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A CORE INTEREST ANALYSIS OF THE FORMATION  
OF MALAYSIA AND THE SEPARATION  
OF SINGAPORE

by

CHARLES RICHARD OSTROM

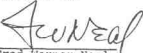
A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of  
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fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
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## PREFACE

This study has three general objectives. The first is to contribute to the development of the core interest approach as a tool for analyzing national as well as international political relations. The second objective is to demonstrate the utility of the core interest approach in general and the contributions made to it by this work in particular, through case studies of the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore. The third general objective is to contribute to the understanding of these two events through a detailed analysis of the closely related decisions to form the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 and to have Singapore separate from Malaysia in 1965.

It must be noted that the use of the core interest approach in this work deviates from the original idea of core interest as utilized by Fred Warner Neal and others. Much of the symbolism and logic of the idea, however, is maintained.

Previously the core interest approach has been used as a tool only for the analysis of international political relations, especially those involving serious conflict. Both case studies in this work, however, are different. The first one differs because it involves a general situation of mutual cooperation rather than of conflict. Also it involves relations between a sovereign state (the Federation of Malaya) and an "internally self-governing" British Crown Colony (Singapore),

rather than relations between two sovereign states. Singapore was moving rapidly toward independence,<sup>1</sup> however, and in the discussions and negotiations regarding the formation of Malaysia, the Singapore leaders acted much as if they were the representatives of a sovereign state rather than of a colony. In short, although Singapore was not a sovereign state, its leaders acted with a large degree of political independence. The second case study differs because it involves a conflict between the central government of a federal state and the government of one of that state's constituent units, rather than a conflict between two sovereign states. This second departure from previous practice in the utilization of the core interest approach requires further justification.

The writer is of the opinion that the differences between national and international politics are differences of degree rather than of kind. Olson and Sonderrmann list several ways in which relations between states tend to differ from relations within states. Within states "order is maintained and violence is prevented through the presence of six conditions or institutions": laws, political machinery to change these laws, an executive body to administer the laws, courts to settle disputes in accordance with law, superior public force which deters acts of individual or sub-group violence, and a state of public well-being such that people

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<sup>1</sup>Its constitutional status was to be reviewed in 1963, and independence was a distinct possibility.

are not driven to violence by a sense of desperation.<sup>2</sup> Obviously not all states enjoy these institutions and conditions, and not all international relationships lack them. Thus, Olson and Sondermann point out, "perhaps the study of relations within some societies can best be understood by using concepts from international relations, while the study of relations among certain states can profit from the use of concepts ordinarily employed in the study of domestic politics."<sup>3</sup>

The writer believes that Malaysia is one state in which certain domestic political conflicts can best be understood through the use of some concepts from the field of international politics. While Malaysia enjoyed all six of the conditions and institutions listed above to a considerable degree during the period studied, the new state was plagued by what proved to be a crucial<sup>4</sup> deficiency in an additional factor which is the very foundation for these conditions and institutions: "an underlying consensus on acceptable goals and methods of achieving them<sup>5</sup> among the members of such a society."<sup>6</sup> Malaysia's severe deficiency in this regard is well expressed by Scott's observation that, within Malaysia,

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<sup>2</sup>William C. Olson and Fred A. Sondermann (eds.), The Theory and Practice of International Relations (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>It proved to be crucial for the existence of the Malaysian state as it was originally constituted in 1963.

<sup>5</sup>This, as will be demonstrated in Part III, was basically what was at stake in the Singapore-led campaign for a "Malaysian Malaysia" as contrasted with a "Malay Malaysia."

<sup>6</sup>Olson and Sondermann, p. 2.

politics outside the upper crust of Western-educated Chinese, Indians, and Malays "have to be treated almost as three different political systems, each corresponding to a racial group, conducting 'international relations' with one another at arm's length within the Federation of Malaysia."<sup>7</sup> This, as will become apparent in the second case study, is the situation that developed between the Malay-dominated federal government in Kuala Lumpur and the Chinese-dominated state government in Singapore.

Thus it is contended that although the core interest approach has previously been utilized only in the analysis of international political conflicts, it can also be useful and appropriate for the study of such intranational political conflicts as the one analyzed in Part III of this work. Indeed, it is hoped that the result will constitute a modest success in illustrating the value of greater integration of research and theory development between the areas of international and intranational political analysis.<sup>8</sup>

A final justification for the use of the core interest approach in an analysis of the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, even though the former was not a sovereign state, is based on the concept of sovereignty itself. As this writer uses the concept, a state is sovereign if there is no higher

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<sup>7</sup>James C. Scott, Political Ideology in Malaysia, Reality, and the Beliefs of an Elite (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>Chadwich Alger calls for such efforts in his "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," American Political Science Review, Vol. 57 (June, 1963), p. 419.

legal authority above it. Sovereignty is thus a legal concept and is not necessarily related to the actual degree of political independence the leaders of a state enjoy. This point is relevant to the study of Singapore's separation from Malaysia because Singapore, although it was not legally sovereign, exercised a considerable degree of political independence from the central government of Malaysia. Singapore had autonomy in its health, social and educational policies and controlled its own radio and television facilities, which it used to further its own political interests. Also its Prime Minister utilized trips abroad to promote Singapore's interests vis-à-vis Kuala Lumpur and various foreign governments.

In summary, the use of the core interest approach in the two case studies of this work is held to be appropriate even though Singapore was not a sovereign state at either time. This has been justified by the contentions that the differences between national and international politics are differences of degree rather than of kind; the nature of the Malaysian political system is such that an approach formulated primarily for the analysis of international political conflict is appropriate for the analysis of the Malaysian internal political conflict studied herein; and in regard to the degree of political independence it exercised (as opposed to the legal concept of sovereignty) Singapore enjoyed sufficient political latitude to make the use of the core interest approach appropriate.

This final justification is relevant to a consideration of the "linkages" or areas of convergence between national and international political systems. As Rosenau notes, students of both national and international politics tend to be prisoners in "conceptual jails," students of international relations being bound by the concept of the national interest and students of intranational politics by the "prerogatives of sovereign authority."<sup>9</sup> By focusing on the perceptions of decision-makers, the core interest approach (especially as modified in this work by the integration of the concept of the psychological environment<sup>10</sup>) constitutes a conceptual framework within which the influence of international factors on intranational politics and vice versa can readily be examined. As such it constitutes an effort in the area of what Rosenau terms "linkage politics." The proof of the pudding is in the eating, however, and the results of this effort will be evaluated in the concluding chapter.

In Part I of this work the core interest approach is described and additions and modifications are made in an attempt to increase its usefulness as a tool for analyzing political conflict situations. In Parts II and III a core interest analysis of the formation of Malaysia in 1963 and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 is presented. In the final section, conclusions regarding the modified core interest approach and the two case studies are drawn.

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<sup>9</sup>James N. Rosenau, Linkage Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Infra., pp. 17-19.

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PART I  
THE CORE INTEREST APPROACH

## CHAPTER I

### A THEORY OF CORE INTERESTS

Fred Warner Neal has set forth a theory of core interests as a method of thinking about international politics in regard to both analysis and decision-making. This chapter is an attempt to clarify and to develop this theoretical approach as a tool for the analysis of contemporary and historical problems. Neal's theory of core interests will be summarized briefly and then certain aspects will be elaborated and commented upon.

#### Neal's Theory of Core Interests

The object of Fred Warner Neal's core interest approach to international politics is to make thinking about national interests more precise. His theory may be summarized briefly by the following statements:

1. The concept of core interests is based on the model of a world composed of sovereign nation-states, each with a unique set of national interests.
2. In each case these interests and the degree of importance attached to them are determined by the leaders of the state. Their judgments may be right or wrong, rational or irrational. National interests are thus defined as being

what the leaders of the state believe them to be; they are not what some independent observer may consider them to be, and they cannot be calculated by outside objective criteria of any kind.

3. At the heart of its national interests each state has one or more core interests which it regards as being absolutely vital to its security. A core interest is defined as one which is considered to be so vital that a threat to it is regarded by the state's decision-makers as a threat to the existence of the state itself, as they conceive its existence.

4. Though core interests may not be strictly geographic in nature, they are ultimately concerned with geographic areas and are most often centered in adjacent land areas.

5. The relationship between core interests and power is crucial. A core interest is realistic only to the extent that it can be asserted effectively. In the case of the weakest states core interests may simply be coterminous with their own territorial boundaries. In the case of more powerful states, however, core interests usually involve something more, something beyond or in addition to the state's own territory.

6. An essential characteristic of core interests is that they are not negotiable. Since by definition a threat to a core interest amounts to a threat to the existence of the state, such interests are no more negotiable than the existence of the state itself, which is to say not at all.

7. Since a core interest involves the very existence of the state, it will fight for what it regards as a core

interest just as it would fight for its own existence. Thus when one state considers that another threatens a core interest, an international conflict inevitably ensues; and when two states actually assert the same core interest a "war situation"<sup>1</sup> inevitably develops.

8. A "war situation" does not always culminate in war, however, for appeasement (defined as the giving-up of a significant interest under the threat of force) may result.

9. Not all international conflicts involve core interests; there can be conflicts involving secondary or tertiary interests.

Is the "Theory of Core Interests" Really a Theory?

Whether the "theory of core interests" is really a theory depends on one's definition of theory. As pointed out in the Dictionary of the Social Sciences, the term "theory" can denote a wide range of things. This continuum ranges from "any hypothesis, confirmed or not" to only "strongly confirmed hypotheses."<sup>2</sup>

Neal himself is unsure on this point, admitting that he is "far from certain that it is correct to speak of a theory

<sup>1</sup>That is, war is imminent or probable because core interests, by definition, cannot be compromised.

<sup>2</sup>Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (eds.), A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964), p. 435.



of core interests at all."<sup>3</sup> In one of his seminars Professor Neal stated that he set his concept of core interests forth as a principle which, with its sub-principles, almost constitutes a theory. Core interests exist, he holds, and therefore constitute a principle<sup>4</sup> of international politics. He is trying to elaborate a theory out of it in order to explain things. Once identified, he contends, core interests will explain state behavior in important matters. In what he calls his "modest theoretical approach" he seeks to blend to some extent the essence of all of Thompson's and Lippmann's three kinds of theory: normative or value theory, empirical or causal theory, and policy science.<sup>5</sup>

The particular definition of theory that appears to be the most applicable to Neal's intent is, "a coherent set of hypothetical, conceptual and pragmatic principles forming a general frame of reference for a field of inquiry."<sup>6</sup> Given the degree of diverging interpretations among Professor Neal's students regarding what "the theory of core interests" is or

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<sup>3</sup>Fred Warner Neal, "The Theory of Core Interests and U. S.-Soviet Cold War Rivalry," Paper Delivered at the Second Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Boulder, Colorado, March 29, 1961 (mimeographed), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>A principle is defined as a fact or a generalization accepted as true and basic.

<sup>5</sup>Neal, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Websters Third New International Dictionary (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1961), p. 2371.

should be,<sup>7</sup> it is submitted that the term "theoretical approach" would be more appropriate. Hence, in this analysis it will be referred to as the "core interest theoretical approach" or, more simply, the "core interest approach."

#### The Core Interest Approach and Foreign Policy Making

A key aspect of foreign policy making, Neal believes, lies in the determination of core interests. Assuming that the decision-makers of a state desire to achieve their interests without conflict if possible, that they prefer to avoid paying the price of war for something they feel is not worth it, and that if their policies do culminate in conflict it is preferable to anticipate this conflict, they are behooved to comprehend fully both their own core interests and those of other relevant states.<sup>8</sup> Once these core interests are determined and known, the relationships between interests and power become easier to determine, foreign policy alternatives become clearer, and decision-makers can be aware of where (and over what) conflict is likely to break out.

