New Confrontation', FEER, 6 Aug 1964, pp.225-6.

4
For example his address to Singapore National Union of Journalists, 24 May 1963, in Malaysia comes of Age (Singapore, 1963).

5
Address of 30 July 1964, in Malaysia Will Succeed (Singapore, 1964).

6
Address to University of Malaya, 28 Aug 1964, in Some Problems in Malaysia (Singapore, 1964) p.11. See also other speeches in same volume.

new bone of contention. Visiting Europe for the centenary of the Socialist International, he met many leading members of the UK Labour Party and also took the opportunity of addressing Malaysian students in London.¹ He reiterated his charges about a Malay Malaysia, arguing that the Alliance feared defeat by the non-communal PAP. On his return from Europe, Lee had talks with Razak and the Tunku, and it was agreed that public disputes would be avoided for two years.² Surprisingly, despite a couple of minor incidents, the agreement functioned well for two months.³

On 25 November 1964 Tan Siew Sin introduced the 1965 budget in the Dewan Ra'ayat.⁴ Three days later by making criticisms similar to those he had made of the previous budget, that it 'had a tendency to widen the gap between the haves and the have nots', Lee reopened the dispute between the PAP and Alliance.⁵ Alliance supporters were incensed at this criticism,⁶ Tan accusing the PAP of being 'disloyal'.⁷ It appeared that many members of the Alliance were not fully attuned to the concept of opposition, particularly if it appeared effective. Ominously, while the PAP received support in its criticisms from the PPP, the Government was supported by the PMIP.⁸

Following the budget debate the Singapore-Kuala Lumpur war of words recommenced. Lee asserted that Singapore's poor would not be taxed to subsidise Malaya's rich⁹ and began to talk of the need to

¹
One Hundred Years of Socialism (Singapore, 1964).

²
ST, 26 Sept 1964.

³
See ST, 19 and 28 Nov 1964. In the two spheres of Federal and Singapore state politics the Alliance and PAP were alternately Government and Opposition: to not disagree under such circumstances would have been difficult.

⁴
Ibid., 26 Nov. Malaysian Parliamentary Debates after this time were unobtainable and, in early 1967, unprinted.

⁵
Ibid., 29 Nov. See also Harvey Stockwin: 'Budget Politics', FEEER, 31 Dec 1964, p.642.

⁶
ST, 3 Dec 1964.

⁷
Ibid., 4 Dec.

⁸
Ibid., 1 and 3 Dec. The PPP and PMIP had long been regarded as the most clear examples of communally based parties, the former non-Malay, the latter Malay. Their alignments in the budget debate appeared to indicate that Malaysian politics could polarise around a racial spectrum.

⁹
Ibid., 5 Dec.

unite Malaysia's 'have nots'.¹ During the next two months Lee developed a more sophisticated criticism of the Central Government. Internal conflicts were the most serious threat to Malaysia,² he argued, and they could be blamed on Malayan politicians who refused to readjust to Malaysian realities.³ Within UMNO, extremist Malays wished to maintain the political domination of UMNO based on an alliance between Malay feudalists and Chinese capitalists. These Malays, said Lee, feared the non-communal, socialist approach adopted by the PAP which threatened to break their power.⁴

The PAP had sought to extend its influence in Malaysia and had at first adopted the guise of a non-Malay communal party better able to represent non-Malay interests against UMNO. This approach had failed. By the time of his visit to Australia, Lee was mounting a frontal attack on the Alliance Government, ostensibly as the leader of a non-communal party.⁵

Perhaps the most significant effect of Lee's visit to Australia was that it brought to Australia's attention the tensions within Malaysia. Articulate, English educated and vigorous, there seemed little doubt that Lee would create a favourable impression in Australia. With his pragmatic approach to politics mixed with a degree of socialism, essentially of the Fabian variety, coupled with an attitude to regional security problems little different from that of Australia, he presented an image of a modern, developing Southeast Asia that Australia favoured.⁶ More particularly his vision of non-communal politics in Malaysia, however impractical in the short term, was likely to appeal to a country long used to a two party, ideologically based, political system.⁷

Lee's tour of Australia, from 15 March to 2 April, revealed him in his best light, travelling extensively, speaking frequently and with great force, and above all communicating his point of view

¹ Ibid., 9 Dec (letter to editor).

² Ibid., 2 Jan 1965.

³ Ibid., 1 and 6 March.

⁴ Speech of 24 Feb 1965 in Malaysian Mirror, 6 March 1965. Also ST, 25 Jan.

⁵ See speeches at Kuala Lumpur, Seremban and Malacca in Towards a Malaysian Malaysia (Singapore, 1965). See also Harvey Stockwin: 'Lee Disengaged', FEER, 8 April 1965, pp.71-4.

⁶ Aust, 2 March; S-H, 7 March.

⁷ Kenneth Randall in Aust, 16 March, and Creighton Burns in Age, 16 March.

to such diverse sections of the Australian community as the Sunday Telegraph and the ALP. The exact nature of his argument is more difficult to determine. During his first address, to the National Press Club,¹ he paid but scant attention to Malaysian domestic politics other than referring to the need to build a political system based on 'popular feelings and aspirations'. Although he sympathised with Australia's desire to remain friendly with Indonesia, he said, it would not be in Australia's interests to allow Malaysia to be crushed. Australian assistance in defence would give Malaysia time to build a stable political system. The speech was received sympathetically in the Australian press.² But one editorial did warn that

there is little doubt that he has another private mission which he regards as of prime importance, and that is to put the point of view of the Chinese Malaysians....He may be expected during his visit ...to seek to engage Australian influence in the direction of the modification of what he regards as discriminatory Malay policies. 3

Lee's subsequent speeches received widespread publicity and he advanced the basic argument that Australia should support the Malaysia concept rather than a particular Government.⁴ There is little doubt that this received much support in the press. Again, among Labor politicians, whom he addressed at a closed meeting, his socialist approach was greeted with sympathy. This was first evidenced on 25 March when Clyde Cameron argued in Parliament that 'Mr Lee made quite clear that in Singapore today the democratic forces are far more firmly entrenched than they are in the rest of Malaysia',⁵ For expressing such views, Cameron was accused by Liberal members of seeking to divide Malaysia.⁶ 'Why don't you tell the Tunku to stop?' he retorted.⁷ Cameron's speech was an indication, later substantiated, that the ALP's sympathy lay with Lee.⁸

¹ Text in Malaysia—Age of Revolution (Singapore, 1965) pp.21-32.

² Mercury, 17 March; Ad. News, Advertiser, 18 March.

³ SMH, 18 March; see also 'Not As A Tourist', Bulletin, 3 April.

⁴ Alex Josey: 'Lee Kuan Yew', Bulletin, 20 March; interview with Lee, Sunday Telegraph, 28 March; broadcast, Age, 29 March; editorial, Bulletin, 27 March.

⁵ CPD, HR, vol.45, 25 March 1965, p.379.

⁶ Ibid., p.380 (Chipp and Turner).

⁷ Ibid., (Cameron).

⁸ Brian Beddie: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, July-December 1965', AJPH, May 1966, p.5; Interviews with senior members of the ALP Canberra, 1966.

The Australian Government was not so prepared to reveal its sympathies. Although it later seemed that Canberra hoped that the Alliance Government would accommodate the PAP, during his visit Lee was counselled by Menzies to moderate his attacks on the central Government.¹ Lee was later to reveal that he had written to Menzies in April and informed him of extremist Malay hostility to the PAP. He said that he had asked Australia to use her influence in Malaya to moderate this, but complained that no such action had been taken.² Whatever the Australian Government thought of the situation it was clearly reluctant to intervene in Malaysia.

Lee's tour did nothing to moderate the dispute with the Alliance, and conceivably intensified the existing animosities.³ The Federal Government was concerned at the support shown abroad for Lee. The Tunku criticised foreign correspondents for reporting that Malays dominated Malaysia;⁴ the Malay Mail attacked Lee for seeking support from Malaysian students overseas, particularly in the UK and Australia;⁵ and Semu bin Abdul Rahman⁶ accused Lee of trying to get foreign states to intervene in Malaysian domestic politics.⁷ Similar criticisms were made by other leading Malays, particularly with regard to Lee's visit to Australia.⁸ Although on his return Lee denied that he had been propagating the PAP's case in Australia,⁹ this could hardly be substantiated. Even the PAP literature on the subject negated such a contention.¹⁰ By that stage the dispute was too widespread to be settled by reference to facts in any case, and

1 Interview with senior Australian Government official, Canberra, July 1966.

2 Advert, 1 Sept 1965.

3 T.B. Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', p.271.

4 ST, 8 March.

5 C. Times, 25 March.

6 The Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Chairman of UMNO Youth.

7 ST, 22 March.

8 Ibid., 26 March (the Minister for Agriculture); ibid., 6 April (Ja'afar Albar); ibid., 14 April (Mentri Besar of Perlis); ibid., 19 April (Khair Johari). The Tunku was similarly disturbed, ST, 8 March. Shortly after Lim Yew Hock was recalled to assess the influence of Lee's tour, Aust, 15 April.

9 Ibid., 4 April.

10 For example, Malaysia-Age of Revolution.

was affecting most aspects of Federal-Singapore relations. A Federal Government directive that the Singapore branch of the Bank of China be closed was vigorously opposed by the PAP,¹ while seemingly straightforward negotiations to decide the distribution of the British quota on textile imports led the Tunku to accuse the PAP of assisting the communists by bringing the dispute into the open.²

The interest in Malaysian affairs which Lee's visit had provoked in Australia soon subsided, as Vietnam resumed the centre of the political stage. The Australian Government had strongly expressed its support for American policies, a position reaffirmed by the Prime Minister in a highly publicised correspondence with a number of Anglican Bishops.³ On 14 April it was announced in Canberra that Henry Cabot Lodge, former American Ambassador in Saigon and then Ambassador at large, was to visit Australia.⁴ It was rumoured that he would seek an increase in Australian military aid to South Vietnam to coincide with the accelerated American build up.⁵ On 29 April, following Cabot Lodge's visit, Menzies announced that such a step was to be taken.⁶ He argued that the NLF, controlled from Hanoi, was seeking

The takeover of South Viet Nam [which] would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South-East Asia. It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

This was a less sophisticated argument than that of Hasluck⁷ but in substance the same. Following a request from Saigon, Menzies explained, and 'after close consultation with the Government of the United States', the Government had decided to send an infantry battalion for service in South Vietnam. He read a letter from President Johnson expressing warm approval of the action.

¹ ST, 31 Dec 1964.

² Ibid., 30 March, and 24 to 27 March; Times, 22 March 1965.

³ CNIA, March 1965, pp.139-41.

⁴ Age, 15 April.

⁵ Ibid..

⁶ CFD,HR, vol.45, 29 April 1965, pp.1060-1.

⁷ See pp.271-2, supra.

The Australian commitment to Vietnam bore certain resemblances to that made to Malaysia. Both actions were justified by the Government as part of a policy designed to prevent the expansion of China; both commitments were only accepted after the major guarantor of the relevant state had committed itself unequivocally; and in both cases there were indications that the Australian Government was less keen than those major participants to negotiate a Western withdrawal, which was demanded on the one hand by the NLF and Hanoi and on the other by Djakarta.¹ Despite these parallels at the diplomatic level, the commitments were dissimilar and the issues they involved were distinct. Although the formation of Malaysia (particularly with respect to the inclusion of the Borneo states) might, like the formation of South Vietnam, be attributed to strategic political considerations rather than to the demands of indigenous political movements, the populations of the states which joined to form the Federation had been consulted on the matter. While that process of consultation had been something short of exemplary, by 1965 there was ample indication that the majority of Malaysians were prepared to accept the Federation. In Borneo opposition to Malaysia (as distinct from criticism of its federal government) was slight except among sections of Sarawak's Chinese community. Indonesia's policy was clearly one of international aggression and it received negligible support from within Malaysia. The Federation was prepared to defend itself to the best of its abilities. Australia was prepared to resist Indonesian aggression because the UK and Malaysia would do so and because aggression was to be prevented. In Vietnam, despite superficial similarities, these criteria were not so clearly applicable. It had never been certain that the majority of the population of southern Vietnam supported either partition or the Government of Diem. Although the NLF received Hanoi's support, its forces were largely indigenous to South Vietnam and in 1964 seemed likely to overthrow the Government. By early 1965, when the US implemented a policy of supporting Saigon with substantial American ground forces, Washington's objective was not so much to maintain as to establish the control of the South Vietnamese Government over the country. Evidence of a 'Chinese thrust' could hardly be provided. The Australian commitment to South Vietnam was made in response to a US request, both to encourage and help maintain an American presence in the region as a counterweight to China, and once more to win American good will by demonstrating Australia's worth as an ally.

1

See Hume: 'Australian Political Chronicle', p.215; C.Times, 6-10 April; and statement by Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, p. 291, infra.

Australian attitudes towards Southeast Asia tended to crystallize around the issue of Vietnam after it was announced that Australian forces would assist the Saigon Government. Publicly, the Australian Government espoused the domino theory¹ and depicted communism as a monolithic force either expanding southward from China or encompassing Southeast Asia in a pincer movement directed from Peking and Djakarta. Indonesian policy was proving to be more than a minor irritant and some concern was expressed in Australia about the possibility of a Sino-Indonesian military alliance² or a successful PKI coup in Djakarta.³ During 1965 there were indications that the Australian Government was itself taking such fears seriously, a trend no doubt encouraged by the increasing anti-American orientation of Indonesian policies and Djakarta's 'vociferous confrontation against the West'.⁴

In February 1965, at the House Armed Services Committee hearings in Washington, McNamara testified that confrontation was straining America's relations with Indonesia.⁵ During the following month relations became worse: the Indonesian Government seized control of the American owned rubber plantations,⁶ then it announced the closure of USIS facilities in the country⁷ and finally in mid-March took over the foreign owned oil companies amid demonstrations demanding the seizure of all US firms in retaliation for American support for Malaysia.⁸ On 7 March Dean Rusk claimed:

we would like to see good relations with countries like Indonesia. But this requires some effort on both sides. I think at the present time it is fair to say that our relations are being reduced; they are becoming, to use a diplomatic word, simplified.⁹

¹ Coral Bell: op.cit., p.149, refers to the domino theory as a 'piece of...political black comedy'. See also Murphey: op.cit., and J.L.S. Girling: 'Vietnam and the Domino Theory', Australian Outlook, April 1967, pp.61-70.

² SMH, 3 Feb 1965 (ed). See Age, 8 Feb, for report of alleged Peking-Djakarta agreement to partition Malaysia.

³ Age, 17 Feb; M.Fraser on return from Indonesia, CPD,HR, vol.45, 23 March 1965, p.243 ff.

⁴ Donald Hindley: 'Political Power and the October 1965 Coup in Indonesia', JLS, Feb 1967, p.237.

⁵ ST, 20 Feb.

⁶ S-H, 28 Feb; D.Tel, SMH, 2 March.

⁷ Times, 5 March; US Dept of State Bulletin, 29 March 1965, vol.LII No.1344, p.448.