In regard to the relation between interests and power, sound foreign policy calls for the state to assert core (and

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<sup>7</sup>Compare, for example, the differences in the approaches and interpretations of the three core interest dissertations thus far written under Prof. Neal's direction: Nish Jamgotch Jr., "Eastern Europe as a Soviet Core Interest," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California, 1964; Jon A. Yinger, "Cuba: American and Soviet Core Interests in Conflict," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California, 1965; and this work.

<sup>8</sup>Neal, p. 5.

other) interests only when and where they can be made meaningful in terms of the power the state is able and willing to use to assert them. As Lippmann has put it ". . . foreign policy consists in bringing into balance, with a comfortable surplus of power in reserve, the nation's commitments and the nation's power" and "the constant preoccupation of the true statesman is to achieve and maintain this balance."<sup>9</sup> Core interests must be assessed, therefore, not only in terms of existing power relationships but also in terms of potential ones.<sup>10</sup>

Policy makers might be helped to achieve greater realism, Neal suggests, if they would divide their core interests into three groups:

1. those that are unlikely to be challenged in the foreseeable future,
2. those they will continue to assert even if challenged,
3. those they will consider abandoning voluntarily either because of a re-evaluation of their importance to national existence or because they have become (or are likely to become) core interests of another state having greater power to assert them.

In terms of potential challenges to core interests of other states there are also three categories:

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<sup>9</sup>Walter Lippmann, U. S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1943), pp. 9-10. Cited in Neal, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>Primarily for this purpose, the concept of latent core interests will be advanced below.

1. those that cannot be challenged successfully,
2. those that might be challenged successfully, and
3. those that can be challenged successfully.

After classifying core interests in such a manner, decision-makers should re-evaluate and perhaps change some of their own core interests and then design policies to achieve or maintain their remaining interests.

#### How Core Interests Change

There are three basic ways for core interests to change: by appeasement, via war, and voluntarily. Appeasement, defined as the giving up of a significant interest under the threat of force, could involve the giving up of a core interest. An example of this would be the submission of Czech leaders in 1938 to the Munich decisions which led to the dissolution of the Czech state, a clear sacrifice of a core interest. Major alterations of core interests have usually resulted from war. Via war the victors can impose sweeping and fundamental core interest changes upon the vanquished. Refusal by defeated states to accept such major redefinitions of core interests, however, explains why there is a tendency for new wars to grow out of old ones.

Two types of situations call for a re-evaluation of core interests with the idea of changing them voluntarily. First, technological developments may call for core interest changes. For example, the development of intercontinental missiles might cause overseas air bases and short range missile

installations to cease to be core interests. Second, changing power relationships may call for a re-evaluation of core interests. For states with extensive or far flung core interests especially, it may be wise to relinquish a core interest before it is (or can be) effectively challenged.

It should be noted, however, that unless re-evaluation indicates that such core interests were erroneously established in the first place, a voluntary change of this second type, by definition<sup>11</sup> requires that the decision-makers alter their conception of the state. For example, the British since World War II have relinquished a number of areas that were clearly core interests prior to the war. This was done wisely, it might be concluded in a core interest analysis, for the leaders realistically adjusted to their state's greatly diminished power situation by revising their conception of it as a great imperial power and reformulating their core interests accordingly.

#### The Geographical Element in the Core Interest Approach

Neal's emphasis on geographical factors in the determination of core interests and his insistence that core interests can be identified with geographic areas has led some people to conclude that his theory of core interests is geographically deterministic or geopolitical in nature. Such impressions are incorrect. Neal's statements on the role of geography contain

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<sup>11</sup> I.e., by the definition of a core interest as one vital to the existence of the state itself as the decision-makers conceive it.

qualifications which absolve him from such charges. For example:

1. . . . core interests are usually geographic areas, usually adjacent geographic areas. (Emphasis added.)<sup>12</sup>
2. We may take it as a postulate of the nation state system as it has existed up to now that powerful states tend to extend their influence one way or another to less powerful states on their borders and that this influence is generally regarded as a core interest. (Emphasis added.)<sup>13</sup>

Also he states:

Neither do core interests have to be strictly geographic; that is they do not have to be conceived of exclusively in terms of land areas, although I can think of no case where they have not ultimately concerned land areas.<sup>14</sup>

For the core interest approach to be "geopolitical" or "geographically deterministic," core interests would have to be defined as being objectively determined by geopolitical data, as both Rohn and Jamgotch have come close to stating.<sup>15</sup> But core interests have been defined here as being what the decision-makers of the state perceive them to be. Thus only if these leaders have a "geopolitical" or a "geographically deterministic" outlook would core interests be so determined.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Neal, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Rohn states that "the extent of the core interest is objectively given by geopolitics but subjectively modified by the perception of statesmen" and Jamgotch that "objective interests" are "core interests which inhere in the very existence of the nation-state." Peter H. Rohn, "Professor Fred Warner Neal's Concept of Core Interests: A Summary and Critique," Paper mimeographed for seminar use (n.d.), p. 1, and Jamgotch, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> In this regard it is interesting to note that Rohn believes that "one eminent justification" for the core interest approach "is the fact that many practitioners of international politics actually think in geopolitical terms, or thought so until recently." Rohn, p. 4.

And in such cases it would not be the core interest approach that would be geographically deterministic or geopolitical but rather the leaders involved.

The role of geography in the core interest approach is very important, however, and can be explained as follows. First, geographic factors have usually been an important element in the motivation and determination of core interests (or their equivalent). It must be noted, however, that non-geographical elements can also be important determining factors. As has just been indicated, it all depends on the outlook of the decision-makers. Second, core interests have always been ultimately geographic in the sense that their manifestation could be pinned down to a geographical area eventually. Finally, in all cases of contention over core interests the point of conflict has been geographical and the conflict has usually been resolved in terms of geographic areas.

Yinger summarizes the role of geography in the core interest approach well, noting that among the factors which make up national interests geography, coupled with the need for security, has traditionally been the most important. In the present era, however, when the primary threat to national security (at least among the great powers) comes from thermo-nuclear weapons and missiles, geographical proximity is neither a necessary nor a decisively important criterion. Even so a lingering geographical focus, stemming largely from psychological attitudes rather than security calculations, causes geography to remain a central focus in terms of what is said

and thought by foreign policy makers.<sup>17</sup> This leads us to a discussion of the impact of thermonuclear weapons systems on the core interest approach.

Impact of Thermonuclear Weapons Systems on the Core Interest Approach

Neal believes that the advent of thermonuclear weapons systems alters the whole concept of core interests, at least in the traditional geopolitical sense. This is because any state possessing thermonuclear weapons plus the ICBM's to deliver them automatically threatens the core interests (i.e., the existence) of all other states, exactly as it may have done in the past by constructing military bases near their borders. Thus the potential incidence of core interest threats within the international system has been vastly multiplied.

As before, a threat to a core interest is a threat to the existence of the state holding that interest. But today, if the holder of the core interest possesses thermonuclear weapons systems, the existence of the challenging state is also threatened. This fact by itself would operate to decrease challenges to core interests. But the holder of a core interest which is being challenged is put into a severe dilemma if the challenger possesses thermonuclear weapons systems. For if it responds to a threat to its core interest in the

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<sup>17</sup>Yinger, pp. 2-3.



traditional manner (i.e., by military action) it risks its existence. Yet by giving up its core interest it also, by definition, runs the same risk.

The decision-makers of such a state are faced with a conflict between two of their own core interests, and are thus forced to choose between them. Such a predicament will be termed a core interest dilemma.<sup>18</sup> Also whereas before the thermonuclear era a core interest conflict often would have led to a war, now such a confrontation is more likely to result in a core interest dilemma and thus produce a situation ranging from serious diplomatic conflict to limited war, rather than full scale hostilities. This is more likely if they both have second strike capability against each other.

In short, thermonuclear weapons systems make more likely what Neal calls an "identity of core interests" in the sense that the avoidance of nuclear war is essential to the existence of both protagonists, at least in the present case of the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> Because this core interest is held by each with respect to each other (i.e., reciprocally) it will be labeled a "mutual" core interest.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted, however that at present this core interest in avoiding thermonuclear war applies with certainty

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<sup>18</sup>To lessen the danger of such a dilemma Neal urges that both superpowers "pull in their horns" and reduce their widely extended core interests. Neal, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>Infra, p. 27, Footnote 17.

only to the U. S. and the Soviet Union, and only with respect to each other. Against any other state (even a thermonuclear one) either of these superpowers conceivably could wage a thermonuclear war without having to run what their leaders considered to be an intolerable risk to their existence, especially if they struck first.

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## CHAPTER II

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORE INTEREST APPROACH

In this chapter additions to the core interest approach will be presented in an attempt to increase its usefulness as a tool for analyzing decisions and events in the area of international politics. More of Neal's ideas will be elaborated upon and some of the interpretations and contributions of two previous core interest analysis dissertations written under his direction<sup>1</sup> will be discussed.

#### The Definition of Core Interest

Neal's concept of core interest is, as he states, "essentially a defensive one, essentially a concept of the status quo." A core interest is "something a nation has or thinks it has or claims to have."<sup>2</sup> Thus he defines a core interest as one "which, when it is threatened, is considered so vital that the threat is regarded as a threat to the very existence of the nation itself, as the policy makers conceive existence." And since a core interest involves the existence of the state, "to the extent that a nation will fight for its own existence it will fight for a core interest."<sup>3</sup>

In this study, however, the definition of a core interest will be altered slightly to make it theoretically possible

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<sup>1</sup>Jamgotch and Yinger.

<sup>2</sup>Neal, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

for something a state does not have or claim to have to be a core interest, so long as its decision-makers believe it is vital to its continued existence. A core interest will thus be defined as an interest which the decision-makers of a state consider to be vital to its existence, as they conceive of this existence. A state will fight for its core interests (i.e., to defend or acquire them, as the case may be) to the same extent that it will fight for its own existence.

It is important to note, as Neal does, that the core interests of a state are thus what the decision-makers believe them to be. They are not what some independent observer may judge them to be, and they cannot be calculated by any outside objective criteria of any type. The judgment of the decision-makers may be right or wrong, rational or irrational, but their decision is what counts in determining what is and what is not a core interest.

#### Core Interest Goals and Objectives

Just as there are different levels of generality in the formulation and expression of national interests in general, so there are different levels in regard to core interests. Two basic types or levels of core interests will be defined and utilized in this analysis; they will be labeled "goal" and "objective."<sup>4</sup>

A core interest goal is formulated on an abstract or general level and is middle or long range in its time span.

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<sup>4</sup>See Charles O. Lerche, Jr., and Abdul A. Said, Concepts of International Politics (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 8-9

It often tends to be a somewhat utopian formulation of a desirable state-of-affairs. A core interest objective, in contrast, is formulated in regard to a specific situation in a specific area, and is immediate or short range in its time component. It is often the closest approximation to a more general goal that the decision-makers believe to be both acceptable and attainable in the particular circumstances. A policy is defined as the actual means utilized to attain national interest goals or objectives.

There is often a means-end relationship between an objective and a goal, the objective being the application of the more general goal to a specific situation. The following statement illustrates not only the difference between a core interest goal and a core interest objective, but also the means-end relationship that can exist between them. Commenting on the reports of some journalists Khrushchev said:

They reported that . . . Khrushchev stated that if the forces of counter-revolution would again stage an uprising, the Soviet Union would not come to the assistance of the Hungarian working class.