⁸ Times, 20 March.

⁹ US Dept of State Bulletin, 29 March 1965, vol.LII No.1344, p.447.

During early April Ellsworth Bunker, the American mediator of the West Irian settlement and now again a Presidential representative, had talks in Djakarta with leading officials. Subandrio later said that they had agreed to 'minimise the irritation' between their countries but 'on specific issues there is an agreement to disagree'.¹ Sukarno after three days of talks with Bunker said that no agreement could be reached;² the joint communique which they issued indicated as much:

While it is true that on a range of matters of foreign policy the views of Indonesia and those of the United States are divergent, they have agreed that these differences should not be allowed to affect unduly the general pattern of friendship....Indonesia regards the issue between Indonesia and Malaysia as being of the greatest importance...the United States deeply regrets that the problem exists...these differences have produced certain tensions between Indonesia and the United States...as a result the programmes of assistance to Indonesia which the United States had undertaken in recent years should be reviewed and revised. 3

It was also agreed that the Peace Corps would cease its activities in Indonesia. The combination of American support for Malaysia and the anti-Western orientation of Indonesian policy, was straining Washington's relations with Djakarta.

Sukarno did little to prevent the increasing alienation of the Western powers. Within a week of Bunker's departure, in a major address to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference, Sukarno delivered an attack on the West.⁴ He depicted Indonesia as 'engaged in a life-and-death struggle against imperialist encirclement', and represented Vietnam as being in a similar position: 'the only honourable way for the US is to withdraw from Vietnam to let the Vietnamese people...solve their own problems'. Similarly he said little to ingratiate himself with Australia, warning: 'do not think that the Pacific Ocean will remain pacific for ever'. He also questioned the need for an ascertainment of West Irianese opinion. Unreservedly anti-Western, he argued: 'the most basic and important thing is for the imperialists to let the Asian people solve their own problems themselves, for the imperialists to withdraw all their troops, bases and warships from Asia'.

¹
Times, 8 April.

²
C. Times, 25 April.

³
US Dept of State Bulletin, 3 May 1965, vol. LIII No. 1349, p. 655.

⁴
Sukarno, Speech of 18 April 1965 (text from Indonesian Embassy, Canberra).

The reception which the speech received from the Australian press ranged from moral indignation that the 1962 agreement on West Irian might be broken¹ to more practical concern at Sukarno's anti-Western outbursts.² Various other factors contributed to Australian apprehensions at that time. Among the audience at Sukarno's address were Chen Yi and Chou En-lai, and their fraternal declarations were matched only by the enthusiastic reception which the Peking Review gave to Sukarno's speech.³ Further, there seemed to be indications that Indonesia was becoming increasingly, if still only mildly, hostile to Australia: Australian casualties in Borneo continued; a bomb, probably placed by an Indonesian saboteur, exploded in the building which housed the Australian High Commission in Singapore;⁴ and Indonesia's national assembly demanded that relations with Australia be reassessed.⁵

During mid-1965 there was no indication that Indonesia's international policy would change or that the growing power of the PKI would be checked.⁶ Although Indonesia's attitude towards Australia continued to be a mixture of tolerance and mild hostility,⁷ military confrontation continued. Indonesia further reinforced her forces in Kalimantan and persisted in a campaign of terrorism in western Malaysia.⁸ But the danger was not that Malaysia and her allies might be militarily defeated, but that they might be forced

¹ SMH, Age, Advertiser, West Australian, Adelaide News, 20 April; Mercury, 21 April. See Chapter Four, supra.

² Daily Telegraph, 20 April; Age, 23 April; Adelaide News, Herald, 24 April.

³ Peking Review, 30 April 1965.

⁴ The Australian Government denied that the bomb was intended for the Australian mission, viz. Hasluck, CNIA, March 1965, pp.144-5, but the incident received considerable publicity nonetheless.

⁵ In April, Australia's only significant firm in Indonesia was taken over, Age, 24 April 1965.

⁶ 'There were no hints during the first nine months of 1965 that the year would be different politically from the last five, particularly with respect to the growing power of the PKI', Daniel Lev: 'Indonesia 1965: The Year of the Coup', Asian Survey, Feb 1966, p.103.

⁷ For example Subandrio's warning that Australia should not 'meddle in Asian affairs', and editorial in Suluh Indonesia of similar tone, reported in Canberra Times, 27 May. See also T.B. Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', pp.268-70.

⁸ See Malaysian letters to the UN Security Council 8 March and 28 May 1965, Malaysian Communications with the Security Council; Indonesian Aggression Against Malaysia, vol.II; 'The Threat to Malaysia', Times, 29 and 30 April; Seth S. King in NYT, 27 June; Anthony Short: 'Confrontation in Sarawak', FEER, 23 Dec 1965, pp.547-9; and statement by Subandrio in Times, 14 July 1965.

to face a protracted campaign seemingly unsusceptible to political solution. It seemed clear that while Sukarno remained President the PKI would retain its strength, Djakarta its link with Peking¹ and Indonesia her hostility to the West.² With regard to negotiations there seemed, despite various efforts at mediation (particularly by Japan and Thailand), no more cause for optimism than during the previous year.³ It appeared that Malaysia was prepared to negotiate but that Indonesia was less than enthusiastic. Within a week of one proposed conference Sukarno announced that he would not attend because the Tunku had 'inflamed Indonesian opinion'.⁴ In short, confrontation seemed to be a continuing feature of Southeast Asian politics.

The correlative of Indonesia's increasingly 'simplified' relations with the US was growing American support for Malaysia. In February, McNamara announced that the US was to extend a limited programme of military aid to Malaysia⁵ and shortly after it was agreed that a number of Malaysian officers would be trained in the US,⁶ In March Malaysia accepted a new offer from the US of a loan of \$US4m. for the purchase of military equipment. The terms of the loan had been renegotiated: repayment was to be made in ten years at three per cent interest.⁷ Although the US continued to stress that it was but an auxiliary in the defence of Malaysia,⁸ this new indication of US support was enthusiastically received in Kuala Lumpur and Australia.⁹

¹ Times, 1 June; Ra'anant: op.cit., p.42; Sutter: op.cit., pp.531-3; Heidhues: op.cit., p.285; Justus M.van der Kroef: 'Indonesian Communism's "Revolutionary Gymnastics"', Asian Survey, May 1965, pp.228-32; William E.Griffith: Sino-Soviet Relations, 1964-5 (MIT, Cambridge Mass, 1967) p.118 ff. During Sukarno's absence in late 1964 and rumours of his illness, the army gained much political strength; his return to Indonesia and good health reversed this trend. That the demise of the PKI coincided with the end of confrontation tends to substantiate this argument.

² Anti-Western invectives continued, as for example on the occasion of the presentation of the new US Ambassador's credentials, C.Times, 29 July.

³ Usha Mahajani: 'The Malaysian Dispute: A Study in Mediation and Intervention', Australian Outlook, Aug 1966, pp.177-92.

⁴ ST, 4, 5 and 12 March.

⁵ SMH, 22 Feb.

⁶ ST, 24 Feb.

⁷ Ibid., 7 March.

⁸ Ibid., 9 March, statement by William P. Bundy.

⁹ Ibid., 30 March (the Tunku); Age, D.Tel, 8 March; WA, 11 March.

Internationally Malaysia continued to seek diplomatic support for its position and in late March Razak left for a second tour of Africa with this end in view. Reports that he was attracting sympathy for Malaysia were common but perhaps exaggerated.¹ The big test of Malaysia's diplomatic support would come at the Afro-Asian Conference to be held in mid-1965 at Algiers. It was not clear that she would gain even admission to the conference in the face of Indonesian opposition. At the Afro-Asian Islamic Conference at Bandung in March 1965, Malaysia had prevented hostile resolutions from being passed,² but this was not a fully representative gathering. At the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference held in May at Winneba, Ghana, not only were hostile resolutions adopted, but the Malaysian Government's delegation was refused admission.³ At that time, with the Algiers conference imminent, Malaysia's chances of being invited seemed only moderately good.⁴ But whatever the outcome, Malaysia could be assured of continued Australian support: the Malaysian Government was moving towards the US-led Western alliance. This was reflected in the firm stand taken by Kuala Lumpur in support of America's policy towards China in general and the Vietnam insurgency in particular, the Tunku declaring: 'I feel that American action to help South Vietnam is a proper one... bombings by the Americans are, I consider, justified'.⁵

Although, following a request from Kuala Lumpur,⁶ Australia sent a mission to Malaysia to assess what further assistance might be required,⁷ Vietnam, as the epitome of the policy of the containment of China, was Australia's chief concern. By May the Australian Government was adopting a posture whose firmness surpassed that of the US. At the SEATO Council meeting in London 3-5 May, Hasluck said: 'today we see aggression in Asia as being just as much a danger to the whole world as it is to those of us who live in or near Asia...South-East Asia is the front line in the struggle for

¹ ST, 22, 19 March; 2 April (from Kenya); 7 April (from Tanzania).

² Indon Herald, 16 March 1965 for the Conference's resolutions. See also Loifer: 'Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.257.

³ See, Resolutions of the Fourth Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference May 9-16 1965 Winneba Ghana (AAPSC Secretariat, Cairo, 1965). The conference advised the Barisan, Socialist Front and Partai Rakyat delegations to unite to form one committee which would be 'automatically admitted'.

⁴ C. Burns, Age, 28 May; Loifer: op.cit., p.258.

⁵ Tunku's Call For Unity, speech of 17 April 1965 (Kuala Lumpur, 1965) pp.10-11. See also Suara Malaysia, 6 Aug 1965.

⁶ Aust, 9 March; Age, 27 March.

⁷ Defence Dept. P.R.6, 4 May 1965.

world security'.¹ In this light Australia very much welcomed the British and American military efforts in the area. There was a military threat to Vietnam, he argued, and

there are other targets on the Communist list. Mainland China has made no secret of its plans for conquest by subversion of Thailand. There is a clear pattern for undermining...country after country throughout the region. In this broad regional context, I should like to refer to the Indonesian attempts to crush Malaysia ...there are accumulating further signs of the interaction of events in Malaysia and other events in other parts of South-East Asia. President Sukarno is associating himself more closely each year with the outlook and the ambitions of Peking and is turning his country more and more towards ...partnership with the Chinese aggressor.

Referring to confrontation, he said: 'more and more we see that aid [to Malaysia] as part of a total contribution [together with that to Vietnam] to meet a common danger'. Although the SEATO Council communique² hardly took this line, there were indications that the ANZAM and ANZUS powers were beginning to think along the lines of greater integration of their respective 'spheres of influence'.³

Returning from London, Hasluck visited Malaysia where he had discussions with Government officials. At a press conference referring to the possibility of a negotiated settlement, he argued:

the decision lies more with Indonesia than with anyone else. As long as Indonesia insists on confrontation ...resistance on our part must also continue and there is no basis on which any settlement could be reachedAs long as Indonesia continues to deny Malaysian sovereignty...I see no possibility of successful negotiation...nor do we see at the moment any hope for a successful outcome of mediation.... Basically we see no reason why the Australian people, and I accent people rather than government,...should not be able to live in the closest friendship [with Indonesia]....But there is this one unfortunate thing, that the Indonesian Government persists in its confrontation of Malaysia. 4

Although Australia hoped to 'eventually work out a friendly relationship with Indonesia', he said, the current Government

1
CNIA, May 1965, pp.251-3.

2
CNIA, May 1965, p.256.

3
See p.289 ff, infra.

4
Transcript of the Press Conference of the Minister for External Affairs, Mr Paul Hasluck, at Kuala Lumpur, on Friday May 21 1965, (text supplied by DEA).

in Djakarta was likely to prevent or at least postpone the attainment of that objective. The existing relationship between Australia and Indonesia was based on a 'misunderstanding'¹ of Australian intentions on the part of Indonesia. In the meantime Australia was determined that 'the aggressor is not going to win'. Militarily a protracted holding operation was expected. Events later in the year were to justify Hasluck's assessment.

In June, Menzies attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London. For Malaysia this seemed likely to be significant in that its results might determine the outcome of her attempts to attend the Algiers Conference. The Commonwealth communique 'recognised and supported the right of the Government and people of Malaysia to defend their sovereign independence'² and to that extent expressed firmer support than that of the previous year. Although both the British³ Government and Menzies⁴ regretted the qualified nature of the support evidenced for Malaysia, the latter fearing it 'might muddy the waters at Algiers', the degree of support expressed seemed satisfactory. In the event Malaysia's international support was not tested, for, following a coup d'etat⁵ in Algeria, the conference was first postponed and then abandoned.

By July 1965 Australian policy towards Southeast Asia was firmly established. On return from his five-week overseas tour Menzies on 13 July outlined its basic assumptions. Postulating a withdrawal of the US from the region he asked:

Does anybody with his five wits doubt that before very long Chinese Communism acting through North Vietnamese Communism would sweep down...and that in the long run, and not so very long run at that, we would find ourselves with aggressive Communism almost on our shores? 6

He thought that the Vietnamese and Malaysian situations 'fall into the same pattern'. Both were aspects of a larger problem, for 'our future...largely depends upon how far the USA is prepared to continue to accept its responsibility in this part of the world'.

¹
ST, 20 May 1965 (statement by Hasluck in Kuala Lumpur).

²
CNIA, June 1965, p.322.

³
Statements by Duncan Sandys and Harold Wilson, UKPD,HC, vol.715, 29 June 1965, col.313.

⁴
CNIA, June 1965, pp.348-9.

⁵
See T.B.Millar and J.D.F.Millar: 'Afro-Asian Disunity: Algiers 1965', Australian Outlook, Dec 1965, pp.306-21; Guy J.Pauker: 'The Rise and Fall of Afro-Asian Solidarity', Asian Survey, Sept 1965, pp.425-32.

⁶
Sir Robert Menzies Press Conference, 13 July 1965 (text from P.M. Dept.).

Three days later Hasluck addressed himself to the same issues in Hobart.¹ He developed the argument that a balance of power was required in Asia so long as China sought to dominate the continent. The USA and to a lesser extent the UK could offset Chinese power. A victory for the NLF, and so for China, would lead to the extension of communist influence elsewhere: in Malaysia communist insurgency would begin again and in Indonesia 'known anti-communist groups and forces in the country would be discouraged...in their resistance to the growing strength of the PKI'. He repeated that 'there is no present sign that Indonesian confrontation will cease', particularly with the 'growing influence of the PKI'.