I have to say to these journalists, pardon me gentlemen you have reported an untruth. . . . We declare that if there is a new provocation against any socialist country, the provocateurs will have to deal with all the countries of the socialist camp, and the Soviet Union is always ready to come to the assistance of its friends to repulse fittingly the enemies of socialism if they should try to disturb the peaceful labors of the people of the socialist countries.<sup>5</sup>

The statement that the Soviet Union would repulse counter-revolutionary attacks in all socialist countries is an

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<sup>5</sup>N. S. Khrushchev, "Speech at Tatabanga, Hungary," April 8, 1968; Pravda, April 9, 1958. Cited by Jamgotch, p. 18.

indication of a likely Soviet core interest goal. The Soviet Union's crushing of the 1956 Hungarian uprising is an example of the assertion of a core interest objective. Clearly, the crushing of the Hungarian revolt would be a necessary means for accomplishing the Soviet Union's end of preventing a counter-revolutionary movement from succeeding in any socialist state.

It should be noted that it is theoretically possible for a core interest goal to be fulfilled by any one of a number of alternative objectives. In such a case none of these objectives would constitute a core interest objective in itself, but the attainment of some one of these alternative objectives would constitute a core interest. In other words each alternative objective would constitute one possible means of gaining a core interest end or goal. Thus even if a particular objective were the most preferable among several alternative means of attaining a core interest goal, it (theoretically) should not be pursued with core interest intensity for, unlike a core interest objective, it would be negotiable as long as alternative means to the core interest goal remained. Only if the objective is the only feasible means to a core interest goal should it become a core interest objective.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that goals often contain a quasi-utopian element while objectives tend to be more realistic and credible

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<sup>6</sup>This important distinction will be utilized in regard to Malaya's interest in including the Borneo territories in Malaya.

also has significant theoretical implications for core interest analyses. Rival powers, especially rival Great Powers or superpowers, are far more likely to threaten or challenge each others goals than objectives. And a threat or a challenge to a goal is generally far less serious and dangerous than a challenge to objectives. This is because goals are more removed from actual policy actions than are objectives, which tend to require more immediate policy decisions and actions. This difference is similar to that between words and deeds. Words, though they can create great anxiety, hostility, and tension, are far less likely to lead to actual blows (i.e., physical conflict) than are threatening or hostile deeds. Similarly, the enunciation of a sweeping core interest goal (such as preventing counter-revolutions in any socialist state or preventing communist takeovers in any non-communist state) may well produce general tension, but it is hardly likely to produce a war situation. When such goals are transformed to policy objectives in a specific situation and the policy begins to be implemented, however, a war situation is likely to develop.

#### The Psychological vs. the Operational Environment

The concepts of the "psychological" versus the "operational" environment, developed by Harold and Margaret Sprout,<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Harold and Margaret Sprout, "Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics," Journal of Conflict Resolution (March, 1957), pp. 309-28.

are useful in explaining both foreign policy actions and their results (either actual or predicted). The operational environment is defined as the milieu as it actually exists, while the psychological environment is the decision-makers' perception of what the environment is. Obviously, what matters in foreign policy decision-making is what the decision-makers perceive the milieu to be, not what it actually is. This frame of reference within which policy alternatives are defined and decisions made (i.e., the psychological environment) is thus the key to understanding foreign policy decisions from both the contemporary and the historical perspectives.

The understanding of the nature of the operational environment is greatly increased by historical hindsight, and consequently the operational environment concept is particularly useful in explaining the actual results of policy actions in historical perspective. It is also helpful in predicting future consequences of contemporary actions. In studying such conflicts the analyst may wish to point out what he believes to be distorted perceptions in the decision-maker's psychological environment in order to argue against a policy or to explain why he thinks it is incorrect or will fail or both. Here the burden of proof is on the analyst to demonstrate how the environmental perceptions of the decision-maker differ from the actual operational environment.

Of course the analyst's view of the environment is necessarily a "psychological" one too, but since he is presumably more detached and usually has the advantage of some



degree of historical hindsight, his perceptions of the environment should usually be closer to reality than those of the decision-makers. At any rate, it is argued that this use of the concept of the operational environment can be a useful tool in many case studies.

Rejected Concepts: Objective and Subjective Core Interests

There has been much confusion over the labels "objective" and "subjective" as applied to the core interest approach. Rohn's summary of Neal's theory indicates that "the extent of the core interest is objectively given by geopolitics but subjectively modified by the perception of statesmen."<sup>8</sup> But Neal himself has put it quite differently, saying that "objectively" a core interest is what the leaders say it is but "subjectively" we can ask if it really is a wise core interest.<sup>9</sup> Jamgotch defines "objective interests" as core interests which "inhere in the very existence of the nation state" and "subjective interests" as "specific interpretations of given security dilemmas and resultant policies which are calculated for their resolution."<sup>10</sup>

Yinger recognizes this confusion and devotes six pages of his dissertation to a discussion of "the two general approaches" to the problem and the difficulties each involves. The first approach is to consider factors "objective" in the

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<sup>8</sup> Rohn, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> In his International Politics seminar, 1963.

<sup>10</sup> Jamgotch, p. 11.

sense that "they (allegedly) exist independent of the foreign policy maker's perception," e.g., important geographic and strategic factors and historical economic and political ties. The second general approach is to accept the statements and actions of policy makers as being "objective" in the sense that they exist independently of the analyst's perceptions.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that both approaches are subjective in the sense that, sooner or later, they depend on the perceptions and interpretations of individuals<sup>12</sup> produces much confusion. And the more favorable connotation of the label "objective" adds an emotional element to this confusion. In short, the two terms appear to be more of a liability than an asset. Accordingly, it is proposed that they be scrapped.

#### "Correct" and "Incorrect" Perceptions and Values

Neal's point about questioning the wisdom of a core interest has already been provided for partially by the addition of the concepts of the psychological and the operational environment to the core interest approach. It is proposed that the analyst criticize the decisions of policy-makers by disagreeing with their perceptions of the environment and

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<sup>11</sup>Yinger, pp. 6-12.

<sup>12</sup>Yinger wisely inserted the word "allegedly" into his description of the first approach, for even factors which do exist independently from policy-makers' perceptions can be (and often are) evaluated and interpreted differently by different people according to what factors they hold to be most relevant and significant given the current state of technology, etc. For examples of different interpretations of such objective factors as strategic geographical ones see Stephen B. Jones, "Global Strategic Views," Geographical Review, Vol. XLV (1955), pp. 492-508.

classifying them as "incorrect" rather than "correct" ones. An incorrect perception of the environment could cause either or both of two different types of error: a mistaken calculation regarding whether an objective could be attained at an acceptable cost and a faulty judgment in formulating the policy by which to attain an objective.

The word "wise," however, implies correct values regarding what objectives should be pursued as well as correct perceptions of whether an objective can be attained at an acceptable cost and, if so, what policies would be most efficient and effective in attaining it. Thus the analyst should also have a theoretical construct through which he can criticize the values decision-makers use in their formulation and ranking of national interests. In this regard it is proposed that he criticize their formulation and ranking of national interests as being based on values which are incorrect in terms of his own version of the best interests of the state. Of course, in all such criticism's of the decision-makers' perceptions or values the burden of proof is on the analyst, who must convince his readers that his perceptions or conceptions of the state's interests are better than those of the actual policy-makers.

#### Geopolitical and Ideological Factors

For analytical purposes it is often useful to divide the factors that can cause an area to be considered a core

interest into two categories: geopolitical and ideological.<sup>13</sup> What will be labeled a geopolitical interest is defined as one that is based primarily on strategic military, economic or political factors. An ideological interest, in contrast, is one that is based primarily on factors pertaining to the political ideology and sense of mission of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Traditionally core interests have been related primarily to geopolitical power and security considerations. Foreign areas strategic for military purposes, especially those along vulnerable borders, were those most likely to be accorded core interest status. With the post World War II advent of thermonuclear weapons and missile delivery systems plus the rise of the strongly proselytizing ideology of Communism, however, core interests motivated largely by ideological factors have become prominent.

That ideological considerations have become important factors in the Soviet Union's designation of Eastern Europe and Cuba as core interests has been demonstrated by the analyses both of Jamgotch and Yinger already cited. Although

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<sup>13</sup>Yinger, pp. 13-15, and Jamgotch, pp. 14-15 and 29, have previously made this distinction. This concept of ideological interests and the example of the mutual U. S. and Soviet core interest in avoiding a thermonuclear war with each other partially nullify Rohn's criticism that the core interest theory "avoids the principle as well as empirical examples of non-spatial interests of states." Rohn, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>It should be noted that "ideological core interests, no less than geopolitical ones, always have a specific geographical referent." The distinction between the two lies in the reasons the area is considered a core interest. Yinger, p. 15.

Eastern Europe clearly qualifies as a likely Soviet core interest by virtue of geopolitical considerations alone, Jangotch emphasizes ideological factors pertaining to regime security as being of great contemporary importance. Similarly, Yinger emphasizes Cuba's ideological importance to the Soviet Union in his core interest analysis.

Since both categories of criteria are usually present in a specific case, many core interests cannot be classified as being either primarily geopolitical or ideological in nature. Nevertheless, it can be useful, however, to distinguish between these two types of factors and assess their relative importance. Such an exercise can greatly clarify the exact nature and purpose of the core interest and thus add precision both to its formulation by decision-makers and to its interpretation by others (e.g., foreign decision-makers and academic analysts). In the analysis of a contemporary crisis this exercise could illuminate possible paths to a settlement by pinpointing the nature and the degree of the conflict of interests more precisely.

Further precision in the formulation and interpretation of core and other interests can be achieved by investigating more thoroughly the specific conditions necessary to satisfy core interests. Theoretical constructs for this function are presented in the next section.

#### Positive-Influence and Negative-Influence Interests

The major theoretical contribution of the present study to the core interest approach is a demonstration of the

usefulness and the importance of determining what is necessary to satisfy the particular core interest (and other national interests) involved in a specific situation. The utility of the concept of core interests as a tool for both contemporary and historical analyses of international political problems can be significantly enhanced in most cases by classifying core interests as being either "positive" or "negative" in nature.

What shall be termed a positive-influence core interest is one that requires a condition ranging from a privileged position in an area to outright control over or annexation of it in order to be satisfied. A negative-influence core interest is one which requires a condition ranging from neutrality or equal status of some type of the exclusion or withdrawal of some specific influences or activities of certain other states from the geographic area of the interest.

It is important to note that this distinction between positive-influence and negative-influence core interests makes it theoretically possible for two rival powers to have core interests in the same geographic area without these interests being mutually incompatible. For example, both the United States and the Soviet Union could have a core interest in the geographic area of Cuba and yet not have these interests conflict. If the core interest of the U. S. were to require only the negative-influence situation of the absence of an offensive military threat to the U. S. (e.g., offensive type missiles) and if the core interest of the Soviet Union were the slightly

positive<sup>15</sup> one of preserving a "socialist" regime on the island, then the rival core interests of the two superpowers in Cuba would not be mutually incompatible.

Previously the words "overlapping" and "conflicting" have been used synonymously to indicate a mutual incompatibility between core interests of opposing states.<sup>16</sup> It is contended that it would be more useful to reserve the term overlapping to describe situations where states have core interests in the same geographic area (either in whole or in part) but where these interests are not mutually incompatible. The term conflicting could then be reserved to describe situations in which two states have core interests that are mutually incompatible and thus constitute a war situation.<sup>17</sup>

In summary it is held to be important for the analyst to determine not only whether two rival states have core interests in an area of conflict but also what is necessary to satisfy these core interests. In this regard the classification of such core interests as being of either the positive-

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<sup>15</sup>That is, it is slightly positive in regard to the continuum of possible positive core interest required conditions, which range from various types of special positions or situations in an area to annexation of the area.

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, Yinger, p. 6 and Neal, pp. 5 and 9.

<sup>17</sup>To refer to two other possible situations it is proposed that a common core interest be defined as one that is shared jointly by more than one state (e.g., the U. S. and the South Korean states in repelling the North Korean attack of 1950) and a mutual core interest be defined as one that is held reciprocally, such as that of the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid a thermonuclear war against each other. (Cited above, p. 13.)

influence or the negative-influence type can be of aid in determining whether these interests of the two states merely overlap or are in conflict.