Australian policy was based on certain hypotheses, the most important of which was that China was eager to expand its influence in the Southeast Asian region. This would not seem an unrealistic assumption to make about the likely objectives of an aspiring and potential great power in its immediate environs. But in the case of Vietnam it was assumed that the NLF was controlled by Hanoi which was in turn directed from Peking. Apart from making occasional references to the not altogether convincing US official publication Aggression From The North,² the Government did not explain in any detail the reasons which had led it to make that assumption. As one observer noted, the Government took its stand 'on a number of dogmatically asserted propositions'.³ It would seem that Australia's physical involvement in Vietnam was largely a response to US pressure.⁴ While the general argument that US power provided a useful balance to that of China had some validity, the Government's more specific contentions were less convincing: that the Vietnam war was directly related to Chinese expansionism, that the commitment of Australian forces to Vietnam significantly affected US determination to maintain her presence in Southeast Asia, and that it made it more likely that the US would render assistance to Australia if that ever became necessary.⁵

The Government's position with regard to Malaysia was less susceptible to criticism. Indonesia was attacking Malaysia and receiving negligible indigenous support from the latter; Djakarta's

¹
DEA, P.R.75, 16 July 1965.

²
Aggression From The North (US Dept of State, pub.7839, Far Eastern Series 130, 1965).

³
Beddie: op.cit., p.1.

⁴
T.B.Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', pp.273-4.

⁵
See T.B.Millar: Australia's Defence, postscript.

aims were contrary to those of Australia not only in relation to the immediate dispute but in her desire to terminate the Western military presence in the region; and it did appear that Indonesian policy was increasingly influenced by the PKI. It was thought to be in Canberra's interests to prevent the PKI forming the government in Djakarta: this could best be achieved by containing Indonesian attacks on Malaysia but avoiding any significant retaliation, particularly as that would most damage the army's position. Within Malaysia there seemed little doubt that a majority of the people supported a continuing British and Australian presence to assist in Malaysia's defence. Finally, it is worth emphasising that apart from advice on military and to some extent diplomatic matters, there is little evidence of interference by Britain or Australia in Malaysian domestic affairs. Malaysia was as sovereign as such a militarily dependent country could be. The British had studiously avoided creating any impression to the contrary. Australia was helping defend a sovereign state with a responsible and, despite all qualifications, popular Government.

If during the preceding two years British policy had appeared, and indeed had been, straightforward in relation to Malaysia, during 1965 it took on ambiguities which were of some concern to its partners in the ANZAM arrangement. During late 1964 Australian fears that the British Labour Government might seek a rapid withdrawal from Southeast Asia had been allayed: British forces had been increased and there seemed little likelihood of London's seeking to negotiate a settlement with Djakarta irrespective of Malaysian desires, for, as Wilson pointed out, 'this would give the Indonesians just the argument they are looking for to suggest that Malaysia is in some way in a tutelary position'.¹ The British Defence White Paper of February 1965 had been accepted in Australia as pledge of a continuing British military presence 'East of Suez'.² This was too facile an interpretation of British intentions as the following months were to show. During the Parliamentary debate on the White Paper Healey warmly defended the commitment to Malaysia as a contribution to 'the maintenance of peace and stability',³ but

¹ UKPD, HC, vol. 706, 18 Feb 1965, cols. 1361-2.

² *Daily Telegraph*, *Melbourne Sun News Pictorial*, *Age*, *SMH*, *MW*, 25 Feb (eds); Douglas Wilkie: *Melbourne Sun News Pictorial*, *SMH* (ed), 1 March; Millar: 'Problems of Australian Foreign Policy', p. 274.

³ UKPD, HC, vol. 707, 3 March 1965, cols. 1337-8. He denied that Britain was building 'a wall against communism' or protecting 'selfish British economic interests' - but he was seeking to persuade people other than Australians.

he was not unopposed. Although most of the Conservative Party accepted the policy,¹ some members of the Labour Party were less enthusiastic: R.T.Paget thought Malaysia to be 'a commitment we should wind up as soon as we safely can',² and Zilliacus argued that defence costs should be halved and the East of Suez policy abandoned.³ There were other indications of dissatisfaction in the Labour party with the East of Suez policy.⁴

The British Government's position was far from unequivocal in this matter. The Cabinet made no secret of its concern about defence costs,⁵ which it was seeking to reduce. These costs which related to the 50,000 men in Malaysia received considerable publicity: a total cost of £320 million per annum,⁶ a cost 'across the exchanges' of £103 million in 1964⁷ and a drain on foreign currency of £62 million per annum.⁸ The Government admitted its desire to reduce these, and other defence costs.⁹ This led to a position where on the one hand Wilson would assert Britain's intention to maintain its East of Suez policy¹⁰ and on the other declare a general objective of cutting British commitments.¹¹ These objectives were

1
Ibid., col.1376, Aubrey Jones was an exception, criticising the commitment to Malaysia as merely a response to US pressure.

2
Ibid., col.1370.

3
Ibid., cols.1396-1405.

4
Ibid., 8 March 1965, cols.87-8 (Eric S.Heffer), cols.98-9 (Emrys Hughes); 15 March, cols.971-3 (Emrys Hughes).

5
Times, 4 March (Healey), 1 July.

6
UKPD,HC, vol.710, 6 April 1965, cols.55-6 (Healey). See Hugh Hanning; 'Britain East of Suez - Facts and Figures', International Affairs, April 1966, pp.253-60.

7
UKPD,HC, vol.711, 5 May 1965, col.173Q.

8
Ibid., vol.715, 7 July 1965, col.262. This was exceeded only by the BAOR in Germany, costing £78m. But the East of Suez total would have included Aden (£19m.) and Hong Kong (£10m.) and so have been greater.

9
UKPD,HC, vol.713, 1 June 1965, col.1505, Wilson said he was trying to reduce defence costs East of Suez by 'radical action'. Ibid., vol.709, 1 April 1965, vol.1979 (Wilson); ST, 13 April (George Brown).

10
Times, 4 May 1965 (Wilson to the SEATO Council).

11
C.Times, 12 May 1965 (Wilson to the NATO Council); UKPD,HC, vol.713, 27 May 1965, cols.835-6 (Wilson).

not strictly incompatible but hints that the UK might reduce its forces in Malaysia particularly after confrontation had ended were not rare.¹

The reasons for the British Government's position may be surmised. It had decided to maintain the stability of sterling and to play a 'world role': in both policies it was dependent on US support and opposed by a section of its own party. In April Wilson visited the USA and reaffirmed British support for US policy in Vietnam, and the British intention to continue its East of Suez policy.² The US welcomed these assurances.³ Paradoxically, Britain was forced to maintain its position in Asia, which weakened sterling, because of its susceptibility to US pressure due to that very weakness.⁴ But the British Government was reviewing the East of Suez commitment. It seemed likely that London would expect greater cooperation and assistance from its ANZAM partners and the US if it were to continue that policy.⁵

It was becoming clear that whatever the wishes of the British Cabinet there were political pressures favouring,⁶ and financially attractive reasons for,⁷ ending the East of Suez policy as early as possible. But by and large there was an unwillingness in Australia to accept the probability of an impending withdrawal. This was perhaps most severely jolted when on 2 August the British

1

Ibid., vol.709, 1 April, col.1868: Stewart, 'If the Indonesians are anxious...about the presence of...British forces in that area, they have only to bring confrontation to an end and that anxiety can be removed'; ibid., vol.713, 1 June, cols.1504-6, Wilson hinted at this.

2

Times, 17 April.

3

Ibid., 6 April, reporting an interview with McNamara; Times, 18 June; Leifer: 'Diplomacy of Confrontation', p.251.

4

Wilson all but admitted as much: UKPD,HC, vol.713, 1 June 1965, cols.1504-6. See George K.Tanham, 'A United States View', International Affairs, April 1966, pp.194-206; and Alastair Buchan, 'Britain in the Indian Ocean', International Affairs, April 1966, pp.184-93.

5

Ibid., 25 May, cols.234-5; SMH, 29 May 1965; Millar: op.cit., p.274. One British observer argued that 'If Australia wants Singapore to be kept as a bastion in her Near North...then she ought to pay for it. Australia spends 3½ per cent of her national income on defence, Great Britain 7 per cent', Maurice Zinkin: 'The Commonwealth and Britain East of Suez', International Affairs, April 1966, p.214.

6

UKPD,HC, vol.711, 3 May 1965, col.718 (Noel Baker), 914 (Rose); vol.713, 27 May, col.835 (Bence); vol.716, 15 July, cols.770-1 (Marten and Allaun).

7

Ibid., vol.717, 3 Aug 1965, cols.1264-6 (Wilson); Times, 5 Aug: the attractions were clearly recognised.

Parliamentary Labour Party passed without vote a resolution calling for quicker cuts in defence expenditure than planned, and the Cabinet said that it approved the motion.¹ The following day in Parliament Labour backbenchers criticised the Government for not being sufficiently forceful in its efforts to cut defence expenditure and called for an end to the East of Suez policy in general and the commitment to Malaysia in particular.² The Government offered no fundamental disagreement, arguing only that it was then obliged to defend Malaysia.³ By that stage it had become clear that a reduction in British forces in the area could in due course be expected. But whereas it had been previously supposed that, following the end of confrontation, the British forces would be run down to their 1962 levels, by mid-1965 it seemed that a more extensive reduction could be anticipated and that the possibility of a complete British withdrawal could not be ruled out.⁴ Concurrently it became necessary for other reasons for Australia to reassess her position in Malaysia.

On 9 August Singapore's separation from the Federation of Malaysia was announced. The causes of the separation are at once complex in the description and simple in the explanation. The evolution of the Alliance-PAP dispute from March to August 1965 revealed the interplay in miniature of the various political forces of post-war Malaya, the dispute's origins lying in the PAP's efforts first to modify and then to eliminate Malay political dominance. For Malays, to campaign for non-communal politics was to be anti-Malay.

In April, following Lee's return from Australia, the Tunku had explained his basic objections to PAP activity:

We dreamt of Singapore in connection with Malaya as what New York is to America but little did we realise that the leader of the PAP had in his mind a share of the running of Malaysia. This we considered unacceptable. 5

1
Times, 3 Aug.

2
UKPD, HC, vol. 717, 3 Aug 1965, cols. 1605-7 (Heffer), 1608-9 (M. Foot), 1610-11 (R. Woof), 1615 (Orme and Allaun).

3
Ibid., cols. 1617-22 (Millan, Under-Secretary of Defence for RAF).

4
SMH, 4 Aug; SMH, Age, 6 Aug; WA, 9 Aug (eds) Interview with senior officials in Singapore Defence Ministry, Singapore, February 1966, and Malaysian Government, May 1966.

5
Tunku's Call For Unity, p.2. The comparison with New York was presumably to a commercial capital with limited political power.

He added that 'we must not be pushed around by a state Government'.¹ But it was not against the Tunku that Lee launched his accusations of racialism in Kuala Lumpur,² but against more extremist sections of UMNO. The PAP contended that during March, Utusan Melayu had reopened its communally-based attack on the Singapore Government,³ and in April Lee opened a libel suit against Ja'afar Albar for statements reported in Utusan Melayu, in order to draw attention to the veracity of the PAP case.⁴

Again, the PAP propensity to discuss communalism openly and dispassionately with a view to eradicating its strength as a political force, aroused only hostility among the Malays who were well aware of their numerical inferiority. When Lee remarked that historically speaking most Malays were the descendants of recent migrants⁵ and that there was no peculiarly Malaysian race, he was heavily criticised. Utusan Melayu attacked that 'evil and dangerous statement'⁶ which Ja'afar Albar (himself an immigrant from Indonesia) regarded as a 'slap in the face to Malays' that could make them lose their patience.⁷ Malay Merdeka, one of UMNO's official publications, called for a review of Singapore's position, asked for 'concrete action' against its leaders and warned that if the Malays were 'hard pressed' they might have to look to Indonesia.⁸ These were strong words from within UMNO.

Clearly the Alliance-PAP dispute had been reactivated. The position was not improved when at a surprise meeting in Singapore on 9 May the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC) was formed by representatives from the PAP, UDP, PPP, SUPP and Party Machinda.⁹ At the conclusion of the meeting a declaration was issued proclaiming the MSC's support for 'a democratic Malaysian Malaysia'. It continued by elaborating the concept:

1
Ibid., p.11.

2
ST, 27 April 1965.

3
Utusan Melayu, 22 March; Malaysian Mirror, 10 April.

4
ST, 25 and 29 April.

5
Ibid., 5 May, an academically accurate but politically unwise argument.

6
Utusan Melayu, 6 May (ed).

7
ST, 6 May. See also Berita Harian, 6 May (Tuan Sued Nasir Ismail).

8
Malay Merdeka, 7 May.

9
ST, 10 May. Party Machinda had been recently formed in Sarawak,

A Malaysian Malaysia means that the nation and the state is not identified with the supremacy, well being and the interests of any one particular community or race.... The special and legitimate interests of different communities must be secured and promoted within the framework of the collective rights...of all races. Support for the ideal of a Malaysian Malaysia means in theory as well as in practice, educating and encouraging the various races in Malaysia to seek political affiliation not on the basis of race or religion but on the basis of common political ideologies and common social and economic aspirations. ¹

It went on to concede that such a situation would take some time to develop but argued that the Alliance was making no effort to produce that change and was continuing to pursue its pre-Malaysia policies which 'may be destructive at the present time'. Although the MSC, like the PAP, had carefully avoided specific criticism of Malay rights, its attack was clearly against the communal voting which had produced and sustained UMNO, a party dependent on common race rather than common ideology or economic aspirations. There was some force in Tan Siew Sin's warnings that party politics could well polarise around a Malay/non-Malay position, the two groups led by UMNO and the PAP respectively. ²

In mid-May the UMNO General Assembly was held and gave some indication of opinion within the party. ³ Although the Tunku urged the Assembly to approach calmly the issues raised by the MSC, UMNO Youth demanded stronger action against Lee, and Dr Ismail thought it necessary to assert that Lee would not be detained. The tone of the meeting was one of Malay communal feeling outraged. ⁴ Within a week Ja'afar Albar at a political meeting led the crowd in chanting 'crush Lee' and added, 'shout louder so that Dr Ismail can hear the people's anger'. ⁵ The moderation of the Tunku was clearly not fully representative of feeling within UMNO.

In late May the Parliamentary session opened and matters approached a climax. Lee proposed an amendment to the vote of thanks on the King's speech, an amendment which censured the Government for not mentioning the objective of a Malaysian Malaysia.

¹ See Petir, June 1965.

² ST, 30 April 1965. Particularly since the PMIP called for 'Malay unity' to oppose the MSC, ST, 13 May.

³ Jean Grossholtz: 'An Exploration of Malaysian Meanings', Asian Survey, April 1966, pp.231-2.

⁴ ST, 15 and 16 May. See Creighton Burns: Age, 18 May.

⁵ Utusan Melayu, 24 May.

His speech was a thorough statement of the PAP's approach.¹ He first took exception to the King's reference to 'threats from within the country' which he took to mean the PAP. He went on to assail the Malay language press, particularly Utusan Melayu, which he depicted as extremely communal in character and which he alleged misrepresented the UMNO moderates, making their statements communal by omissions. The MSC accepted the Malaysian constitution including the Malay rights but, Lee argued, 'quite clearly there is a distinction between our political equality' and our duty 'to give special attention to the economic and social uplift of the Malays...we accept that obligation'. But if present policies were continued, he argued, the urban-rural imbalance would continue: 'of course there are Chinese millionaires....The Alliance remedy is to create a few Malay millionaires....But how does that solve the problem?' He concluded by asking, 'instead of special rights why not tax the haves in order to uplift the have-nots including the many non-Malays?'