#### The Problem of Ascertaining the Core Interests of States

Rohn points out a methodological deficiency of the core interest approach when he complains, "I miss some set of principles and procedures with which anonymous researchers can grind factual data into reasonably consistent conclusions."<sup>18</sup> Neal admits this deficiency but points out that the theory of core interests is merely a way of thinking about international politics. It does not pretend to provide objective methods or criteria for determining what the core interests of states are or even what they should be. Two people looking at an international situation from a core interest point of view, he continues, might come up with different and even quite contradictory conclusions.<sup>19</sup>

The determination of core interests is indeed a difficult task both for policy-makers and for academic researchers. Neal observes that certain interests can be identified clearly as being of core interest importance and certain others as clearly not warranting that status. Beyond these, however, lie a wide range of interests whose status is far less clear. Regardless of how difficult it may be to determine core interests, Neal stressed, there can be no rational foreign policy

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<sup>18</sup>Rohn, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>Neal, p. 6.



where this effort (or its equivalent) is not made. One can argue about the desirability of public statements about core interests, once they have been determined, but there can be no doubt about the desirability of having all foreign policy makers themselves understand as clearly as possible what the core interests of their own state are and what their counterparts in other states consider their core interests to be.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it is because foreign policy makers tend not to think in terms of core interests (or their equivalent) that Neal feels that foreign policies often tend to be irrational.

#### Classification of Core Interests According to Mode or Expression

As indicated in the preceding section, the central problem in a core interest analysis is to determine what are the interests--and particularly that type of national interest which has been defined as a core interest--of the states involved in an international conflict situation. To clarify this task, to facilitate the interpretation and communication of evidence, and to aid in tracing the historical development and assertion of core interests, a classification of core interests according to their mode of expression and assertion (or lack of these) will be proposed. First, however, a note on the role of power is in order.

As Neal points out, the relationship between core interests and power is crucial, because a core interest is

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

realistic only to the extent that it can be asserted effectively. Thus what will be termed a credible core interest will be defined as one for which there is a convincing relationship between what is necessary to satisfy the core interest on one hand and the availability of appropriate power and a willingness to use it on the other. With this relationship in mind, the following classification of core interests is proposed.

A latent core interest is defined as one which, though considered vital to the existence of the state, would not be asserted (either defensively or aggressively) with the use of force. The reason for this is the relative lack of power the state can command against likely opponents. In short the interest would not be credible.

This situation is similar to that which has been described as a core interest dilemma, when an interest considered vital to the existence of the state is at stake but to assert it with force would also jeopardize its existence. In this case, however, the use of force would involve probable (if not certain) military defeat with all its ominous implications regarding the survival of the state.

Thus, as Yinger puts it, "it is axiomatic that a relatively weak state tends to assert neither by word or by deed core interests very far removed from its own territorial boundaries."<sup>21</sup> This is wise policy, for without the genuine

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<sup>21</sup>Yinger, p. 76.

potential of successful implementation the assertion of such an interest would be a dangerous move, a mere wishful gesture and an invitation for trouble.

It might be objected that since a latent interest will not be asserted forcefully, it is irrelevant to analyses of international conflict situations. This may be true in many cases, but such interests can become very important in periods when relative power situations are in a state of flux, as during war. Yinger's comment on the Soviet interest in Eastern Europe after 1945 illustrates this point. "The interest was an old one," he notes, "but the willingness and ability of the Communist regime to pursue this . . . objective was something new."<sup>22</sup>

In summary it is contended that what has been defined as a latent core interest is a true core interest--even though it would not be asserted with force--because it is considered by the decision-makers to be vital to the existence of the state. It also meets the other core interest criterion, that the state will fight for it to the extent that it will fight for its own existence. In this case, however, the decision-makers have decided not to fight for it because to do so would result in the loss of what they consider to be an even more fundamental core interest that would result from the military defeat of the state. In effect they have foreseen the core interest dilemma that would result from a challenge to the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

interest if it were asserted and have resolved the issue in advance; they have chosen--wisely, if their perceptions and calculations are correct--not to assert the interest in the first place because they are not capable of doing so credibly. Furthermore, the concept of latent core interests is quite useful for tracing the evolution of a core interest historically and for predicting possible future conflict areas, especially during a period of rapid fluctuations in relative power positions. Thus it is held to be a useful construct in the core interest approach.

A second type of core interest, according to the mode of its expression and assertion, will be labeled "covert". A covert core interest is one that has not been officially expressed but nevertheless is (or would be) asserted with the use of force if need be. Decision-makers may decide, for example, that it would be best for the state not to declare certain core interests publicly.<sup>23</sup> One reason for this could be the fear of encouraging rival states to assert interests right up to this limit. The example of South Korea not being included within America's defense perimeter in Secretary of State Acheson's policy statement of January, 1950 illustrates this danger.

A key difference between a latent and a covert core interest is that the latter is credible. The state has the power to assert it meaningfully, and the decision-makers are

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<sup>23</sup> Neal, p. 6.

willing to do so, though they have not officially indicated as much.

The third general type of core interest will be labeled an overt core interest and is defined as one that has been expressed officially. This expression may vary in form from an official comment of some type to a provision in a formal treaty.

While it is assumed that overt expressions of core interests made by the leaders of a state are most often sincere, it is possible that such an expression might be made in a deliberate attempt to deceive others or that a leader may not actually have meant what he said because of a failure on his part to realize the core interest implications of his remarks. It is proposed that in such cases (when the analyst has reason to doubt the sincerity or the intent of an overt expression) the declaration be labeled, respectively, a core interest feint and an unintended core interest statement. Of course the burden of proof in such cases lies with the analyst.

The final type of core interest will be labeled a tested core interest. It is defined as one which actually has been asserted with force, either aggressively or defensively. Except in cases where the resort to force does not involve great risk to the existence of the state, such an action should be considered definite proof of the core interest status of the interest.

Jamgotch, however, holds that the minimum prerequisite for a core interest status is "the claim to successful territorial defense."<sup>24</sup> This requirement precludes the concept of negative core interests presented above because it implies that an interest cannot be a core interest unless or until it is overtly claimed to be a defense imperative or has been battle-tested in an actual conflict. Such a definition renders the core interest approach relatively useless for contemporary analyses and relegates it largely to historical studies. It seems only logical that a core interest could lead either to a treaty provision or to a test of battle rather than created by such events, as Jamgotch's definition implies. Admittedly, his definition goes far toward resolving the problems of identifying core interests and of getting agreement among analysts as to which interests are and which are not core interests. But this appears to be a "burning down the barn to get rid of the mice" type of solution, for it greatly reduces both the applicability and the usefulness of the core interest approach.

#### Summary of the Modified Core Interest Approach

The core interest approach that will be used in this analysis is summarized in the following statements.

1. The core interest approach is based on the model of a world composed of sovereign states, each with its own unique set of national interests.

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<sup>24</sup>Jamgotch, p. 16.

2. These interests and the degree of importance attached to them are determined in the case of each state by its own decision-makers. National interests are thus defined as what the decision-makers of the state believe them to be; they cannot be calculated by outside objective criteria of any kind.

3. Thus what matters in foreign policy decision-making is what the decision-makers perceive their milieu to be (their psychological environment), not what it actually is (the operational environment).

4. A foreign policy analyst may criticize the decision-makers' formulation of national interests either on the basis of disagreeing with their perceptions of the environment (and labeling them incorrect perceptions) or on the basis of disagreeing with the values underlying their formulation and ranking of the national interests (and labeling these incorrect values).

5. At the heart of its national interests, each state has one or more core interests which it regards as being absolutely vital to its security. A core interest is defined as one which the decision-makers of a state consider to be vital to the existence of the state, as they conceive of it.

6. Two basic levels of generality of core interests (and other national interests) are denoted. A core interest goal is formulated on an abstract or general level and is middle or long range in its time span. A core interest objective is formulated in regard to a specific situation in

a specific area and is immediate or short range in its time component.

7. For analytical purposes the factors that can cause an area to be considered a core interest are also divided into two categories. A geopolitical core interest is defined as one that is based primarily on strategic political, economic and military factors. In contrast, an ideological core interest is one that is based primarily on factors pertaining to the state's political ideology or sense of mission.

8. Core interests may be labeled "positive" or "negative" according to what is required to satisfy them. A positive-influence core interest is one that requires a condition ranging from some privileged position or favorable situation in an area to its outright control or annexation. A negative-influence core interest is one which requires a condition ranging from neutrality of some type to the exclusion or discontinuation of specific influences or activities on the part of certain other states within the geographic area of the interest.

9. The distinction between positive-influence and negative-influence core interests makes it theoretically possible for two rival states to have core interests in the same geographical area and yet not have them conflict, i.e., be mutually incompatible. They may merely overlap, i.e., they may not be mutually incompatible even though they are concerned (in whole or in part) with the same area. Other terms to describe the juxtaposition of core interests are mutual



(when a core interest is held reciprocally between two or more states) and common (when the same core interest is held jointly by two or more states).

10. The relationship between core interests and power is crucial because a core interest is realistic only to the extent that it can be asserted successfully. A credible core interest is defined as one for which there is a convincing relationship between what is necessary to satisfy the core interest and the availability of appropriate power to attain it (plus the willingness to use this power).

11. To clarify the problem of determining what the core interests of a given state are, to facilitate the interpretation and communication of evidence in this regard, and to aid in tracing the historical development and assertion of core interests, it is proposed that they be classified according to their mode of expression and assertion as follows:

- a. A latent core interest is one which, though considered vital to the existence of a state, would not be asserted with force or even expressed officially.
- b. A covert core interest is one that has not been officially expressed but nevertheless is (or would be) asserted with force.
- c. An overt core interest is one that has been officially declared. A core interest feint occurs when an overt expression of a core interest is made for the deliberate purposes of deception. An

unintended core interest statement is an overt expression of a core interest made unintentionally, the spokesman not meaning (or realizing the implications of) what he said.

- d. A tested core interest is one which actually has been asserted with force.

12. Core interests need not be strictly geographical in nature, even though they are ultimately concerned with geographic areas.

13. An important characteristic of core interests is that they are not negotiable. That is, since by definition any threat to them jeopardizes existence of the state, they are no more negotiable than is the existence of the state itself.<sup>25</sup>

14. Thus when one state considers another to be threatening a core interest, an international conflict situation develops; and when two states actually pursue conflicting core interests a war situation exists. Actual war does not always occur, however, because:

- a. Appeasement (defined as the renunciation of a significant interest under the threat of force) may take place.

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<sup>25</sup>Prof. Neal's statement on this point concludes with the phrase, ". . . which is to say not at all." The fate of some of the more artificial "new States," however (e.g., the U.A.R.-Syria union and split, the disintegrated West Indian Federation, and the Federation of Malaysia being studied) indicate that it would be better to state merely that they are "no more negotiable than is the existence of the state itself."

- b. One or both of the core interests involved may be voluntarily redefined so that there is no longer a conflict.<sup>26</sup>
- c. The threat of defeat or destruction may make war unacceptable for one (or both) because such a war in itself could be considered a threat to the existence of the state thus creating a core interest dilemma. Consequently one or both states may not assert themselves to the point of general warfare.
- d. One of the core interests involved may be a latent one and thus not be asserted with force.

15. Traditionally the greatest changes in core interests have been imposed through the military power of the victors over those they have defeated in war. Core interests may also be changed voluntarily or by appeasement, as noted above. "Good" policy making requires voluntary core interest changes when either technological developments or changing power relationships call for them.

16. Not all international conflicts involve core interests, however; there can also be conflicts involving secondary or other interests.

In the following chapters core interest analyses will be made of the formation of Malaysia and the separation of

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<sup>26</sup>This, however, is dangerous because it is likely to be mistaken for appeasement. It is also an indication of poor previous interest formulation and policy planning.

Singapore from Malaysia. These case studies are an attempt both to promote better understanding of these events and to illustrate the value and utility of the core interest approach as an analytical tool.

PART II

THE FORMATION OF MALAYSIA

## CHAPTER III

### RELEVANT BACKGROUND FACTORS

In September of 1963 the Federation of Malaysia was created by the merger of the Federation of Malaya, the State of Singapore, and the British Crown Colonies of Sabah and Sarawak. The Sultanate of Brunei, a British protectorate, had also been invited to join but declined.

Part II of this study is a core interest analysis of the interests of Malaya and Singapore in this merger. The interests of Sabah and Sarawak in joining and of Brunei in not joining are outside the scope of this study and will be considered only in relation to the interests of Malaya and Singapore. This particular chapter is a survey of the main geographical, racial, socio-economic, historical and political factors relevant to the creation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 and the separation of Singapore in 1965.

#### The Geographical Background

As formed in 1963 Malaysia encompassed an area of about 130,000 square miles (a little smaller than California) and had a population of about ten million. Contemporary Malaysia is a discontinuous state consisting of two separate parts: the Malayan peninsula extending south from the narrow Kra isthmus to the island of Singapore and the northern third of

Borneo. Almost five hundred miles of the South China Sea separate Eastern from Western Malaysia and thus create serious transportation, communication and defense problems.

Malaysia has land frontiers with Thailand on the Asian mainland and with Indonesia on Borneo. The rugged jungle areas along the Thai border provide a refuge for the remnants of the communist guerilla forces that are waiting for another change to take over the country. As McKie warns, they have been defeated, yes, but they are "still a nucleus, intact, organized and deadly, if a revolutionary opportunity comes again, as it easily could."<sup>1</sup> Of even greater concern to Malaysia during the period of Indonesian confrontation (1963-1966) was its nine hundred mile border with Indonesia on Borneo. This mountainous jungle border is neither clearly defined nor fully surveyed and was the scene of several military skirmishes.

Across the narrow Strait of Malacca to the west of Malaya lies the Indonesian island of Sumatra, and less than a mile south of Singapore lies the water boundary with Indonesia. Also, to the northeast of Sabah across the narrow Bulu Sea lie the Philippine Islands, a proximity relevant to Philippine claim to parts of Malaysian Borneo.

Malaya and Singapore occupy an area that has long been of great strategic importance. On a map the Malayan peninsula

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald McKie, The Emergence of Malaysia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963), p. 204.

and the islands extending eastward from it appear as stepping stones between Southeast Asia and Australia. This land bridge has been of great significance for the early migrations of peoples in Asia and for the advance of the Japanese army in World War II. The primary strategic importance of the area, however, lies in its dominance of the sea lanes between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. History has repeatedly demonstrated the military and commercial importance of control over this area.

#### Singapore

In modern times Singapore has dominated this strait and the trade, commerce and defense of the region. Singapore is a small island some twenty-five by fourteen miles in extent that is separated from Malaya by the narrow Strait of Johore, which is effectively bridged by a three-quarter mile filled causeway open for continuous motor and rail traffic. This causeway also supports the pipeline upon which Singapore depends for its supply of fresh water from Malaya. It is significant to note that the cutting off of this supply of water would have a disastrous effect on Singapore. On the north side near the mainland lies the great military base which has been a key link in Britain's defense and control of the area, although it should be noted that the Japanese easily conquered the naval bastion during World War II via a land invasion from Malaya. The city of Singapore lies on the south side of the island and has the deepest harbor and best dock facilities of any port within a thousand miles.



Located about midway between India and China, Singapore is one of the major ports of the world and has a gross annual trade of over two billion dollars. Ever since the 1920's Singapore has been the economic capital of the peninsula. While its banks, warehouses and docks grew to become the entrepôt<sup>1</sup> for a large part of Asia, it performed more services for Malaya than for any other area. The prosperity and stability of Singapore has thus been largely dependent upon the products and markets of the Malayan hinterland,<sup>2</sup> for traditionally Singapore has had only a few industries of its own. Malaya, in turn, is dependent upon Singapore to market the vast quantities of rubber and tin which make up 85% of its exports.<sup>3</sup> It also depends on Singapore for imports of much of the food and other products its population requires, for the peninsula itself is far from being self-sufficient. Thus, as a leading economic expert on the area puts it, the separation of Malaya and Singapore is "unthinkable except to the economically illiterate."<sup>4</sup>

Singapore is basically a Chinese city for over 75% of its 1,634,000 population is Chinese. After World War II and the revolution in China communist influences have grown in

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<sup>2</sup>In 1961 Lee stated that 40% of Singapore's economy depended on the imports and exports of Malaya. Lee Kuan Yew, The Battle for Merger (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Charles A. Fisher, South-East Asia (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1964), p. 619.

<sup>4</sup>T. H. Silcock, "Singapore in Malaya," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXIX (March, 1960), p. 34.

Singapore's fertile environment of severe over-population and underemployment problems. These problems have also increased Singapore's tolerance of the British bases, which provide 40,000 jobs and thus generate the incomes which support almost one tenth of Singapore's population. It is thus not surprising that when Singapore was granted limited self government in 1959, Britain retained control over internal security as well as foreign policy and defense.

The Borneo Territories: Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei

The three states of British Borneo, isolated from most world tensions and sheltered by a paternalistic British colonialism, were areas of social and political lag but also of recent economic boom. They cover an area one and a half times as large as Malaya and are across the northern third of Borneo.

Despite the fact that they are part of one island with Indonesian Kalimantan, there is a very real affinity between them and Malaya, for this is an area in which "land--fragmented by mountain ranges--divides, while the sea unites."<sup>5</sup> Situated along the busy sea route between India and China, these areas have developed a mixed population somewhat comparable to that of Malaya and Singapore in racial proportions. Also similar to Malaya, these territories are primarily coastal settlements situated on rivers flowing down from a mountainous interior. Furthermore, they share a common history of British colonial

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<sup>5</sup>Sir Richard Allen, "Britain's Colonial Aftermath in Southeast Asia," Asian Survey, Vol. II (September, 1963), p. 413.

development with Malaya, in contrast to Indonesia's Colonization by the Dutch.

Sabah (formerly North Borneo) was the most politically underdeveloped of the territories and had no organized political activity until the Malaysian issue was raised. It is underpopulated (only 455,000 people) and underdeveloped economically. Sabah has extremely valuable timber resources, however, and this industry has boomed. It also produces rubber, copra, rice, and some oil. Sabah vitally needs capital to develop these resources, a factor which strongly influenced its decision to join the Federation.

Although Sabah has a multiracial population, most of its Chinese show little interest in Communism and many actually preferred to remain a British colony. The area presented a serious problem for Malaysia during Indonesia's "confrontation" policy because an estimated<sup>6</sup> 7,000 Indonesian laborers live there. Most are drawn from Indonesia by economic necessity, remain for a few years, and then return to Indonesia.

Sarawak is about equal in size to Malaya but has only 744,000 people, 90% of whom are illiterate. Much of the territory is accessible only by jungle river, and only 6% is under cultivation. Thus, like Sabah, Sarawak has vast tracts of unpopulated jungle that can be opened up only by well-planned and well-financed development programs. Sarawak's chief exports are rubber and oil, and its refinery processes Brunei's oil as well as its own.

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<sup>6</sup>Willard A. Hanna, "Malaysia, A Federation in Prospect," American University Field Staff Reports, Vol. X, No. 6 (1962), p. 12.

Sarawak's mixed population poses problems, for its highly individualistic tribal peoples (51%) are not easily integrated with the economically more advanced Chinese (31%) or the politically more experienced Malays (18%). These indigenous tribal peoples present a communal problem and some of the Chinese have strong Communist sympathies.

Brunei consists of two bulbous little enclaves, each with coastal frontage, that extend into Sarawak at a point near Sabah and not far from the Indonesian border. At first glance it seems to be an inconsequential territory, for it covers only 2,226 square miles and had only 84,000 people in 1960.

Brunei's importance is magnified, however, by its great wealth in oil, and it is in the enviable position of having an annual income three times greater than its annual expenditures! But despite a five year program designed to do "everything that a national developer with unlimited resources could dream up"<sup>7</sup> and a \$300 million reserve for programs not yet planned, Brunei suffered from a violent revolt in 1962 and did not join the Federation.

#### Malaya

Malaya is a generally mountainous country about 80% of which is forest covered and only lightly exploited. Thus, in contrast to many other Asian nations, it does not suffer from

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<sup>7</sup>Willard A. Hanna, The Formation of Malaysia (New York: American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1964), p. 128.

an overpopulation problem. Malaya's relative prosperity compared to the rest of Asia (its \$287 annual per capita income is almost twice that of Thailand or the Philippines) is due largely to great exports of rubber and tin, two strategic commodities. Malaya's low level of agricultural and industrial development coupled with the widely fluctuating world prices for rubber and tin, however, have made its economic history a fever chart of poverty and prosperity. Federation with Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah would help to stabilize and diversify its economy.

Malaya has a plural society which includes indigenous Malays (a brown skinned race closely related to the Indonesians and thoroughly Muslim in culture), immigrant Sumatrans and Javanese (of similar stock to the Malays), immigrant groups of Chinese (mainly from South China), immigrant Indians and Pakistanis, some Eurasians, and a few others. Unfortunately, the racial, religious and linguistic barriers between the three primary communal groups have not been overcome to any great extent. Indeed, rather than becoming a racial melting pot Malaya has often appeared more likely to become a boiling cauldron of racial tensions and violence. As we shall see, the racial composition of Malaya was a key factor both in the formation of Malaysia and in the separation of Singapore.

#### The Racial Background

The three main components of Malaya's plural society are the culturally diverse Malay, Chinese, and Indian racial

communities. The primary political loyalties and identifications in Malaya are communal rather than national, tribal, or regional in nature. Thus race is the most important single background factor that one must continually keep in mind in any analysis of the formation of Malaysia or the separation of Singapore. Indeed, race (complemented and reinforced as it is by the largely congruent factors of language, socio-economic status, religion, and political party identification) is the primary factor to consider in the analysis of any major issue in Malayan (or Malaysian) politics.

Sophisticated students of the Malaysian political scene have demonstrated the fallacy and warned against the dangers of treating all Malays or all Chinese as if they were the same in terms of their political opinions, attitudes, and identifications. This writer accepts this caveat and, indeed, differences within each of the two major communal groups will be stressed in certain parts of this analysis. It must be emphasized, however, that in such important questions as the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore the gross and undifferentiated primordial factor of race emerges as the key consideration in explaining the perceptions, motivations, calculations, decisions, actions, and reactions of the political decision-makers and their constituents.

This consideration of the factor of race in Malayan politics begins with a description of the various racial stereotypes existing in the Malayan political environment. While a stereotype is usually a crude and uninformed

generalization and can often be proven false through objective investigation, it nevertheless is considered to be "true" by its holders and thus can have a powerful influence on their perceptions and behavior. In other words, what counts in determining the behavior of members of the Malay community in Malaya, for example, is not whether the Chinese actually are dirty, cunning, and deceitful but whether the Malays perceive and react toward the Chinese as if they were.

Wilson describes the two basic racial stereotypes of Malaysia well. He observes that no matter what the intention or the personality of any individual Chinese may be in any situation with a Malay, the Malay

will always proceed in the belief that the Chinese is an infidel--dirty,<sup>8</sup> cunning, and deceitful. Equally, it may be averred that the Chinese acts according to his stereotype of the Malay--lazy, naive, and incompetent.<sup>9</sup>

More sophisticated and more informed judgments regarding racial or communal character exist in the minds of the top political leaders of Malaysia. It is noteworthy, however, that conceptions of the different character of the three primary racial groups exist even in the mind of such a highly intelligent, well-educated, and well informed leader as Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore and a leading actor in both the formation of Malaysia and the separation of

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<sup>8</sup>Wilson explains that the meaning implied is not so much physical dirtiness as ritual impurity as exemplified by the Moslem injunction against eating pork because it is "unclean" and the Chinese penchant for pork. Peter J. Wilson, A Malay Village and Malaysia (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1967), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. vi.