Lee's accusations were answered in two ways which revealed the schism within UMNO. Dr Ismail presented a sophisticated view of the Alliance's objectives:

There are two ways of establishing a Malaysian Malaysia. The first is the platform of the PAP - non communalism straightaway. The other - the method adopted by the Alliance -First inter racial harmony; second an ultimate state of non-communalism. 2

Other members of UMNO were not prepared to be so charitable and an array of backbenchers violently attacked Lee, the term 'traitor' being frequently used.³ Razak wound up the debate denying that the PAP was a 'threat from within' but accusing it of championing Chinese communal interests.⁴ Lee's amendment was rejected but the incident did not end at that. Having been denied the right to reply to his critics (despite an assurance from the Speaker that he would be accorded that privilege) Lee held a press conference in the Parliament and repeated, with extensive documentation, his charges that 'extremists' within UMNO were encouraging communal feelings among the Malays.⁵ 'The result of Lee's action was a wild and

1

Text in The Battle For A Malaysian Malaysia, I (Singapore, 1965) pp.5-52.

2

ST, 1 June.

3

Ibid., 28 May and 2 June.

4

Ibid., 4 June. It was later revealed that the Tunku had avoided speaking so as not to exacerbate the situation by publicly attacking Lee, ST, 12 June.

5

ST, 4 June.

uncontrolled spate of charges from both sides'.¹ In the Senate debate on the King's speech Senator Tan, the Alliance Whip, demanded that either Singapore should secede or the Government should 'put Mr Lee Kuan Yew away to sober him up'.²

It was against such a background that the Tunku left for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference. The intensity of the dispute continued to increase despite Lee's meeting with Razak in late June.³ The situation by July may perhaps best be described by reference to two highly significant events.

On 6 July the Federal Government issued an order instructing Alex Josey, a British journalist long resident in Singapore, to leave Malaysia within two weeks.⁴ Josey had previously been reporting on Malaysian politics largely for foreign journals⁵ and had travelled extensively with Lee. On 19 June his most recent background article had appeared in the Sydney Bulletin⁶ and depicted the growing strength of the Malay 'ultras' in UMNO while the Tunku was abroad. A week later the UMNO Youth organisation had demanded that Razak not meet Lee and that 'stronger action' be taken against Lee and Josey.⁷ Thus, while Razak justified Josey's expulsion on the grounds that he had interfered in Malaysian domestic politics,⁸ Toh Chin Chye described it as the first sign of the 'suppression of liberalism' and an indication that Lee might be arrested.⁹ Josey was helping Lee improve his image overseas, as the Tunku indicated,¹⁰ but this action only further damaged the Alliance's reputation.¹¹ Toh's accusation that the extremists were increasingly directing

1
Grossholtz: *op.cit.*, p.233.

2
ST, 8 June.

3
Ibid., 30 June. See statements by Khir Johari, *ibid.*, 14 and 22 June, Ja'afar Albar and Semu, *ibid.*, 25 June; Utusan Zamin, 20 June; Utusan Melayu, 5 July.

4
ST, 7 July.

5
Particularly The New Statesman (London) and Bulletin.

6
Alex Josey: 'Some Musty Skeletons', Bulletin, 19 June 1965.

7
ST, 27 June.

8
Ibid., 8 July.

9
Ibid., 9 July.

10
Times, 9 July.

11
Times, 8 July (ed); Creighton Burns: C.Times, 22 July; Bulletin, 17 July (ed); Economist, 28 July (ed).

the Alliance's policies seemed not without justification¹ though it was denied that Lee would be arrested.² Josey claimed that the Government expelled him as a sop to the extremists in order to avoid being forced to take more drastic action.³ But his expulsion was a temporary palliative and by the end of the month Utusan Melayu was misquoting Razak as having said that Lee was Malaysia's most dangerous enemy.⁴

The verbal battle had by that stage come to dominate Malaysian politics. In July, following Ong Eng Guan's resignation, a by-election was held in Singapore's Hong Lim constituency.⁵ In a straight fight with the Barisan, the PAP made it clear that it would contest the issue on its Malaysian Malaysia platform.⁶ The PAP attacked the Alliance rather than the Barisan. Lee's opening and major campaign address was largely a tirade against the Malay extremists who 'use two microphones; one for you and me...the other ...very high frequency in Jawi. You and I do not understand, but they do'.⁷ He argued that the Barisan could not stand up to 'these people': Lee was portraying the PAP as the champion of Singapore and non-Malay rights against an oppressive Malay Federal Government. On polling day Utusan Melayu came out in favour of the Barisan,⁸ but this did not prevent the PAP candidate being returned with a two thousand majority.⁹ Lee proclaimed this to be a victory for a Malaysian Malaysia.¹⁰ Similarly, proposals by Kuala Lumpur that Singapore's contribution to federal revenues be reassessed¹¹ and

1 Rajaratnam suggested that Josey was the makan kechit for the main course, Lee: ST, 20 July.

2 Ibid., 10 July (Razak), 14 July (Tunku).

3 Alex Josey: 'My Expulsion From Malaysia', Bulletin, 17 July.

4 Utusan Melayu, 31 July; Mirror of Opinion, 2 Aug.

5 ST, 17 June.

6 Ibid., 18 June and Petir, July 1965.

7 Malaysian Mirror, 10 July.

8 Utusan Melayu, 10 July.

9 ST, 11 July. The PAP candidate polled 6,398 votes, the Barisan candidate 4,346.

10 Ibid..

11 Ibid., 10 July.

that the Bank of China¹ be closed, were regarded, as Jek Yeun Thong, Lee's Political Secretary, claimed, as moves to crush Singapore.²

On 5 August the Tunku, who had been forced by illness to extend his trip overseas, returned to Malaysia amid hopes that he might instil some calm into the situation.³ But clearly there would be forces in UMNO obstructing this. The large crowd that met the Tunku at the airport carried anti-Lee banners⁴ and there was pressure on the Tunku not to meet Lee.⁵ Nonetheless on 7 August they did meet and two days later the Tunku announced in the Dewan Ra'ayat the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. He explained: 'there have been so many differences with the Singapore Government and these differences have taken many forms; so much so that it has now come to breaking point...as soon as one issue was resolved, another cropped up'.⁶ He voiced some specific objections to PAP policies: the enlistment of support overseas,⁷ its criticism of the 1965 budget and its lack of contribution to Bornean development. He pleaded that two courses had been open to him, suppression or separation, and he had taken the latter. But this was far from the full story.

The PAP offered a different explanation for the separation.⁸ Essentially it argued that Singapore's 'eviction' was due to the Malay extremists: 'The effective non-communal approach of the PAP on Malaysia's social and economic problems alarmed the conservative and traditionalist leaders of the Alliance...and particularly UMNO'.⁹ Thus the Malay 'ultras' with the aid of the Malay press appealed to Malay communalism to oppose the PAP. Singapore was evicted by

1
Ibid., 25 July.

2
Ibid., 29 July.

3
ST, 4 Aug (ed).

4
Ibid., 6 Aug.

5
Utusan Melayu, 5 and 6 Aug.

6
Suara Malaysia, 10 Aug.

7
Grossholtz: op.cit., p.238, 'the appeal of the concept [of Malaysian Malaysia] abroad must have been high on the Tunku's reasons for separation'. See also P.Boyce: 'Singapore's External Affairs Power', op.cit..

8
For example, Separation (Singapore, 1965); Patrick J. Kilen: 'How Singapore Was Evicted', Mirror, 21 Aug 1965; Lee Kuan Yew in Suara Malaysia, 24 Sept.

9
Separation, p.6.

the Malay moderates who 1) could not resist the ultras, and 2) preferred in any case to cooperate with the 'political eunuchs'¹ of the MCA and MIC. In the context of immediate events this explanation is reasonably accurate but it ignores more deep rooted motivations.

The Tunku asserted that he had decided on separation while in London, and that on his return he had got the unwilling PAP Government to sign the Agreement.² It seems clear also that the 'ultras' were causing some concern to UMNO's leadership, the Tunku admitting as much in a letter explaining his decision to Toh Chin Chye (who had been a most reluctant party to it): 'if I were strong enough to be able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not'. But the faults did not all lie in Malaya. The PAP was undoubtedly motivated by a mixture of ambition and ideology. The party's first bid for power on the strength of the non-Malay vote found ideology largely subsumed, its second as a non-communal party found the PAP re-emphasising the force of ideology. But whatever the PAP's bona fides, within the Malayan political spectrum the PAP was to be regarded necessarily as a non-Malay party representing a challenge to Malay political dominance.³ As a result 'the disputants tended to formulate their differences in Malay-versus-Chinese terms'.⁴ After nearly two decades of politics in that idiom, little else could be expected. Politics in Malaya was seen as a zero-sum game played by communal groups. The PAP's challenge to stability disturbed Malays because of the party's open discussion of communal politics, its hints of reform, its effective propaganda machinery and its potential, rather than its actual strength. Although the Alliance leaders had similar aspirations for non-communal politics⁵ their approach was more gradualist: the PAP, and the countervailing force it had excited in UMNO, hindered their policies. Publicly the power of both was reduced; the PAP was evicted and Ja'afar Albar forced to resign. The battle for merger had been lost.⁶

1
Lee Kuan Yew: Suara Malaysia, 24 Sept.

2
Times, 16 Aug.

3
Leifer: 'Singapore in Malaysia', op.cit., p.55; R.S.Milne: 'Singapore's Exit From Malaysia: The Consequences of Ambiguity', Asian Survey, March 1966, p.178.

4
Grossholtz: op.cit., p.227.

5
See Dr Ismail p.295, supra.

6
R.Catley: 'Malaysia: The Lost Battle For Merger', Australian Outlook, April 1967, pp.44-60.

The dispute between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore had not gone unnoticed in Australia. By May the press was paying some attention to the subject and was in general sympathetic with the PAP. Razak's suggestion in May, that if Lee were replaced amicable relations could be established, came in for particularly heavy criticism, the Mercury expressing the opinion that 'the attitude of the Malayan Federal leaders to the Premier of Singapore seems to range from political immaturity to downright impudence'.¹ During the next two months the Australian press continued to show concern but began to accept a more balanced interpretation.² But the setback which the dispute represented for Australia's Malaysia policy was not questioned. The press also expressed some distaste for Malaysia's propensity to take Commonwealth protection for granted. The dispute itself, not the issues involved, was Australia's concern and so, it was argued, the Government should impartially counsel moderation.³

The Government gave little indication of what its attitude towards the dispute was. Reference has already been made to Menzies' effort to persuade Lee to moderate his assault on the Federal Government.⁴ In July the Prime Minister described his attitude more openly. Asked at a press conference whether Australia was doing anything to bring together the factions in Malaysia, he replied:

We have our diplomatic representatives in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. They both have the closest access to the people concerned. I think the differences could easily be exaggerated. Anyhow it is in our interest ...to see them disappear, and that is our constant desire. 5

In May Hasluck had expressed a similar opinion, that while it was 'a matter to be worked out by the people of Malaysia...we are of course closely interested in the outcome'.⁶ Although it has been suggested that Australian officials tended to favour the Alliance,⁷

¹
Mercury, 11 May, editorial. See also editorials in Herald, 11 May; Canberra Times, 12 May; Sydney Sun, SMH, Daily Telegraph, 18 May.

²
For example, Mercury, 24 May; Advertiser, Herald, 28 May; SMH, 2 June; Daily Telegraph, 3 June and 10 July; West Australian, 2 Aug; Australian, 21 July.

³
Sydney Sun, 24 May; Adelaide News, 25 May; SMH, 2 June; Age, 23 July; SMH, 22 and 26 July.

⁴
See p.278, supra.

⁵
Press conference by Sir Robert Menzies, 13 July 1965 (text from Prime Minister's Department).

⁶
Press conference by Mr Paul Hasluck in Kuala Lumpur, 21 May 1965 (text from Department of External Affairs).

⁷
Peter Boyce: 'Australia's Diplomacy in Malaya', JSEAH, Sept 1963, pp.72-3.

Canberra's official posture appears to have been one of impartial non-intervention.

The Tunku, however, did not regard Australia as being impartial. At a press conference in August he suggested that Canberra had tacitly supported the British Government¹ which, according to Razak's political secretary, at one stage urged the Alliance to take some PAP men into the Federal Cabinet.² This was anathema to UMNO and led many within that party to believe that Lee had the sympathy of the British Government, particularly since it was felt that the British Labour Party would favour the PAP. The Tunku later accused 'high British officials of waging an insidious campaign to split the unity of the people of Malaysia'.³ To judge by the tone of the British press, such feelings, based on British sympathy for the PAP were not altogether unjustified.⁴

In Australia the Labor Party had undoubtedly become more sympathetic to Malaysia vis-a-vis Indonesia and Lee with regard to the Alliance. But if Australian policy towards confrontation was bipartisan,⁵ its strategic rationale was a matter of dispute. The ALP opposed the commitment to Vietnam 'firmly and completely',⁶ regarding the position there as being 'somewhat different'⁷ from that in Malaysia. In fact Whitlam argued that rather than accept a new commitment to Vietnam Australia would have done better to concentrate her efforts on the defence of Malaysia whose people firmly opposed Indonesia, were subjected to a clear case of military aggression and had much of the world's sympathy.⁸

1
Times, 17 Aug.

2
Inche Abdullah Ahmad in Varsity (Official Organ of the Students Union, University of Malaya) Dec 1965, p.14. See also Michael Leifer: 'Some South-East Asian Attitudes', International Affairs, April 1966, pp.224-5; and Michael Leifer: 'Singapore Leaves Malaysia', World Today, Sept 1965, p.361.

3
Guardian (London), 4 Oct 1965, quoted in Leifer: 'South-East Asian Attitudes', p.224.

4
See Paul Johnson: New Statesman, 16 July 1965; Times, 10 Aug (ed).

5
See Chapter 7, *supra*; Mr E.G. Whitlam, 'Meet The Press' - HSU7 Melbourne, 7 March 1965 (ALP Information Release, No. 5/65); E.G. Whitlam, Meet The Press, Brisbane, 14 March 1965 (ALP Information Release, No. 8/65); interviews with leading members of the ALP.