Singapore. Lee has expounded on the different "habit patterns" of the three racial communities:

The Malays . . . under the beneficence of tropical sunshine and tropical rainfall are by and large a leisurely people, not intense, with no tendency to gastric ulcers, no desire to accumulate fortunes, leading lives as satisfying as any other human beings anywhere in the world. They would have been quite happy but for the impact of Western civilization which brought in the Chinese and the Indians into milieu.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, Lee continues, the immigrant Chinese and Indians are products of different cultures and experiences:

The Chinese, products of floods, pestilence [sic], famine are an intense people, not better or worse, but different because of that experience. A different climate and a different situation produced a different type of culture. The people who went South were fortune-hunters: that's the main reason why they left their homes. . . . In Malaysia they tried their hand in rubber, tin, commerce, trade, industry and manufacturing. Similarly, the Indians were also migrants seeking a better life. At the time of leaving their country, many had the intention to return, to receive the accolade from their own village elders for having made good. But for various reasons, they lived on in the leisurely climate of Malaysia because life was good here.<sup>11</sup>

The stereotyped images held by the average Chinese and Malay of each other are of particular interest in the analysis of the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia. As Wilson points out, while the political leaders of Malaya and Singapore made the merger decision, the success or failure of the policies these leaders could implement to make the new state culturally, economically, and politically viable depended largely upon

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<sup>10</sup> Lee Kuan Yew, Malaysia--Age of Revolution (Singapore: Malaya Engraving and Litho Printing Co., n.d.), p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



the attitudes and values of the least sophisticated (i.e., the masses) of each of the communal groups toward the others.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Socio-Economic Background

The geographic distribution and economic position of the Chinese and Malays in Malaya are uneven, a factor that retards racial integration and the development of interests that cut across communal lines. In somewhat oversimplified terms the Malays dominate both ends of the socio-economic spectrum as the rural subsistence farming population at the bottom and the political elite at the top. The Chinese dominate most other spheres, especially urban groups from employers and professional people down to unskilled laborers. It is important to note that some Chinese impinge directly upon the Malay peasant by buying his produce, selling him goods, and providing him with credit.

The Chinese predominate in almost all the urban areas and in the Western portion of the Malayan peninsula where rubber and tin have been developed. They own and operate most of the non-European commercial enterprises, are second to the British in terms of capital investment, are the chief middlemen and shopkeepers, generally dominate the service industries, account for over 40% of the tin production, dominate the pineapple industry from plantation to can, own many of the small and medium rubber holdings, are the principal vegetable

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<sup>12</sup>Wilson, p. 3.

gardeners and raisers of poultry and pigs, practically monopolize the building and skilled artisan trades, and dominate Singapore's entrepôt trade.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast the Malays are largely a rural people, most of whom are still engaged in a small-holding, subsistence type of agriculture. Until recently Malays rarely have been willing to work regularly on estates or mines and their position in the wholesale and retail trades has been insignificant. The net result of these contrasting economic positions is that the average annual income per adult male in 1957 was M\$3,264 for the Chinese but only M\$1,433 for the Malay.<sup>14</sup>

In order to compensate for and to alleviate their economic handicaps, the Malays have sought and received various special privileges. The Malays have special preferences and quotas in regard to four areas. These quotas give them a four to one advantage over non-Malays (Chinese and Indians) in the Senior Civil Service and for government scholarships. Also many of the best agricultural lands are set apart as Malay reservations, and Malay businessmen reap advantages regarding business permits and licenses. The Malays even succeeded in getting formal recognition of these special

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<sup>13</sup>Norton Ginsberg and Chester F. Roberts, Malaya (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958), p. 244 and Victor Purcell, The Chinese in Modern Malaya (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1956), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>T. H. Silcock, "Communal and Party Structure," in T. H. Silcock and E. K. Fisk (eds.), The Political Economy of Independent Malaya (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 3.

privileges in the 1957 Constitution. (Article 89 deals with the special land reservations and Article 153 with the civil service, business and educational aid quotas.) The Reid Constitutional Commission concluded from its hearings that there was little opposition to the continuance of this system of preferences for a certain length of time. It recommended their retention, stating that the Malays would "be at a serious and unfair disadvantage compared with the other communities if they were suddenly withdrawn."<sup>15</sup> The Commission encountered very strong opposition from sections of the non-Malay communities to any increase in these special Malay privileges, however, and to their continuance for a prolonged period of time. Such opinion found a rallying point a decade later in Lee Kuan Yew's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign.

The special privileges given to the Malays were supposed to bring them up to the level of the Chinese in regard to economic skill and opportunity within fifteen years. As the Malays progressed economically, the argument went, they would become more willing to relinquish a fair share of political power to the non-Malays. But at the time of the formation of Malaysia after six years of development under the 1957 Constitution, indications were that the Malays were progressing economically only very slowly, if at all. The results of the

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<sup>15</sup> Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission, 1957, p. 70 as cited by K. J. Ratnam, Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965), p. 108.

Malayan Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) program were extremely disappointing to those who had hoped that the Malay, once given the opportunity and the capital, would quickly prove to be the equal of his Chinese competitor.

One report noted:

The Malays lacked a knowledge of accountancy and secretarial practices; couldn't adapt to systematic trading; were not resourceful when they met with disappointment or failure; and found it difficult to grasp basic business and accounting principles.<sup>16</sup>

A government official further noted that many Malay failures were due to fraudulent loan applications, mismanagement and poor business planning.<sup>17</sup> In agriculture the Malay has also proven to be far inferior to the Chinese. The typical kampong Malays Wolff studied were generally content merely to grow enough for their own needs, used haphazard, inefficient and unproductive methods, and showed a general lack of interest in improving their techniques.<sup>18</sup> Hence many were pessimistic about the likelihood that the Malays would achieve anything resembling economic parity within the anticipated fifteen year period.

This problem of respective economic inequality is intensified by the fact that neither race takes much consolation from its own advantages, which each firmly believes are

<sup>16</sup>Frank A. King, The New Malayan Nation (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1957), p. 64.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Interviews with Dr. Robert Wolff, July 10-12, 1963 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya. Dr. Wolff, a social psychologist, was conducting an intensive study of a Malay village.

its natural rights. The Malays picture themselves as native sons of the soil, being exploited by an alien race (brought in by foreign rulers) which has seized the economic assets of their country. The Chinese, on the other hand, see themselves as a progressive race that has been held back by the British in favor of the primitive natives. They are firmly convinced that their wealth and Malay poverty are the natural consequences of Chinese industry, thrift, and adaptability and Malay indolence, thriftlessness, and conservatism. As one Chinese puts it:

It is ridiculous to call Malaya the land of the Malays because we Chinese were here as soon as they were--and we built the country while they lay about under the palm trees. This is our land but the Malays claim it and the Europeans milk it economically.<sup>19</sup>

Such sentiments highlight the danger of many Chinese becoming "fed up" with the political dominance and special privileges of the Malays. As King asked in 1957, "How long can the Chinese and Malays take to come to an understanding and to create a common nationalism which is essential for the survival of the nation?" Not long, he answered, noting that "Do not drive them to the forests" is a cry which has remained applicable long after the immediate threat of the Emergency had passed. The threat of communism and of "Chinese nationalism" in Malaya is a double-edged sword, King concluded, which on one hand sets a limit beyond which the Malays would be wise

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<sup>19</sup> Robert S. Elegant, The Dragon's Seed (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1959), p. 10.

not to delay the integration of the Chinese but on the other provides the excuse and fear which makes them hesitate and delay.<sup>20</sup> As will be shown, this "double-edged sword" was an important factor in the decision to sever Singapore from Malaysia in 1965.

The historical circumstances under which Malaya became a plural society merit some attention. Also the spread of Islam into Southeast Asia, the British colonial policies that perpetuated and reinforced communal loyalties, British economic development of its colonies, the nature of the impetus World War Two and the Communist guerrilla war gave to the Malayan independence movement, the British reaction to this movement, the formation of political parties in Malaya, and the way in which Malaya achieved independence, are also relevant to a study of the formation of Malaysia and the subsequent expulsion of Singapore.

#### The Historical Background

Since early times the region bordering the Straits of Malacca has had a history of struggle for hegemony by the powers of the mainland and of the islands. Funan was the earliest of the empires; the Buddhist state of Srivijaya controlled the area in the ninth century; by the fourteenth the powerful Hindu empire of Majapahit was dominant. After

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<sup>20</sup>King, pp. 46-7.

the sixteenth century the dominating powers were foreign: Portuguese, Dutch, British and Japanese. Recently, however, the struggle appears to be reverting to the indigenous states.

In the thirteenth century the powerful cultural force of Islam entered the area and eventually spread throughout most of what is now Malaysia and Indonesia. This triumph of Islam provided a unifying influence which the Portuguese, Dutch, British, and Japanese could never quite overcome. Even under the economic and military dominance of these powers, the political control of the area remained largely in the hands of a number of local sultans.

#### British Colonial Policy in Malaya

Unlike that of the French, British colonial policy was never directed at making fully integrated Englishmen out of its colonial citizens. From the beginning British interests in the area, like those of the preceding Portuguese and Dutch, were primarily commercial. Beginning in 1786 the British East India Company took possession of the island of Penang and later the ports of Malacca and Singapore; these three maritime areas were united as the Straits Settlements in 1824. Control over other Malay areas developed slowly, and not until 1894 did four other states accept British advisors and protection as the Federated Malay States. In 1909 four additional states were transferred to England by Siam and became (together with Johore) the Unfederated States. It is important to note that these states continued to be Malay; British officials had no

executive authority, were required to work through the Malay civil service, conducted their official business in Malay, and respected Malay customs and religion. The prestige and much of the power of the local Sultans therefore remained.

The schisms among the main racial groups in Malaysia today are largely a legacy of the traditional British colonial practice of divide and rule. The British pursued a crude pro-Malay policy of tolerating Chinese and Indian immigration because it served their commercial needs. The Malays were generally content to let the other communities be, so long as there was no encroachment on the special economic and religious privileges the British granted them.

British immigration policy is noteworthy in regard to the creation and perpetuation of communal groupings in Malaya. In the 1880's British-imposed stability, order, and security made the Malayan hinterland ripe for development. To provide an adequate labor force for British capital investment, Chinese immigration was fostered. The relatively inert Malays were content to leave wage labor to the "money-grabbing, pork-eating," nonbelieving (in Islam) Chinese, whose labor "felled the jungle, cultivated the early plantations, mined the tin and worked the docks."<sup>21</sup> As Freedman puts it, the Chinese immigrants were energetic and adventurous; when opportunities were created in Malaya there were Chinese to seize them. The

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<sup>21</sup>J. Norman Farner, "Malaya and Singapore," in George McTurnan Kahin (ed.), Governments and Politics in Southeast Asia (New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 246.



Chinese filled the growing towns created by the expansion of trade and supplied the skilled and unskilled labor required by both Western capital and the capital they themselves accumulated. They set themselves up as the traders and shopkeepers of Malaya, collecting, distributing and acting as sources of credit.<sup>22</sup> The Chinese thus formed a convenient conduit between the native Malays and the European overlords. And, as Spector notes, once the traditional local economy was disrupted by colonial demands and values, the services the Chinese performed made them indispensable.<sup>23</sup>

British policy toward the Chinese immigrants is significant in regard to the perpetuation of Chinese communalism in Malaya. The British were interested in the Chinese primarily as economic resources; thus so long as the Chinese paid their taxes and did not challenge colonial authority, they were left relatively free to organize their own tight-knit little communities. The British were content to have Chinese kapitans (Headmen) run these Chinese communities and farmed out the collection of taxes to the highest bidder.