6
CPD,HR, vol.46, 4 May 1965, p.1102 (Calwell).

7
Ibid., p.1121 (Galvin).

8
Ibid., 6 May 1965, pp.1253-4; see also *ibid.*, 24-25 May, p.2055 (Bryant), and 26 May, p.2149 (Benson).

It had not at first been clear ~~the extent to which~~ ^{how far} Lee had influenced opinion within the ALP. When he was in Australia Lee had invited a Labor delegation to visit Malaysia. It was reported that the Australian Government was apprehensive that the delegation, by expressing pro-PAP sentiments, might exacerbate the Malaysian dispute.¹ On 7 July six senior members of the ALP arrived in Singapore. Two days later Whitlam, the leader of the mission, made a speech indicating his sympathy for the PAP. He argued that it had the 'proper application of democratic principles in the political economic and social spheres', which was 'rare in this part of the world'.² In Malaya Whitlam stressed more heavily the bipartisan nature of Australian support for Malaysia and expressed no public sympathy for the Alliance.³ On return to Sydney Whitlam made this more apparent when at a press conference he expressed concern over the problem of Malay 'ultras', was critical about the expulsion of Josey and viewed with some distaste the restrictions on the organisation of labour in Borneo and Malaya (but not Singapore).⁴

On 2 August the ALP Federal Conference was convened in Sydney.⁵ A general consensus of opinion towards confrontation was evidenced, although there remained groups within the party less prepared to condemn Indonesia and wishing to express firmer support for the PAP. A motion declaring Indonesia to be 'guilty of aggression against Malaysia' was adopted.⁶ Motions criticising the Australian press for misrepresenting Indonesian policy, calling for a 'withdrawal of all foreign troops and bases' from Southeast Asia, and condemning Australian military action in Southeast Asia because 'there is no evidence of any military threat to Australia', were rejected.⁷ Similarly the following motion was considerably modified:

1
Aust, 2 June.

2
ST, 10 July.

3
Ibid., 17 and 18 July.

4
SMH, 24 July. Another member of the delegation, Frank Crean, expressed similar views in Age, 4 Aug. Interview with leading member of the ALP, Canberra.

5
Australian Labor Party: Official Report of the Proceedings of the 26th Commonwealth Conference, (ALP 1965).

6
Ibid., p.80.

7
Ibid., p.81.

Labor supports the new nation of Malaysia and believes that the pending ALP talks with Singapore People's Action Party will achieve Labor's aim that merchant-class elements should not be allowed to curb the rightful demands of the Malaysian people for higher living standards. 1

The policy of seeking a treaty with Malaysia, the only exception to a bipartisan approach with the Government, was retained,² but the position was rather different from that existing in 1963. The Malaysian Government by mid-1965 was prepared to conclude a separate treaty with Australia,³ probably owing to its own concern about a British military withdrawal. It was still in Australia's interest, however, to ensure that it was not to be left as the sole guarantor of Malaysia.

The initial reaction in Australia to Singapore's separation was one of dismay and surprise. Press editorials expressed a variety of opinions on the subject but were united in their concern. One leader writer felt that 'from being an oasis of security in a troubled area, Malaysia has...become a danger spot in itself' and that 'Australia will obviously have to re-examine her attitudes and commitments'.⁴ But while it was suggested that the event left Australian 'foreign policy in confusion',⁵ most editorials felt that Australia should continue to oppose Indonesian confrontation.⁶ There was some feeling, however, that a new form of association with the area's defence might be required, particularly since the UK might rethink her own commitment.⁷

The Government's reaction differed little from that of the press. Australia, like Britain and New Zealand, had not been consulted on the issue of separation, the Tunku fearing that the ANZAM powers might seek to prevent it.⁸ On 9 August Canberra received its first notification of the Separation Agreement and it

1
Ibid., pp.85-6.

2
ALP: Federal Platform...As Approved by the 26th Commonwealth Conference, 1965 (ALP 1965) p.28.

3
CPD,HR, vol.47, 18 Aug 1965, p.292, Whitlam made this assertion which was not denied by the Government. In interviews Malaysian officials confirmed this.

4
SMH, 10 Aug.

5
Aust, 10 Aug.

6
SMH, C.Times, WA, D.Tel, M.Herald, Financial Review, 10 Aug.

7
See Times, 10 Aug (ed); Beddie: op.cit., p.6; Peter Boyce in C.Times, 11 Aug; Sydney Sun, D.Mirror, 10 Aug; SMH, 11 and 13 Aug; Age, 12 Aug.

8
Times, 12 Aug; P.J.Boyce: 'Singapore As A Sovereign State', Australian Outlook, Dec 1965, pp.262-3.

was later reported, and not denied, that Menzies had sent a letter to the Tunku complaining that he had not been consulted.¹ On the same day Hasluck admitted that the Government 'regretted' the separation,² but Government officials were reported to have thought that it might improve relations between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and would not impair their common resistance to confrontation.³ In a statement on 10 August the Prime Minister adopted a more optimistic attitude following a meeting of the Cabinet Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee. He admitted that Australia had not been consulted but said that 'we...direct ourselves to the future'.⁴ He expressed approval of the separation arrangements, adding:

we are glad that the new arrangement recognises that the two entities must continue to work together in close association...we believe that this separation should be regarded as the beginning of a new approach to the task of working together....Various aspects of the separation will require examination in some detail....A central and most important matter is the continued and combined defence of the region...we are determined to play our part with all the other countries concerned in continuing a common resistance to attacks upon the Malaysian area.

The Government had thus moved from a posture of dismay to one of restrained optimism. It accepted that the 'new approach' could bring greater stability, but carefully, in the last sentence quoted, guarded against a British withdrawal.

A situation which had at first appeared serious could be regarded in a more sanguine manner. In the Agreement of Separation,⁵ provision had been made for cooperation between the two states. Article V allowed for the setting up of a joint defence council⁶ and for cooperative defence policies, including Malaysia's rights to use bases in Singapore, and it forbade either state from entering into agreements with third parties detrimental to the interest of the other. Article VI expressed the parties' intent to cooperate in economic policies. Within a week the Singapore Government indicated the sort of foreign policy it intended to pursue. Although

¹ Age, 12 Aug; Boyce: op.cit., p.263.

² CNIA, Aug 1965, p.504.

³ Age, 10 Aug.

⁴ CNIA, Aug 1965, pp.504-5.

⁵ Text in Suara Malaysia, 13 Aug 1965.

⁶ Commonwealth diplomats were assured adequate access both to the council's meetings and its decisions: interview G. Bogars (Singapore, Secretary to Defence Ministry).

both Rajaratnam, the new Foreign Minister, and Lee claimed to wish to implement a non-aligned policy, both made it clear that the British bases could remain. Lee argued that this was essential for the well being of the Singapore economy.¹ The Tunku reaffirmed Malaysia's desire to retain the Commonwealth forces, stressing the necessity of resisting communist aggression.² Shortly after, Singapore sent forces to Sabah to assist Malaysia's defence against confrontation.³ There seemed to be every likelihood that Australia's interests would be adequately maintained in the new situation.

On 18 August, Hasluck outlined to Parliament the Government's attitude.⁴ He argued that 'the basic issues that we face are unchanged...the principles at stake, the nature of the conflicts and the Australian interests that have to be upheld are the same'. He elaborated on this theme, saying:

Indonesian pressure continues....Britain still has commitments. Both Malaysia and Singapore face the same defence problems and the facilities and resources of both are involved in the common defence....The existing system of combined defence has worked well; it is in our interests to continue with this existing system.

He went on to relate Australia's policies towards Malaysia and Vietnam to the overall strategy of containing Chinese power. In this light, although new arrangements concerning technical issues might be necessary, Australia's general policy in the area would be unchanged.⁵ It appears that the British Government came to a similar conclusion.⁶

The ALP differed little in its estimation of the situation, as Calwell revealed in his speech during the debate on Hasluck's statement. Only on two issues did Calwell differ from Hasluck.⁷ He argued that the fact that Australia had not been consulted by Malaysia showed the necessity of a separate treaty. That the UK, who had a treaty with Malaysia, had also not been informed, was

¹ Times, 13 and 14 Aug, ST, 13 and 14 Aug.

² Times, 14 Aug.

³ Ibid., 19 Aug; Creighton Burns: C.Times, 16 Aug.

⁴ CPD,HR, vol.47, 18 Aug 1965, pp.185-94.

⁵ CNIA, Aug 1965, pp.505-6 (Statement by Menzies).

⁶ UKPD,HC, vol.718, 26 Oct 1965, col.29Q (Healey); 27 Oct 1965, col.151 (Healey); 28 Oct 1965, cols.350-1 (George Brown).

⁷ CPD,HR, vol.47, 18 Aug 1965, pp.195-201.

ignored by this argument. Calwell, together with other Labor speakers,¹ also showed that the ALP's sympathy was strongly with Singapore.

The secession of Singapore left Malaysia an emasculated federation deprived of its raison d'etre. The Borneo states had been encouraged to enter the Federation essentially as an adjunct to the Singapore-Malayan merger and in many respects their latent conflicts with Kuala Lumpur had been subsumed by confrontation.² But it was quite clear by 1965 that Malaysian Borneo faced problems other than those provided by Indonesia.

In Sabah the parties of the Alliance had not evolved the stable working relationship characteristic of their Malayan counterparts. In December 1964, differences of opinion between UPKO³ and its Alliance partners came to a head on the issue of expatriate government employees. The issue was resolved when Donald Stephens, the charismatic UPKO leader, became Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs and Peter Loh succeeded him as Chief Minister.⁴ But the dispute ran deeper than its ostensible cause suggests. UPKO, a Kadazan native party, was strongly Sabah oriented and it was reported that many of the party's leaders had sympathies with the PAP's vision of a Malaysian Malaysia.⁵ The other two major Alliance parties, SANAP⁶ and USNO,⁷ respectively right-wing Chinese and Muslim parties, were more strongly oriented towards Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur. Further, it had been Ningkan who had successfully mediated in the dispute within the Sabah Alliance after the Tunku had failed to do so, thus suggesting a degree of regional solidarity in Malaysian Borneo.

From Kuala Lumpur, Canberra or even Kuching the situation in Sarawak looked to be more serious. Apart from having to deal with vigorous military confrontation by Indonesia, the state was beset by far-reaching internal dissensions. During 1965 Indonesia considerably reinforced its ineffective 'volunteers' with well

¹ Ibid., pp.212-3 (Benson); 19 Aug 1965, p.246 (Devine), p.292 (Whitlam).

² Robert O. Tilman: 'The Sarawak Political Scene', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1964-5, p.423. See Chapter Five, supra, p.162 ff.

³ The United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation, which was formed in June 1964 by merging two native parties.

⁴ ST, 11, 12, 18 and 19 Dec 1964.

⁵ Harvey Stockwin: 'Storm Over Sabah', FEER, 7 Jan 1965, pp.6-7.

⁶ The Sabah National Party which became in June 1965 the Sabah Chinese Association.

⁷ The United Sabah National Organisation.

trained forces: infiltrators began to be a serious, albeit smallscale menace. Further, the raiders received cooperation from the CCO, members of which sometimes operated in an independent capacity. On 27 June a combined Indonesian-CCO raiding group, apparently with local assistance, attacked a police post and killed two policemen. One was Ningkan's brother.¹ On 6 July, Security Forces, including British units, began resettling Chinese in 'Operation Hammer' in a style reminiscent of the Malayan Emergency's strategic hamlet policy.² At first, 4,200 were moved from the Serian Road but a total of some 50,000 were eventually expected to be included in the plan. The seriousness of the situation was only emphasised when CCO military training camps were found and it was revealed that the organisation had successfully recruited native members, particularly among Third Divisions Ibans.³

Within Kuching things were little better.⁴ Ningkan, like Stephens, was concerned with states' rights, perhaps to an extent which Kuala Lumpur found distasteful.⁵ Further, in May he introduced a land reform bill designed to placate the Chinese smallholders, but was forced to withdraw it after it encountered strong native opposition within the Alliance.⁶ This was followed by a serious leadership crisis within the Alliance: Ningkan narrowly missed deposition.⁷ The major opposition party, SUPP, was also not without its troubles. At its 1965 General Meeting the moderate leadership, including Stephen Yong and Ong Kee Hui, resigned after the party refused to accept membership of the MSC unless the Barisan was admitted.⁸ Although the leadership was later reinstated (after SUPP had left the MSC) it seemed clear that its control over the party was tenuous.

The secession of Singapore had repercussions in Borneo, where the peremptory treatment (as many Borneans saw it) which the PAP received at the hands of Kuala Lumpur was not well received. Many

¹
ST, 28 June.

²
Ibid., 7 June.

³
Ibid., 4 July. See Justus M. van der Kroef: 'Communism in Sarawak Today', Asian Survey, Oct 1966, pp.568-79.

⁴
See Tilman: op.cit., pp.412-25, and Chapter Five, supra.

⁵
See Chapter Five, supra.

⁶
ST, 12 May.

⁷
Ibid., 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 May.

⁸
Ibid., 28 June.

were apprehensive of Malay intentions and jealous of their state's rights against the federal powers. It was soon evident that even in state government circles it was felt that a reassessment of the federal arrangement would be desirable. The Tunku quickly let it be known that this was unacceptable.¹ In a hasty tour of the Borneo states he warned that force would be used against any secessionist movement.² This action was ill-received in the Australian press, which generally considered Bornean desires to be legitimate, and the Tunku to be high-handed in expelling Singapore yet forcefully preventing the Borneo states from seceding voluntarily.³

On 23 August the London Times reported that, although Donald Stephens had accepted Singapore's secession while in Kuala Lumpur, on return to Jessleton he had found that there was talk within UPKO of Sabah's seceding. He was persuaded that Sabah's position within Malaysia should be renegotiated. This request was denied by Kuala Lumpur so he resigned, possibly under some Federal pressure. The paper also reported that the ANZAM powers had informed the Jesselton authorities that Sabah would not necessarily receive their protection if the state seceded.

In Parliament the following day Hasluck, in answer to a question flatly denied that Australia would assist the Malaysian Government in arresting supporters of secession in Borneo.⁴ On the issue of defence assistance he was more equivocal. In reply to a question by Whitlam he asserted:

These statements [in the Times] are without any foundation whatsoever. The position of the Government is that it has renewed its commitment to Malaysia in words that were carefully chosen by the Prime Minister....We would undoubtedly find it much easier if combined defence arrangements were made. 5

Similarly Holyoake denied the reports but admitted that New Zealand would have to 'rethink' the position if Sabah seceded.⁶

1
SMH, 14 Aug.

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Age, 21 Aug.

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Aust, M.Herald, Merc, 23 Aug; Creighton Burns: Age, 23 Aug.

4
CPD,HR, vol.47, 24 Aug 1965, p.322.

5
Ibid., pp.322-3.

6
C.Times, 25 Aug.

Despite Hasluck's evasiveness there seems little doubt that the Times report was substantially accurate. The Tunku said publicly in Sandakan that the ANZAM powers would not defend Sabah if that state seceded¹ and later reiterated this in Kuala Lumpur, adding that Hasluck's statement was a 'sudden change', attributable to the fact that Sabah's secession was by then unlikely.² Peter Loh argued that Sabah could not secede because it would be defenceless.³ These contentions were largely borne out by Hasluck's statement of 18 August, in which he said:

It is, of course, quite obvious that considerable difficulties would be caused for us if it were a matter of entering into separate and possibly differing commitments with a variety of authorities. Nor of course would we have the means in terms of military capability to make a series of substantial commitments.⁴

Nothing in Menzies' statement of 10 August invalidates this conclusion. Australia had been a party principal to the re-creation of Malaysian unity.⁵ But for all that it is difficult to disagree with the Nation's contention that the addition of the Borneo states had been only useful because it was a sine qua non for the merging of Singapore with Malaya; 'for Australia, our particular interests ...were never served by the addition of Sabah and Sarawak to the fundamental merger'.⁶ While this may have been the case in 1961 and 1962, in 1965 Australia was anxious to contain Indonesia's aggression against those Borneo states. Canberra estimated that this could be done more effectively if they remained in Malaysia.