With the rapid expansion of rubber in the early 1900's labor again became scarce, and the British encouraged large scale Indian immigration. When the practice of "crimping"

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<sup>22</sup> Maurice Freedman, "The Growth of a Plural Society in Malaya," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXIII (June, 1960), pp. 162-63.

<sup>23</sup> Stanley Spector, "The Chinese in Singapore," The New Leader, Vol. XLII (June 1, 1959), p. 17.

(i.e., luring workers away from the other plantations with higher wages) threatened to upset the whole labor structure, the British took charge of all immigration. Through taxes on Indian labor the authorities repatriated Indians when unemployment developed and imported more when labor became scarce. This system has been attacked as a "sucked orange" policy for workers were "discarded" back to India when they were no longer useful.<sup>24</sup> An important effect was the policy's accentuation of the transient character of Indian labor with the result that relatively few Indians were absorbed into Malayan society.

British educational policy is also significant in regard to the perpetuation of communalism in Malaya. Indeed, a retired British official with long experience in Malaya has stated that if education in English had been offered and the curriculum had included the vocational training in demand on the labor market, a large proportion of the Chinese would have been attracted to the opportunity and as a result would have been drawn closer together with the Malays. This did not come about, he despairs, for the British held that it was a Malay country and thus the only free education the government provided was in Malay.<sup>25</sup>

As it was, Chinese schools were allowed to exist almost entirely outside of the orbit of the Education Department.

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<sup>24</sup>T. H. Silcock and Abdul Ungku Azia, Nationalism in Malaya (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>Victor Purcell, The Chinese in Modern Malaya (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1956), p. 72.

This suited the Chinese well, for they were basically content to exist in their own self-contained communities while working in a foreign land. They financed their education through contributions, levies, and subscriptions from the Chinese community and hence exerted complete control over the schooling of their children. Consequently their schools were entirely China-oriented in language, subject matter, and philosophy.

These schools were thus left to their own devices until 1920 when the government initiated a grant-in-aid program through which it hoped to supervise and inspect the Chinese schools. The grants were largely spurned, however, (the Chinese feared encroachments) until the depression of the 1930's forced most to apply.

The government had good reason to be concerned about the Chinese schools. Textbooks presented an almost insoluble problem, for those printed in China were about China exclusively and it was found to be impractical to reproduce a series of Chinese language texts locally. One well known reader began, "I am Chinese. I love my country. I live in Nanyang."<sup>26</sup> Needless to say, such texts were not helpful in inculcating a Malayan outlook and nationality and undid a lot of the work the government was doing. Teachers were also a frustrating problem because only a few Chinese teachers were trained by the Education Department. Most had to be recruited from China, and thus usually had little interest in Malaya and

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<sup>26</sup>Lois Mitchison, *The Overseas Chinese* (Chester Springs, Pennsylvania: Dufour Editions, 1961), p. 14.

despised the old style Malayan Chinese who hired them. Consequently "revolutionary influences" and "intense Chinese nationalism" were imported into Malay through the medium of Chinese schools.<sup>27</sup> As Comber put it, these teachers were "often infected with the viruses of nationalism and communism" and their teachings were tainted by one or both.<sup>28</sup>

In general, relations between the British and the Chinese were very good until the 1930's when friction began to develop over British policy based on the theory that Malaya was to be a Malay country. This policy was personified by Sir Cecil Clementi, who battled to break the Chinese allegiance to the mainland and became, as Elegant puts it, the first British official to sacrifice his career and his nervous system upon the altar of Malayization.<sup>29</sup> Chinese enthusiasm for the recently established Koumintang government had led to K.M.T. meetings, propaganda campaigns, and membership drives in Malaya, all of which Clementi banned. Next he exiled a number of Singapore's leading Chinese and repatriated half a million Chinese laborers. Finally he attacked "Chinese culture" by decreeing a system of "national schools" (in which Malay was the language of instruction) and depriving Chinese language schools of government aid. These experiments failed, Elegant concludes, because "nothing in the local cultures attracted

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<sup>27</sup> King, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Leon Comber, "Chinese Education--Perennial Malayan Problem," Asian Survey, Vol. I (October, 1961), p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Elegant, p. 59.

the Chinese and no local political movement stimulated them."<sup>30</sup>

This was partially due to the fact that few Chinese came to Malaya with any intention of settling permanently. The emigrant drain was usually almost as large as the immigrant flow and occasionally exceeded it. Between 1941-42, for example, 2,295,000 Chinese came but 2,050,000 left, resulting in a net gain of only 245,000. Thus up to 1947 at least seventeen million Chinese had migrated since the British arrival, but the census enumerated only 2-1/2 million. Nevertheless this Chinese immigration, which remained completely unrestricted until the depression of the early 1930's, revolutionized the population pattern of the peninsula. The proportion of Chinese rose to 43% while that of the Malays fell to 35% (The proportion of Indians was about 14%).

Thus a most significant legacy of British colonial policy was the creation of a plural society of almost unique proportions in which the main communities lived side by side without intermarrying and with quite different cultures, standards of living, and sentimental ties. The area evolved as a loose condominium of states (Federated Malay States, Unfederated States, the Straits Settlements and the protectorates of North Borneo and Sarawak) under British protection with a very substantial Chinese population and a much smaller Indian one. The Chinese (and the Indians) formed

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

large "floating populations" with thousands coming and going annually, the object of most being to amass enough wealth to return in comparative affluence to their homeland. Denied any substantial political rights but given a considerable degree of community autonomy, most of the Chinese immigrants retained their basic loyalties to China and did not come to owe any allegiance at all to Malaya as an entity in itself.

#### World War Two and the Malayan Union Plan

As was the case throughout the colonial world, World War Two accelerated Malaya's progress toward independence. The Japanese occupation was a catalyst to political change, and when the British returned at the close of the war they soon discovered that the situation had been greatly altered. The political consciousness of the Malay had developed to a degree not previously known. A sense of kinship had been forged between Malays of different states through closer contact and unity of purpose during the war, and they became more militantly nationalist.<sup>31</sup> The position of the Chinese had changed, too, for the statement, "The Chinese is not worried about who holds the Malayan cow as long as he can milk it" was no longer applicable. With the disruption of communications with China during the war, a great many Chinese became fully settled in Malaya and came to consider it their home. They soon came to have great interest and concern over the affairs

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<sup>31</sup>Kernal Singh Sandhu, "Communalism: The Primary Threat to Malayan Unity," Asian Survey, Vol. II (August, 1962), p. 35.

of the country. The same was also true of the Indians, for with the disruption of communications and the abandonment of the concept of dual citizenship by the new Indian government, they too came to regard Malaya as their home and took a more active interest in its affairs.

These new political interests first surfaced in response to the Malayan Union Plan the British proposed in 1946. This political reorganization of the colonial holdings of the British in the area was to make colonial administration more unified and efficient. Centralized and direct British rule would replace the formerly indirect pattern of rule through treaties concluded with the Malay Sultans of the various Malayan states. In this manner, it was argued, more rapid social and economic progress could be made.

Two aspects of this Malayan Union Plan are noteworthy in regard to the later events analyzed in this study. First, Singapore was not to be included in the new Malayan Union though the other two former Strait Settlements (Malacca and Penang) were. This exclusion of Singapore preserved Malay numerical superiority over the Chinese and thus eliminated any immediate danger of the Malays being politically dominated by the Chinese. This consideration, Ratnam concludes, "must have played a major role in deciding the new policy."<sup>32</sup> Second, communal discrimination regarding citizenship qualifications was eliminated so that everyone--regardless of race--who was

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<sup>32</sup>Ratnam, p. 46.

born in and resided in the Malayan Union or Singapore would have a common citizenship and equal rights. This major change worked against the interests of the Malays for despite the exclusion of Singapore, "the very roots of Malay political superiority were now severely threatened."<sup>33</sup> Ratnam elaborates by stating that "the Malays clearly did not want to see their country transformed into another Palestine where they would lose their special identity in a common citizenship embracing all communities" and consequently they "showed every intention of opposing them [the Malayan Union proposals] to the bitter end."<sup>34</sup> It was thus clear that Malay opposition was "very much the product of considerations regarding their status vis-a-vis the non-Malays" and that the Malays "wanted to see the Malay community back in the privileged position it had occupied before the war."<sup>35</sup>

The Malay reaction to the Malayan Union Plan confronted the British with "an upsurge of Malay Nationalism" on a scale that was "unexpected and totally unprecedented."<sup>36</sup> As one writer put it, from being "sleepy beneficiaries of a privileged position" the Malays rose up to become "champions of their own rights and critics of those who tried to destroy them."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.,           <sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 46, 48.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 48.       <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> S. W. Jones, Public Administration in Malaya (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), p. 139. Cited by Ratnam, ibid.



There were mass rallies and processions sporting such slogans as "Malaya for the Malays," "Down with the Malayan Union," "We will fight for our rights and our country," and "Has our benign protector turned bully?"<sup>38</sup> Even Moslem Malay women came out to lead processions and to address rallies, Ratnam notes: "It was clear that the entire Malay community became strongly united in opposing the Malayan Union."<sup>39</sup>

The Malayan Union Plan acted as a catalyst in the formation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) as a vehicle to organize and express Malay opposition to these threatening proposals. As we shall see, this organization later became the dominant political party in independent Malaya and Malaysia. The Malayan Union Plan's arousal of Malay opposition led to a political awakening of the Chinese and Indians, who began to assert demands for equality. These groups felt that the economic imbalance was largely due to the Malay's lack of initiative and enterprise and complained that official discrimination against them in every field of government employment made it hard for them to attach their loyalties to the Malayan cause. Furthermore they feared their linguistic and cultural heritages would be threatened by a biased Malay educational policy. Faced with this mounting antagonism the British abandoned their Malayan Union Plan. Soon these

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<sup>38</sup>L. D. Gammans, M. P., "Crisis in Malaya," The Spectator, Vol. CLXXVI (1946), p. 601 and Malay Mail, May 30, 1946. Cited by Ratnam, ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ratnam, ibid.

political and economic disputes were overshadowed by a more pressing military threat.

#### The Guerrilla War "Emergency"

During World War Two the Japanese occupation forces treated the Chinese badly; many left their stores and businesses and fled to the fringes of the jungle to become squatters. Life here was hard, but somehow most managed to survive and found reasonable safety from the Japanese. Before their hasty retreat the British had established guerrilla units--consisting almost entirely of Chinese--to harass the Japanese. These guerrillas, who became Communist dominated, utilized the Chinese squatters as their principal source of food.

This Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, as it was called, emerged from the jungle at the end of the war hoping to gain control of the country. After being foiled by the quick arrival of British troops and denied positions in the new government, it returned to the jungle and launched a guerrilla war campaign. During the twelve year struggle, called the "Emergency," that ensued, the guerrillas utilized their old source of food and supplies, the Chinese squatters.

In order to cut off the support--both voluntary and forced--that the guerrillas got from the squatters, over half a million Chinese were taken from their isolated dwellings near the jungle and resettled in well fortified "new villages" where they could be both better protected and better

controlled. Most of these Chinese bitterly resented being uprooted and herded into these compounds, often at gunpoint. Many Malays, on the other hand, resented the fact that vast sums of money were being spent to make these "new villages" both healthy and attractive to the point that they were often superior to their own kampongs. Also the substantial financial and moral support the communist guerrillas received from the Chinese in Malaya and especially those in Singapore tended to reinforce the Malay stereotype that the Chinese were disloyal and treacherous.