In 1965 Australia accepted that China posed the most serious threat to her security. During the first two years of the Malaysia dispute there had been a certain ambiguity in Australia's attitude towards Indonesia. Djakarta's policy was seen as posing a threat to Australia's strategy and interests in Southeast Asia, particularly due to its opposition to the Western presence in the region, rather than a direct threat to Australia. In addition Australia wished to

¹ Times, 24 Aug.

² SMH, 26 Aug.

³ C. Times, 25 Aug.

⁴ CPD, HR, vol.47, 18 Aug 1965, p.187.

⁵ See Creighton Burns: Age, 28 Aug; Dennis Warner: SMH, 27 Aug, 2 and 3 Sept. The contentions were substantiated by senior officials of both the Sabah and Australian Governments in interviews at Jesselton, May 1966 and Canberra, July 1966.

⁶ 'The Warners', Nation, 4 Sept 1965.

establish a friendly relationship with Djakarta. By 1965 this policy had undergone significant changes. The Australian Government had become apprehensive about the Sino-Indonesian entente which threatened to produce an extension of Chinese and communist influence in Southeast Asia, the prevention of which was a basic objective of Australian foreign policy. Australia's military contributions to both Malaysia and Vietnam were claimed to be part of a general strategy designed to prevent the spread of Chinese influence, which was depicted as emanating from Djakarta and Hanoi. Concurrently, relations between the US and Indonesia deteriorated, due partly to their conflicting attitudes towards Malaysia, and Djakarta moved towards Peking and Hanoi. The situation in Southeast Asia polarised around two camps: the one centred on the Western-supported governments of Saigon and Kuala Lumpur; the other around their immediate adversaries, the NLF and Indonesia. But while the participants were prepared to equate the two issues and relate each to their overall strategy, the situations in Vietnam and the Malay world differed. Australia adopted different policies towards the disputes and, while the Government publicly sought to identify the two situations, it would appear that it was aware of the distinctions. In Vietnam Australia committed herself unequivocally to the American cause and expressed only hostility towards her opponents. Conversely, despite Canberra's efforts and those of the US, Indonesia became apparently irrevocably committed to an anti-Western posture. For Australia this was the most serious of the developments which accompanied the formation of Malaysia.

The separation of Singapore from Malaysia did not prove to be as disastrous as Australia had at first anticipated. By 1965 the problems which the city-state could create for her pro-Western neighbours by producing a pro-Peking government, seemed unlikely to materialise. The PAP had assumed the political ascendancy and seemed unlikely to lose power to the Barisan. In contrast to 1961, Singapore appeared to present Kuala Lumpur with fewer problems as an independent state than it would as a member of the Federation. In any case merger was no longer acceptable to Kuala Lumpur.

If the ANZAM powers had thought it necessary to defend Malaysia there was no reason for them to withdraw support from its two successor states. Both Malaysia and Singapore remained opposed to Indonesian policy and their dispute had developed independently of confrontation. But the situation, as far as Australia

was concerned, had deteriorated. In the Borneo states some dissatisfaction with Malaysia existed and a more sympathetic policy on the part of the federal government could have made it unnecessary for the ANZAM powers to prevent Sabah's seceding. In general Australia was committed to defending a region less united than when that commitment had been accepted, while the possibility of a British withdrawal from the region within the foreseeable future had increased. Certainly, Australia could no longer depend on the continuing existence of ANZAM as a standing arrangement. Finally, Indonesia had adopted a posture which made it difficult for Australia to achieve a major foreign policy objective, friendship with Indonesia. Unexpectedly one of these issues was quickly resolved in Australia's favour.

The separation of Singapore from Malaysia did nothing to alter Djakarta's policy and confrontation was continued against both states. Her assaults on independent Singapore only seemed to be further indication that Indonesia was less concerned about the desires of Bornean Malaysians than she had publicly claimed. In his Independence Day Address, on 17 August 1965, Sukarno paid little attention to Malaysia but launched an attack on Western policy in Asia generally, declaring: 'we are building an anti-imperialist axis, namely the axis of Djakarta - Phnom Penh - Hanoi - Peking - Pyongyang'.¹ He voiced Indonesian support for North Vietnam against American 'aggression' and criticised vehemently 'the USA which is giving active aid to neo-colonialist "Malaysia"'.²

Australian and Indonesian policies in Southeast Asia were directly opposed. On 2 September Hasluck restated Australia's determination to support Malaysia and Singapore against Indonesia where, he declared, 'it is still a question for debate whether or not a communist party will succeed to power'.³ He reaffirmed Australia's support for the Saigon Government. The basis appeared to exist for the development of a hostile relationship between Indonesia and Australia, particularly since the two states had fundamentally conflicting attitudes towards regional security. On

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Address by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, 'A Year of Self-Reliance', 17 Aug 1965 (Indonesian Embassy, Canberra).

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Ibid., p.18.

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CNIA, Sept 1965, p.543.

30 September this situation was radically transformed when a group of dissident Indonesian army officers, apparently with support of the PKI and perhaps Sukarno, sought to purge the higher echelons of the armed services of anti-communists and install a left wing government.¹ The attempt failed. In its aftermath the structure of the Indonesian Government was completely altered, and with it the orientation of Indonesian foreign policy. Djakarta turned to economic development with Western assistance, and confrontation of Malaysia was, in due course, ended. For Australia the problems presented by confrontation were over.

The abortive coup in Indonesia and its repercussions are outside the scope of this study. But it should be emphasised that the course of events in Djakarta occurred largely independently of Australian policy, although a more forceful policy on the part of Malaysia's defenders, particularly had it involved retaliatory activities, could have led to a more permanent anti-Western posture on the part of Indonesia. The moderation which the Australian Government demonstrated throughout confrontation enabled Canberra to establish quickly a friendly relationship with Indonesia after the ending of confrontation. But to some extent this is to apply ex post facto reasoning. In August 1965 it seemed likely that Australia would be forced to sacrifice one of her interests, friendship with Indonesia, for a more fundamental objective of her foreign policy, namely, a continuing Western presence in Southeast Asia.

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See L. Castles: 'Coup and Counter-coup in Indonesia', Australia's Neighbours, Nov-Dec 1965, pp.5-7; Hindley: 'Political Power and the October 1965 Coup in Indonesia'; Ra'anam: ~~opinion~~ 'The Coup That Failed'.

CONCLUSION

The central thesis of Albinski's extensive treatment of Australia's policy towards China is that 'the presence and influence of Communist China has been a central concern, perhaps even a preoccupation' for Australia.¹ While this may overstate the case, what Albinski calls 'the China factor' is to be found in most aspects of Australia's policy towards Southeast Asia. It had a significant effect on the formulation of the post-war defence in depth strategy and was influential in Australia's policy towards Indonesia's confrontation of the Malaysian Federation. An examination of the accuracy of Australia's perception of China as an aggressive, expansionist power seeking to exert hegemony over Southeast Asia and so threaten Australia, is beyond the scope of this study. But the issue cannot be completely ignored. From the examination which has been presented of the situation in both Malaysia and Indonesia, the conclusion might be drawn that if China were seeking to expand her influence this was not to be achieved on the Japanese pattern of international aggression. In the Malaysian states the existence of political parties sympathetic to Peking was largely a result of the expression, overseas, of Chinese nationalism. There was little evidence that China provided material assistance to those groups. Whether the Chinese communists, as distinct from the KMT, wished the Nanyang Chinese to retain and express their Chinese identity is also open to question. Such a policy could create an obstacle to any ambitions which China might have for exercising eventual hegemony over the region, for the Nanyang Chinese, by retaining their separate identity, have engendered animosities (and to some extent Sinophobia) among the indigenous populations of Malaysia and other Southeast Asian states. Similarly, the increase in the strength of the PKI in Indonesia was due to internal political factors and was only marginally influenced by Chinese policy. On this basis, it would appear that the strength of communist movements in Malaysia and Indonesia was a function of local political forces rather than aggression. But those communist movements were sympathetic to Peking, and to the extent that both they and China favoured the

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Albinski: Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.450.

eviction of the Western presence from Southeast Asia, their objectives conflicted with those of Australia.

Australia adopted a long term strategy of seeking to prevent the extension of communist influence in Southeast Asia. The clearest manifestation of this policy was the pursuit of defence in depth. By encouraging and abetting the Western presence in the region Australia hoped to avoid a change in the regional distribution of power which would lead to an increase in China's influence. The desire for 'stability' in the region, so frequently professed by Australian politicians as their primary objective, may be partly attributed to that policy: the maintenance of the status quo where it was deemed to be in Australia's interests.¹ And yet the China factor does not fully explain Canberra's desire for stability in Southeast Asia. In common with most states, Australia desired her immediate environs to be 'a tranquil area'.² This was accentuated by Australia's direct responsibility for the defence of Papua-New Guinea. Indonesia's confrontation policy threatened both of Australia's primary objectives in Southeast Asia: it disrupted the stability of the region and seemed likely to assist in the extension of Chinese and communist influence. On both counts Australia estimated that Indonesia should be checked.

During the 1950s Australia had stationed forces in Malaya partly that they might be used to help counter the extension of communist influence in Southeast Asia, and partly to defend Malaya. Australian participation in the development of ANZAM, the establishment of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve and the formation of Malaysia were all aspects of the strategy of defence in depth and the preservation of stability. In 1961 Australia was concerned at the growing strength of the anti-Western and possibly pro-Peking forces in Singapore; by 1964 the strength of similar forces in Indonesia was causing some alarm. By 1965 Australia found it necessary to defend a position which it had established in Malaya to prevent 'the southward thrust of communism', against attack from Indonesia. This had not been envisaged as one of the functions of the Australian forces in Malaya and was an unwelcome diversion. But even if the commitment of Australian forces to Malaya had been based on an

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The change of government in Indonesia following the abortive coup, for example, even though it was reported to have involved a bloody purge of the PKI, was greeted with some satisfaction.

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Sir Garfield Barwick: 'Australia's Foreign Relations', in John Wilkes (ed): Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy, p.16. See p. 205, supra.

erroneous view about a likely communist threat and the concomitant desire to draw Australia's defence perimeter in Indo-China, Australia's commitment to the defence of Malaysia rested on firmer foundations. Despite ALP claims, few Malaysians opposed the presence of the Commonwealth forces, particularly after the commencement of Indonesia's attacks on the Federation. Having accepted the obligation to help defend Malaya, it would have been difficult for Australia to have avoided helping resist the Indonesian attacks on Malaysia. Only the rejection of the Malaysia plan during its formative stages and the withdrawal of Australian forces would have made that possible. Australia was helping to check the extension of communist influence, was opposing instability and was resisting aggression.

The deployment of Australian forces to those areas of Malaysia which in fact required defending, involved more complex decisions. Australian policy was subject to influences other than the estimation that Indonesia was pursuing a policy of aggression against Malaysia. The Australian Government had to consider the effect which its Malaysia policy might have on its own domestic situation and on Australia's overall international position.

In 1961 the Malaysia plan was accepted rather than applauded by Canberra, yet it was attractive to Australia for a number of reasons. Malaysia promised to prevent anti-Western elements in Singapore from attaining power. In 1961 the Barisan Socialist was deemed a potential threat to Australian interests, for if it came to power the party seemed likely to adopt a pro-Peking policy and certainly force the British to vacate their bases in Singapore. The development of Malaysia coincided with (though did not necessarily lead to) the demise of the Barisan. By 1965 the Alliance and the PAP were firmly established as the governments of Malaysia and Singapore respectively. The same 'orderly act of decolonisation' seemed likely to prevent serious difficulties arising over the future of the British Borneo territories, which, as colonial enclaves, appeared to be potential sources of threats to 'stability'.

But in this process Australia was largely a bystander, for Britain was the military guarantor of Malaysia. Given Britain's dominant position in the ANZAM arrangement and Australia's traditional reliance on British defence planning (a dependence which had been considerably reduced but not eliminated in the post-war years) it might appear that Canberra's policy towards Malaysia was determined by that of London. Only indirectly was this the case.

It seems possible that Britain viewed the Malaysia plan as an opportunity for divesting herself of her remaining colonial possessions in Southeast Asia preparatory to a withdrawal from the area. The concurrent negotiations for British entry into the EEC would appear to lend weight to the possibility that the UK was seeking to reduce her military commitments in the region. Australia was aware of this possibility and sought to guard herself against the contingency by associating herself with Malaysia's defence only via the British commitment. Australian and British interests did not necessarily coincide, as had been quite apparent during the West Irian dispute. On the question of Malaysia and confrontation the two countries' interests diverged (or potentially diverged) in two major respects: Australia did not wish the British to withdraw from Southeast Asia, while London could well see it as being in British interests to accomplish a withdrawal; and Canberra was more concerned than London to retain a rapport with Indonesia. As a result the policies adopted by the two countries differed.

During the early stages of the Malaysia plan, in 1961 and 1962, Australian objectives coincided with those of the UK, and Canberra was satisfied with the progress that was being made towards the federation of territories involved. As a result of this acceptance of the Malaysia plan under relatively straightforward circumstances, Canberra was later to find itself involved in a more difficult situation. Once Indonesian opposition to Malaysia became apparent Australian policy and interests became distinct from those of the UK, particularly with respect to Indonesia.

During 1963, before the formation of Malaysia, Australia generally approved of the British policy of firm support for the federation's potential member states, a policy which prevented Indonesia from attaining her objectives by force. This enabled Australia to pursue a policy of seeking to persuade Indonesia to accept the proposed federation. In the light of later developments it would seem that the Australian policy had but faint hope of success. Nonetheless, given that Australian interests lay in a negotiated settlement, that objective was certainly worth pursuing. After the formation of Malaysia, it seemed that Indonesian policy had become (if it had not always been) too intractable for a negotiated settlement to be possible. Australia then adopted a policy of 'graduated response'. This was again dependent on Britain's willingness to maintain her firm position as the primary guarantor of Malaysia. The Australian commitment to Malaysia was

increased as Indonesia intensified her pressure on the Federation and evidenced greater belligerency. But Australia still tried to avoid, if possible, breaking the existing rapport between Canberra and Djakarta. It was also hoped that if the Australian commitment was backed by the US, it might carry some deterrent value. There is little evidence that the policy did operate at the level of deterrence and some possibility that it was counter-productive and resulted in Indonesia's taking an even more strongly anti-Western position.

By 1965 Australian policy had again fallen in line with that of the UK. As Indonesia had by then mounted military attacks on an area, the Malayan peninsula, which Menzies had long since depicted as 'more vital' to Australian security 'properly understood than some points on the Australian coast', it is difficult to see how Australia could have avoided direct military action in the defence of Malaysia against Indonesia. By that stage it appeared that Indonesian arguments about self-determination in Borneo were a facade, and that Djakarta was more intent on destroying that which Australia regarded as vital to her security: a Western military presence in Southeast Asia.

Australia made an independent analysis of her interests and implemented an independent policy. Her appraisal of the situation in the Malay world was, by and large, accurate and perceptive. Canberra's policy towards the West Irian dispute was, perhaps, open to some criticism, but given the strength of Australian public feeling on the subject and the Australian military appraisal of the situation, the Government's position was understandable. In any case in 1962 Canberra quickly readjusted her policy and earned no lasting Indonesian enmity. Perhaps more significant was the fact that, although Australia had sought to safeguard herself against the repercussions of a British withdrawal from Southeast Asia, Canberra too readily accepted British assurances that the UK was prepared to maintain a substantial active interest in the region, particularly if she received adequate cooperation from her allies. By August 1965 it was becoming clear that those British assurances were subject to considerable qualification and that the UK would, like Australia, determine her policy on the basis of what she considered to be her interests. Despite the soliciting of the Australian Government, it appeared that the defence of Malaysia against Indonesian confrontation might be the last significant military commitment that the UK would undertake in Southeast Asia.

Australia's relationship with the US was in many respects similar to that with the UK, except that since the mid-1950s the US alliance had come to be seen as the cornerstone of Australian security. But a coincidence of Australian and American interests could not be assumed. This was most sharply revealed when American activity during the closing stages of the West Irian dispute forced a reversal of Australian policy. Like the UK and Australia, the US made and acted upon her own assessment of her interests. Throughout the Malaysia dispute Canberra was anxious to get US backing for the position of the ANZAM powers. Australia was in the almost classic position of a small power with regard to a larger, dominant ally: she sought US backing for her own position which the US, more concerned with the overall situation, was reluctant to give. Neuchterlein's study of Thai policy towards the US in respect to events in Laos in the early 1960s provides a parallel. In the case of Australian policy towards Vietnam a different situation obtained. Although Australia supported US policy in South Vietnam, she was reluctant to involve herself on any significant scale and only committed combat forces after American prompting.¹ In the case of West Irian, the US alliance had provided Australia with no support; quite the reverse, American policy had led to Australia's abandoning a position which she had held for eleven years. On the Malaysia question, the alliance had brought Australia limited support; in Vietnam it had brought an involvement which was unwelcome, at least in its proportions.

But the complexities of Australia's commitment to Malaysia were chiefly a product of Canberra's continuing desire to maintain friendly relations with Indonesia. By late 1964 it was apparent that Indonesia's policy towards Malaysia was aggressive. By that stage Djakarta made little pretence about this but sought rather to justify that policy, largely in terms of the export of the Indonesian revolution.² Malaysia was friendly with the West and capitalist: the Federation was, therefore, a neocolonialist project and an ~~and a deviation from~~ deviation from Asian values. Indonesia did not

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One noted Australian academic has suggested that 'perhaps "domanded" is not too strong a word', T.B. Millar: 'Australia and the Defence of South-East Asia', public lecture, Canberra, 10 June 1965, ANU in cooperation with the AIIA, mimeo, p.12. Having committed those forces, the Australian Government then proved to be one of the most vociferous proponents of the Western commitment to South Vietnam.

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See Donald E. Weatherbee: Ideology in Indonesia: Sukarno's Indonesian Revolution (Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, Monograph Series, No.8, 1966) esp. p.57.

recognise the Federation and so could not commit 'aggression' against it. In any case the concept of aggression was a part of the Western legal system by which Indonesia did not deem herself to be bound. Indonesia, as the vanguard of the New Emerging Forces, did not accept the principle of coexistence with the Old Established Forces, of which Malaysia was a product. But it was on that very OLDEFO presence in Southeast Asia that Australia felt that her security depended. Malaysia's political mores were in direct contradiction to those of Indonesia, and Kuala Lumpur saw no reason not to remain on friendly terms with the West and indeed dependent on the UK for defence. Malaysia was less concerned with the 'social revolution' than with economic development on the Western pattern. But to deny the population of a state the right to construct a particular political system and to adopt a particular international posture, was a principle that Indonesia herself did not accept. Similarly, it was unacceptable to Australia, particularly since Malaysia's posture conformed to Australian interests.

It might be argued that if the UK had not provided Malaysia with adequate military support then Kuala Lumpur would have been forced to adjust to a local distribution of power. This may be true, but it is difficult to contest the right of a sovereign state to seek assistance against attack from whatever quarter it may be obtained. While it might be further argued that Malaysia was in some way 'unnatural' and a product of imperialism,¹ the same could be said of Indonesia. In the post-imperialist world the question of statehood and the related issue of self-determination involve considerable difficulties. As Ivor Jennings has argued: 'On the surface it seemed reasonable: let the people decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people'.² In the case of Malaysia the state had been created and the people defined as a result of both imperialism and local political factors. Although those people disagreed among themselves, few were ready to support the Indonesians. The legitimacy of Australia's support for those people is difficult to contest, especially when it was based, in Barwick's words, on 'upholding the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another country and...respect for the political and

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See Fanner Brockway: 'Malaysia-Indonesia Issue', Eastern World, July 1965, p.7 ff.

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W. Ivor Jennings: The Approach To Self-Government (Cambridge UP, 1956) p.56.

territorial integrity of other nations'. There was little doubt that Indonesia was transgressing a principle which had been vociferously supported by the Afro-Asian states - the principle of self-determination. Indonesia's propounding of the slogan 'Asia for the Asians' was no mask for this fact.

But even having recognised that Indonesia was pursuing a policy of international aggression based on the right of NEFO, as defined by Djakarta, to pursue such aggression, it may still be questioned whether it was in Australia's interests to oppose Indonesian policy. It might be asserted that it was of paramount importance for Australia to retain good relations with Indonesia, that the commitment to Malaysia should have been avoided or abandoned in order to retain Djakarta's good will, and that the UK would have defended Malaysia in any case and the additional Australian assistance was of little military value. These arguments have some validity.

During the period under examination Indonesia did not pose a direct military threat to Australia.¹ The Australian Government appears to have been appreciative of this. During 1963 when there was considerable public discussions of Indonesia's capability to bomb Australia's cities without the RAAF being able to retaliate, the Government gave no indication of serious concern about the matter. In November 1963 the Government announced that the deficiency in the striking power of the RAAF was to be remedied by the purchase of twenty four F-111s. Given that the announcement was made shortly before the federal election and that the F-111s seemed unlikely (even then) to be in service before 1968, it would seem that the timing of the purchase was motivated as much by electoral considerations as by apprehensions about Indonesian air superiority.

Indonesia could have been, however, a most unsatisfactory neighbour in New Guinea. The same situation that had produced confrontation against Malaysia could have arisen with respect to Papua-New Guinea, with Indonesia supporting or instigating a 'liberation movement' in the territory. There was some indication that the Government was seriously concerned at this possibility.²

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See Millar: Australia's Defence, pp.59-67, for a discussion of this issue.

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It is not clear how seriously concerned the Government was. One official told the author that the Government did not really expect Indonesia to prove 'troublesome' in New Guinea.

But after some public consideration of the issue in May and June 1963 (apparently designed to ensure that Australian public opinion and Indonesia were aware of the applicability of ANZUS to East New Guinea) the Government ^{made few references} ~~paid little attention~~ to the subject. It was only publicly mentioned again in late 1964 and then, significantly, by Menzies during the Senate election campaign. Indonesia also caused some concern in Australia because of her efforts to disrupt the alliance system upon which Australia felt her security to be dependent: Indonesia was a threat both to the Western presence in Southeast Asia and to Malaysia, a state which Menzies complimented as 'willing at all times to resist the Reds'.¹

From 1963 to 1965 Australia became increasingly concerned at the direction of Indonesian policy, a concern only heightened by the growth of the Sino-Indonesian entente. It might be contended, as it was by Sukarno, that Indonesia's growing anti-Western orientation was a product of the Malaysia dispute. It seems more probable that Indonesia's confrontation policy was the product of more deep rooted factors. Sukarno had begun to develop his NEFO-OLDEFU dialectic by 1961, and the PKI had assumed a strong position before the Malaysia dispute. Confrontation was a manifestation, not the cause, of Indonesia's increasing alienation from the West, and was an external projection of Indonesia's internal political structure and instability. Although Australia sought good relations with Indonesia, they could not be achieved while Djakarta pursued a policy which Canberra regarded as fundamentally inimicable to Australian interests. Under the leadership of President Sukarno, Indonesia was a disruptive force in Southeast Asia and did not feel herself to be bound by the conventional rules of international behaviour. She was a nuisance to Australia in Southeast Asia and could prove to be one in New Guinea. In part, Australian policy was designed to confine and discipline her.

In contrast, the formation of Malaysia seemed to be very much in Australia's interests. During 1961 and 1962 the federation was being planned largely by indigenous political groups to provide a general solution to the problems which appeared to be presented by the future of Singapore and the Borneo states. It was the Barisan's local political opponents that sought to prevent the party from coming to power. In retrospect, the Malaysia plan does seem to have been an exaggerated response to the power of the Barisan, for it seems that the PAP would have assumed the political ascendancy without the creation of the Federation. But this only became

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CPD, HR, vol.44, 10 Nov 1964, p.2716.

apparent after the Singapore elections of 1963. In 1961 and 1962 Singapore's political future was uncertain and the Malaysia plan did appear to offer the means for either maintaining the PAP Government or ensuring that a Barisan victory would bring no consequences which Kuala Lumpur could not control. This seemed to be in the interests of the ANZAM powers.

The creation of Malaysia was accompanied by the growth of the bitter dispute between the Alliance and the PAP. Australian interests were served while both parties retained power and cooperated with each other, either within or outside the framework of the Malaysian Federation. As by 1965 the rift between the two parties was too great to be easily breached, the secession of Singapore was not necessarily against Australian interests, as Canberra came to recognise. The problems presented by Malaysian Borneo were less easily soluble. The Malaysia plan had offered an attractive opportunity to the Borneo states, particularly in view of the economic assistance which the Malayan and Singaporean Governments had offered. But after the creation of the Federation, the Borneo states found cause for dissatisfaction which culminated, in the case of Sabah, in a desire to secede. In view of the efforts which the ANZAM powers had made to defend Sabah against Indonesian confrontation, and Sabah's continuing opposition to Indonesia's policy, the efforts of London and Canberra to prevent Sabah's secession were understandable. In any case, had confrontation been continued against an independent Sabah, as it had against the Republic of Singapore, the difficulties of defending that state could have proved considerable. As the breach between Jesselton and Kuala Lumpur was not of unbridgeable proportions, Britain and Australia were able to maintain their interests with a minimum of pressure on the Sabah Government.

Despite these tensions within Malaysia, Australia was not helping to maintain the position of an unpopular Government in the face of domestic opposition. There were some elements of such a situation in the case of Sabah, but the state had no intention of succumbing to Indonesia and chose to remain within Malaysia in order to receive maximum protection. In any case, the rapidity with which the secessionist movement collapsed indicated that its strength and determination were not very considerable. Malaysia wanted assistance against Indonesia and was prepared to defend herself as far as her resources would allow, as the rapid increase in Malaysian defence expenditure from 1963 to 1965 indicated.¹

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From \$M 94m. to \$M 207.6m.

The process by which Australian policy towards confrontation was formulated and implemented remains largely obscure. There were indications of some differences between the approaches of various Ministers, particularly between Menzies, Barwick and Hasluck. The effect of these differences is open only to speculation, but some observations may be made. As the Prime Minister and dominant figure in the Government, Menzies was clearly a major factor in the political fortunes of the Liberal-Country parties' coalition. His pronouncements may be partly interpreted within the context of Australian domestic politics and his desire to retain public support for his Ministry. This was particularly the case when elections were at hand, for he dominated the Government's campaigns. Barwick's role in the sphere of Australian domestic politics was less significant and consequently he had the opportunity to elucidate Australian foreign policy in a more sophisticated manner. The apparent differences in approach towards Malaysia between Barwick and Menzies may be largely explained in terms of the differences in their positions. But in addition, Barwick was anxious that Australia should regard herself as, and act as a part of the Southeast Asian region, with which he estimated that she shared fundamental problems of security. Australia's moderate posture towards Indonesian confrontation during the first nine months of 1963 may, perhaps, be attributed to his influence. The guidelines which were established for Australian policy towards confrontation while Barwick was Minister for External Affairs, were followed after Hasluck assumed the portfolio. The change in emphasis in Australian policy sprang chiefly from the change in circumstances; the change in tone was, perhaps, a product of Hasluck's taciturnity and his inclination to regard foreign policy more as a field of private negotiations and diplomacy, than one of open politics.¹

The influence of public opinion is also deserving of some comment. The rapid increase in Australian defence expenditure after 1962 was partly a result of Indonesian policies, yet there was little indication that the Australian Government estimated that Indonesia posed a direct threat to Australia. At the same time, during 1963 and 1964 there was ample evidence that Australian public opinion was seriously concerned at Indonesian activities and wanted increased

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See an interview with Hasluck, Ago, 13 June 1964.

and improved Australian defence forces. The ALP revised its platform on security issues largely as a result of that public concern. The Government appears to have been influenced as much by the public mood as by reasons of international security (although American promptings may have played a significant role in the increase of Australia's defence forces). A number of specific instances indicated the influence of public opinion on foreign policy.

The most clear indication of the Government's awareness of the significance of public opinion was the effort made in early 1962 to get the press to prepare the Australian public for Indonesia's acquisition of West Irian, which Canberra regarded by then as being imminent if not inevitable. This unsuccessful exercise in the manipulation of public opinion was perhaps naively conceived and was not repeated. During confrontation the Government sought to conform to public desires, in appearance if not in fact. Despite the initial strong hostility shown in Australia towards Indonesia's opposition to the Malaysia plan, throughout the development of confrontation there remained in Australia an appreciation of the desirability of retaining Indonesian friendship. This may be in part attributed to the Government's frequent reiteration of the importance of Australia's having good relations with Indonesia. This was a more effective method of shaping public opinion: the intelligent statement of the Government's position.

During mid-1963 there had been considerable public support for the ALP's demand for a separate treaty with Malaysia. The Government was able to alter that situation and by 1965, when it was clear that Malaysia was prepared to conclude such a treaty, there was little demand for one in Australia, and even the ALP paid only lip service to the idea. But the Government was not able to pursue its foreign policy without reference to domestic opinion. In April 1964 it was drawn into the public controversy about the applicability of the ANZUS Treaty to the Australian commitment to Malaysia, despite its patent reluctance to publicise the issue. On such occasions, however, there was little indication that the Government's policy, as distinct from its public explanation of that policy, was significantly affected. During the 1963 election campaign the Government portrayed itself as being determined to resist Indonesia's assaults on Malaysia. This platform had two desirable features: it corresponded to the mood of public opinion, and it helped force the ALP into a position closer to that of the Government.¹ With the

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From 1965 to 1967 the ALP's position on Vietnam changed for similar reasons in a similar fashion.

election won, the Government moderated its determined stance and resisted pressure from its allies to increase its involvement in the defence of Malaysia. By 1964 the Government had support for its policy from the overwhelming majority of Australians. There seems little doubt that a Labor Government would have pursued substantially the same policy.

Since Federation, Australia has pursued her defence and foreign policies as a subordinate member of an alliance system upon which she has placed considerable reliance. Before World War II the UK was the dominant member of the alliance; by the 1950s the US had come to be regarded as Australia's major guarantor. Generally, Australia has accepted an overall conjunction of interests between herself and her major ally and has tended to pursue her policies within the general strategy established by that ally. While Australia's commitment of forces to Malaya may be described in that fashion, her commitment to the defence of Malaysia was implemented in an independent manner.

Although the alliances of which Australia has been a member appeared to offer protection against attack, they have also presented difficulties and potential disadvantages. They may lead to Australia's accepting commitments not intrinsically in her interests (or abandoning those which are) either in order to retain the interest and presence of the senior ally, or as a quid pro quo for a security guarantee which is not immediately essential. Australia seeks to maximise her future security, under hypothetical circumstances, often at the expense of present policy and short term objectives.¹ Further, with her major allies 'not finally and irrevocably committed to the part of the world in which Australia exists',² the possibility of their withdrawing and leaving Australia to continue the commitments of the alliances alone seems real, as British policy in both 1942 and 1965 indicated. There is no certainty that Australia's assistance to her allies' Southeast Asian policies ensures either their continuing presence or their commitment to Australia. The possibility is also sometimes asserted, though it is less easily assessed, that by accepting obligations as

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Professor J.D.B. Miller has suggested, perhaps un gallantly, an analogy with Cavour's dispatch of Piedmontese forces to the Crimean War, 'Possibilities for Supplementary or Alternative Arrangements to the US Alliance', in T.B. Millar (ed): Britain's Withdrawal From Asia: Its Implications for Australia (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1967). It might be added that Cavour's objectives were more immediate and finite.

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Owen Harries: 'Is Asian Communism a Threat to Australia?' in J. Wilkes (ed): Communism in Asia: A Threat to Australia?, p.118.

a result of these alliances, Australia increases the likelihood of a threat to her security.

Under such circumstances, general criteria for evaluating Australian behaviour are difficult to establish, but a careful assessment of each situation and its relationship to Australia's long and short term interests is clearly desirable. In the case of the commitment to Malaysia, Australia made a careful appraisal of the situation and only directly opposed Indonesian aggression after more desirable objectives had been unsuccessfully pursued. Canberra was not prepared to undertake military activity on the simplistic justification of opposing the extension of Chinese or communist influence, nor was she prepared to be pressured by her allies into precipitate military action. Australia assessed her position independently, being aware that her interests differed from those of the UK. The Government also avoided being forced into an inflexible position by Australian domestic opinion, which was at least potentially extremely hostile to Indonesia.

The ultimate justification for Australia's policy towards Malaysia and Indonesia's confrontation of that Federation, must be that Australia's overall objectives were achieved. The failure of the attempted coup in Djakarta and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia left three states with unadventurous, anti-communist governments who appeared likely to establish stable, amicable relations with Australia and each other. The effect of Australian policy on the development of that situation had not been insignificant. When, in 1967, it finally became clear that Britain was planning a military withdrawal from the region, Canberra could view the situation in a more sanguine light than would have been possible at any time before 1966. At least for the time being, communist influence had been contained and stability established in the region.

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Many of the sources which were consulted during the research conducted for this study have been referred to in the text. The following bibliography is a compilation of those sources together with other materials which are either directly pertinent or have provided background information or ideas. It is neither a comprehensive compendium of material available on the subject nor an exhaustive list of sources consulted. Materials which are only marginally relevant or which provide no fresh information or insights into the subject have been excluded.

Section six, headed confidential sources, has been made available to the examiners. The information gleaned from the sources listed in that section has been largely recounted in the text and is accessible to the moderately thorough scholar. The omission of the section is not intended to indicate that the author has been privy to information not readily obtainable (though in a very limited sense this may be the case). As pointed out in the Introduction, some information was only available subject to the proviso that its divulgers not be publicly identified.

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APPENDIX I

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 12th October, 1957.

Whereas the Federation of Malaya is fully self-governing and independent within the Commonwealth;

And whereas the Government of the Federation of Malaya and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognise that it is in their common interest to preserve peace and to provide for their mutual defence;

And whereas the Government of the Federation of Malaya has now assumed responsibility for the external defence of its territory;

Now therefore the Government of the Federation of Malaya and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Government of the United Kingdom undertakes to afford to the Government of the Federation of Malaya such assistance as the Government of the Federation of Malaya may require for the external defence of its territory.

ARTICLE II

The Government of the United Kingdom will furnish the Government of the Federation of Malaya with assistance of the kind referred to in Annex 1 of this Agreement, as may from time to time be agreed between the two Governments for the training and development of the armed forces of the Federation.

ARTICLE III

The Government of the Federation of Malaya will afford to the Government of the United Kingdom the right to maintain in the Federation such naval, land and air forces including a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve as are agreed between the two Governments to be necessary for the purposes of Article I of this Agreement and for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and international obligations. It is agreed that the forces referred to in this Article may be accompanied by authorised service organisations, and civilian components (of such size as may be agreed between the two Governments to be necessary) and dependants.

ARTICLE IV

The Government of the Federation of Malaya agrees that the Government of the United Kingdom may for the purposes of this Agreement have, maintain and use bases and facilities in the Federation in accordance with the provisions of Annexes 2 and 4 of this Agreement and may establish, maintain and use such additional bases and facilities as may from time to time be agreed between the two Governments. The Government of the United Kingdom shall at the request of the Government of the Federation of Malaya vacate any base or part thereof; in such event the Government of the Federation of Malaya shall provide at its expense agreed alternative accommodation and facilities.

ARTICLE V

The conditions contained in Annex 3 of this Agreement shall apply to the forces, the authorised service organisations, the civilian components

and the dependants referred to in Article III while in the territory of the Federation of Malaya in pursuance of this Agreement.

ARTICLE VI

In the event of a threat of 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 those territories or protectorates or within the Federation of Malaya, or other threat to the preservation of peace in the Far East, the Governments of the Federation of Malaya and of the United Kingdom will consult together on the measures to be taken jointly or separately to ensure the fullest co-operation between them for the purpose of meeting the situation effectively.

ARTICLE VII

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 the 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.

ARTICLE VIII

In the event of a threat to the preservation of peace or the outbreak of hostilities elsewhere than in the area covered by Articles VI and VII the Government of the United Kingdom shall obtain the prior agreement of the Government of the Federation of Malaya before committing United Kingdom forces to active operations involving the use of bases in the Federation of Malaya; but this shall not affect the right of the Government of the United Kingdom to withdraw forces from the Federation of Malaya.

ARTICLE IX

The Government of the United Kingdom will consult the Government of the Federation of Malaya when major changes in the character or deployment of the forces maintained in the Federation of Malaya as provided for in accordance with Article III are contemplated.

ARTICLE X

The Government of the Federation of Malaya and the Government of the United Kingdom will afford each other an adequate opportunity for comment upon any major administrative or legislative proposals which may affect the operation of this Agreement.

ARTICLE XI

For the purposes of this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires:

"bases" means areas in the Federation made available by the Government of the Federation of Malaya to the Government of the United Kingdom for the purposes of this Agreement and includes the immovable property and installations situated thereon or constructed therein;

"force" means any body, contingent, or detachment of any naval, land or air forces, or of any such forces, including a Commonwealth Strategic

Reserve when in the territory of the Federation pursuant to this Agreement but shall not include any forces of the Federation of Malaya;
 "the Federation" means the Federation of Malaya;

"Service authorities" means the authorities of a force who are empowered by the law of the country to which the force belongs to exercise command or jurisdiction over members of a force or civilian component or dependants;

"Federation authorities" means the authority or authorities from time to time authorised or designated by the Government of the Federation of Malaya for the purpose of exercising the powers in relation to which the expression is used;

"civilian component" means the civilian personnel accompanying a force, who are employed in the service of a force or by an authorised service organisation accompanying a force, and who are not stateless persons, nor nationals of, nor ordinarily resident in, the Federation;

"authorised service organisation" means a body organised for the benefit of, or to serve the welfare of, a force or civilian component or dependants;

"dependant" means a person not ordinarily resident in the Federation who is the spouse of a member of a force or civilian component or who is wholly or mainly maintained or employed by any such member, or who is in his custody, charge or care, or who forms part of his family;

"service vehicles" means vehicles, including hired vehicles, which are exclusively in the service of a force or authorised service organisation; the expression "of a force" used in relation to "vessels" or "aircraft" includes vessels and aircraft on charter for the service of a force.

ARTICLE XII

This Agreement shall come into force on the date of signature.

APPENDIX II

Text of letter dated 21st April, 1959, received by the Australian High Commissioner in Malaya from the Prime Minister of Malaya and Incorporating the text of the High Commissioner's letter of 24th March, 1959, to the Prime Minister.

I refer to your letter of 24th March, 1959, the terms of which are as follows:-

"I wish to refer to the Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance concluded on 12th October, 1957, between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

"As you know, the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve referred to in the Agreement, its Annexes and the letters exchanged in connection with the Agreement, includes Australian forces which are or may from time to time be serving in the Federation. Accordingly, the various provisions applicable to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, in particular the provisions dealing with the status of forces, apply in respect of these Australian forces.

"I should be grateful if you would confirm that the foregoing is the understanding between the Government of the Federation of Malaya and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in respect of Australian forces serving in the Federation. If so, I would suggest that this letter and your reply be regarded as placing that understanding on record.

"On behalf of the Australian Government, I take this opportunity of conveying to you and to your Government the assurance of our continued interest in, and concern for, the well-being of the Federation and its people."

In reply, I confirm that your letter correctly sets out the understanding between the Government of the Federation of Malaya and the Australian Government and, in accordance with the suggestion contained in your letter, agree that your letter and this reply be regarded as placing that understanding on record.

APPENDIX III

Agreement Relating To Malaysia, 9 July 1963

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore;
Desiring to conclude an agreement relating to Malaysia;
Agree as follows:-

[...]

Article VI

The Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the Federation of Malaya of 12th October, 1957, and its annexes shall apply to all territories of Malaysia, and any reference in that Agreement to the Federation of Malaya shall be deemed to apply to Malaysia, subject to the proviso that the Government of Malaysia will afford to the Government of the United Kingdom the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities at present occupied by their Service authorities within the State of Singapore and will permit the Government of the United Kingdom to make such use of these bases and facilities as that Government may consider necessary for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Malaysia and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in South-East Asia. The application of the said Agreement shall be subject to the provisions of Annex F to this Agreement, relating primarily to Service lands in Singapore.

APPENDIX IV

Text of letter dated 18th September, 1963, received by the Australian High Commissioner in Malaysia, from the Prime Minister of Malaysia and incorporating the text of the High Commissioner's letter of 17th September, 1963, to the Prime Minister.

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 17th September, 1963, concerning the presence of Australian forces in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve under the 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 the terms of which are as follows:-

"I have the honour to refer to my letter to the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya dated 24th March, 1959, and his reply of 21st April, 1959, concerning the presence of Australian forces in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve under the Agreement on external defence and mutual assistance between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on 12th October, 1957.

"The Governments of the United Kingdom, Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore have agreed by Article VI of an Agreement concluded on 9th July, 1963, on the extension to all the territories of Malaysia of the 1957 Agreement. The Government of Australia accordingly regards its association with the Agreement as henceforth applying to Malaysia. I should be grateful if you would confirm that this is your understanding of the position."

In reply I confirm that your letter correctly states the understanding between our two Governments of the position.

APPENDIX V

Malaysia Defence - Statement by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, in the House of Representatives on 25th September, 1963

"It may be remembered that so far back as April, 1955, the Government emphasized the importance of Malaya to the security of the zone in which we live, and pointed out that, in consequence, Malayan integrity and defence were matters from which we could not and should not stand aloof. Reasons of this kind, directly affecting us, were of course, closely allied with the proper interests of others - who are our friends. The establishment of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, of SEATO - to the functions of which the Reserve was relevant - the negotiations of the ANZUS pact, are all in the same pattern. That is a pattern, not of aggression, but of defence; not of isolation in defence, but of common effort for the common security.

"There has been some suggestion that our forces in Malaya went there primarily for purposes of internal security. This is not so. As I have indicated, they went there as a part of a strategic reserve with the United Kingdom and New Zealand and as a contribution to the defence of the South-East Asian area. True, we quickly agreed that our forces could be employed in operations against the Communist terrorists in Malaya. They were so employed, with success, and with great credit to themselves and Australia. The facts were, of course, that these terrorists were promoted and supplied by Communist authorities outside Malaya, and that their activities were as much acts of war against the territorial and political integrity of Malaya as would have been overt military invasion. We think that the people of Australia have agreed with these policies and decisions. In all these arrangements, and in any to be made, the usual rule will apply that the employment of Australian forces remains under the control of the Australian Government. We have acted and will continue to act consistently with the Charter of the United Nations.

"But Malaysia, the new nation, is here. The processes of its creation have been democratic. The United Nations Secretary-General, having appointed suitable persons as examiners, reported that the people of North Borneo and Sarawak desired incorporation into Malaysia. The Prime Minister of Singapore, one of the great sponsors of Malaysia, has just received an overwhelming endorsement at the polls. We have publicly and unambiguously said that we support Malaysia which is, never let it be forgotten, a Commonwealth country, just as our own is. Should there be any attempts to destroy or weaken Malaysia by subversion or invasion, what should Australia do about it? We know that the United Kingdom accepts, in substance, the position of a military guarantor. Honorable members now know the terms of our own recent exchange of notes.

"The Government of Malaysia has said clearly that this exchange is completely satisfactory to it. But it has not been the normal practice of Commonwealth countries to spell out in detail their sense of mutual obligation, nor to confine themselves to legal formulae. For example, our vital engagements with the United Kingdom are not written or in any way formalized. Yet we know and she knows that in this part of the world we look to her, and she looks to us. We each apply in a spirit of mutual confidence a golden rule of mutual obligation.

"But for the benefit of all concerned, honorable members would not wish me to create or permit any ambiguity about Australia's position in relation to Malaysia. I, therefore, after close deliberation by the Cabinet, and on its behalf, inform the House that we are resolved, and have so informed the Government of Malaysia, and the Governments of the United Kingdom and New Zealand and others concerned, that if, in the circumstances that now exist, and which may continue for a long time, there occurs, in relation to Malaysia

or any of its constituent States, armed invasion or subversive activity - supported or directed or inspired from outside Malaysia - we shall to the best of our powers and by such means as shall be agreed upon with the Government of Malaysia, add our military assistance to the efforts of Malaysia and the United Kingdom in the defence of Malaysia's territorial integrity and political independence."