The Emergency was the immediate cause for the formation of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA),<sup>40</sup> for in the eyes of the upper and middle class in particular it became essential that the Chinese cultivate the goodwill and confidence of both the Government (British) and the Malays if they hoped to have any future in Malaya. Established with British encouragement, the MCA began as a Chinese welfare organization (with political overtones) whose goals were to mobilize Chinese support against the insurrection, act as an intermediary between the Chinese community and the government, and assist the resettled squatters. As we shall see, the MCA later became the leading Chinese political party in Malaya and Malaysia.

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<sup>40</sup>The MCA apparently had its genesis in a dinner party remark by the British High Commissioner to the effect that the Chinese community ought to have its equivalent of UMNO. Margaret Roff, "The Malayan Chinese Association, 1948-1965," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. VI, No. 2 (September, 1965), pp. 41-2.

Merdeka: Independence for Malaya

Despite the prolonged Emergency (and also because of it<sup>41</sup>), Malaya progressed steadily toward merdeka (independence) which was finally achieved in 1957. The negotiations and debates among the Malays, Chinese and Indian leaders over the country's constitution exposed the powerful forces of communalism which would severely retard the development of Malayan, and later Malaysian, nationalism. Indeed, because the issues involved were "too dangerous" the task of drafting the constitution was given to a Commonwealth commission of experts (known as the Reid Commission), which heard the testimony of the various groups involved.

Although the resulting constitution prohibited discrimination in law and in public employment, there was one very significant exception, a concession upholding the "special position" of the Malays by continuing the existing quotas (for scholarships, government jobs, etc.) and privileges (for land grants, business licensing, etc.) for at least fifteen years in order to give the Malays a chance to catch up with the other communities.

In the areas of language and religion too, significant concessions were made to the Malays to allay their fears and gain their support. Malay was declared the sole national language (some had favored a bilingual state) but English

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<sup>41</sup>As Allen points out, self-government for Malaya was "one more indispensable key to the success" of the struggle against the communist guerrillas in Malaya. Sir Richard Allen, Malaysia: Prospect and Retrospect (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 98.

would be an "official language" for ten years, Chinese and Indian languages could be used "under certain circumstances" in Parliament, and everyone was allowed to deal with the government in his own language. Also Islam was declared the official national religion to reassure the sultans that their positions as religious leaders would not be compromised. The constitution also took education out of the hands of Chinese elements, which were considered to be of doubtful loyalty.

The most controversial aspect of the constitution was the citizenship provision. The Malays greatly feared the Communist tendencies of the Chinese and, on the other hand, many Chinese preferred to retain their Commonwealth citizenship rights. These problems were "solved" by allowing anyone who met the requirements to register for citizenship but making final approval subject to review by a government minister and by allowing the Chinese to be "dual citizens" provided they did not accept privileges or obligations incompatible with sole allegiance to the Federation.<sup>42</sup> The net result was that it became fairly easy for local-born Chinese to acquire citizenship, but the requirements of eight years of residence, a comprehensive loyalty oath, and a knowledge of the Malay language made the acquisition of citizenship quite difficult for foreign-born Chinese. The need for a liberalization of citizenship requirements was evidenced by the fact that for the 1955 elections the Malays comprised 49% of the population

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<sup>42</sup>King, p. 35.

but 65% of the citizens, while the Chinese comprised 38% of the population but only 28% of the citizens.

Many had hoped that Malayan independence would help to break down communal groupings of Malays, Chinese and Indians and promote the development of a unifying Malayan nationalism. Freedman, however, argues that the contrary resulted. He points out that the social map of Malaya formerly consisted of a "kaleidoscope of small culturally defined units rearranging themselves in accordance to local conditions." The Malays "did not interact with "the Chinese" and "the Indians;" rather some Malays interacted with some Chinese and some Indians. But as these groups came to be realized on a nation-wide scale, he continues, they began to have total relations with one another. In the attainment of Malayan independence, Malays, Chinese and Indians were forced to confront each other and were pushed into speaking for their own ethnic communities on a national scale. Thus, Freedman concludes, independence accentuated, rather than diminished, the plural and communal nature of Malayan society.<sup>43</sup>

#### Singapore

Historically Singapore was the main base from which the British penetrated the Malayan hinterland, modernized the administration of the Malay states, promoted their economic development, and altered their racial structure by importing

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<sup>43</sup>Freedman, pp. 167-68.

large numbers of Chinese and Indian laborers. Technically the Malay states remained separate sovereignties under their respective sultans, and Singapore was a Straits Settlement of the Crown. But in actual administrative practice Singapore and the Malay states were closely associated, as indicated by the fact that the Governor of the Straits Settlements (which included Singapore) was also the High Commissioner for the Malay States.<sup>44</sup>

After World War Two, as we have seen, the British colonial rulers and the leaders of the Malay community collaborated to unify Malaya and start it on its way to independence in 1948 but left Singapore out of the new political unit. As Dartford points out, they both had good reasons for this; the British wanted to maintain their strategic Singapore military base, and the Malays did not wish to see their slender numerical majority in Malaya swamped by the inclusion of the one million Chinese and only 150,000 Malays of the island.<sup>45</sup>

Singapore has not had to grapple with the plural society problems that plagued Malaya, for the Chinese comprise 75% of its population. Instead Singapore has been plagued with the political problems of extreme Chinese anti-nationalism (i.e., identification with China) and of communist infiltration and subversion, particularly in the schools and trade unions. The threat of Communism in Singapore has been particularly

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<sup>44</sup>Silcock, "Singapore . . .," pp. 28-9.

<sup>45</sup>Gerald P. Dartford, "The Communist Threat to Malaya and Singapore," Current History, Vol. XXVIII (February, 1960), p. 88.

menacing. Indeed, for a time in the mid-fifties it looked as if the city might go Communist. In 1955 the extreme left wing People's Action Party (PAP) whipped up very strong, active and vociferous support among the Chinese-educated workers and students of the city in a series of strikes, defiant political demonstrations, and school sit-ins which resulted in violence, bloodshed, and even deaths.

In 1956 David Marshall, the head of the majority Labor Front government, went to London to seek independence, but negotiations broke down over the critical issue of control over Singapore's internal security. Having failed, Marshall resigned and Lim Yew-hock took over. Lim ordered a major crackdown on criminal and subversive elements and made full use of public security legislation permitting the arrest, detainment, and banishment of suspected persons. By the end of 1957 a large number of Chinese students, newspapermen, trade unionists, and PAP leaders had been arrested.

The cleanup completed, the government resumed negotiations for independence. This time the internal security problem was resolved by the creation of an Internal Security Council consisting of seven members: three each from England and Singapore and one from Malaya. Thus Britain and Malaya could control Singapore's internal security operations and had access to all intelligence reports. Britain also retained control of external affairs and defense, but Singapore won control of the remainder of its internal affairs.



The first elections under the new constitution resulted in an overwhelming victory for the PAP led by Lee Kuan Yew. The PAP won forty-three of the fifty-one Legislative Assembly seats in the 1959 elections despite the fact that some of its more extreme left wing leaders had been arrested as security risks and were not allowed to participate. Lee and his fellow victors refused to take office, however, until the British released eight of the PAP politicians being held under detention.

Lee had long been on record as an advocate of merger with Malaya as the best means of gaining freedom from colonial rule and promoting the welfare and prosperity of Singapore. His problem now was to convince the leaders of the Federation of Malaya of the wisdom of such a merger. This would prove to be a difficult task. The following examination of the nature of the political groups that came to power in Malaya will indicate why that government was not very interested in merging with the left-wing oriented Chinese state of Singapore.

#### The Political Background

By 1955 there were fourteen political parties in Malaya, but three of these had formed an alliance and won fifty-one of the fifty-two seats in the elections of that year. They have prevailed in every election since then. This dominant political force, which fielded candidates under an intercommunal Alliance Party electoral label, is composed of political

parties which represent racial communities rather than ideologies.

UMNO (United Malays' National Organization)

UMNO, Malaya's "largest, most powerful, and oldest legal political party," was founded in 1946 by the representatives of forty-one Malay groups who were united in their determination to fight the British Malayan Union scheme, which threatened the political position of the individual Malay states, the prestige of the sultans, and the favored bumiputra ("sons of the soil") position of the Malay masses.<sup>46</sup> This broad range of Malay groups was united by the threat that the Chinese and Indian communities who already dominated over the Malays economically might also, under the liberal political provisions of the Malayan Union Plan, come to dominate the Malays politically.

The story of UMNO, as one of its members has put it, is one of a gradual transformation from a "narrow and uncompromising" view of politics based upon "racial nationalism" to a "more liberal view of a wider nationalism embracing the conflicting interests of the other major racial groups."<sup>47</sup> Also worth noting is the same writer's comment that this transformation has come about "not without painful heartsearching and near fatal crises."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Margaret Roff, "UMNO--The First Twenty Years," Australian Outlook, Vol. XX, No. 2 (August, 1966), pp. 168-69.

<sup>47</sup>Salleh, Daud, "Twenty Years of UMNO," Sunday Mail (Kuala Lumpur), May 8, 1966. Cited by Roff, ibid., p. 169.

<sup>48</sup>Roff, ibid., p. 168.

During its first years of existence UMNO continued to champion exclusively the interests of the Malay community. When its founding father tried to broaden UMNO's base by allowing non-Malays to join, the party refused to go along. Dato' Onn subsequently resigned and formed the intercommunal Independence of Malaya Party in 1951. That this party failed to generate much popular support and disbanded two years later is proof, Roff holds, that Onn's intercommunal vision was "seriously out of touch with the realities of Malay politics."<sup>49</sup>

Onn's political move did, however, play a role in the formation of the intercommunal Alliance structure, for it was in order to prevent a split in the vote against his Independence of Malaya party that UMNO entered into a "marriage of convenience"<sup>50</sup> type of electoral alliance with the Chinese communal party, MCA. For the purpose of contesting the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections of 1952 the two local branches of UMNO and the MCA (without references to their national executives) agreed that UMNO would run its Malay candidates only in the predominantly Malay wards and, in return, the MCA would run its Chinese candidates only in the predominately Chinese wards. This strategy proved to be so effective (the Alliance won 9 of the 12 seats in the Kuala Lumpur elections) that it was employed elsewhere throughout Malaya during 1952 and 1953, producing 94 victories in 124 contests.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Roff, "The Malayan Chinese Association . . .," p. 171.

<sup>50</sup> Ratman, p. 160.      <sup>51</sup> Ibid.

This string of successes led to a series of meetings between UMNO and MCA leaders. It was agreed to create liaison committees to link the various local branches of the two parties throughout Malaya and to contest the 1955 federal elections in the same successful manner. Just before these elections an Indian communal party, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), was admitted to the partnership. The Alliance thus could claim to represent all three of the major racial communities of Malaya and presented an intercommunal image while preserving the vote-attracting power of each of the three communal parties within its respective racial constituency.

#### The MCA (Malayan Chinese Association)

The Chinese of Malaya lacked an organizational framework through which they could pursue their political interests until the formation of the MCA in 1949. The immediate cause of its formation at this particular time was the outbreak of the communist guerrilla war Emergency in 1948. The MCA was formed by those Chinese who had developed significant roots and interests in their land of residence, and who thus sought to promote more understanding and cooperation between themselves and the government.

The British encouraged the formation and the activities of the MCA in order to provide the non-Communist Chinese of Malaya with an organizational focus for their loyalties and otherwise aid in the struggle against the Communist guerrilla terrorists. Those British hopes were largely fulfilled, for

the MCA assisted in recruiting Chinese for military and police duty and, with the proceeds of a lottery it initiated, alleviated the hardships forced upon the Chinese squatters who were uprooted and resettled in the fortified and strictly controlled "new villages."

An important political by-product of this military-political operation was the fact that a half million previously scattered Chinese were rendered much more accessible to political party organization and elections.<sup>52</sup> The MCA was in a favorable position to exploit this opportunity, and its activities became more and more political in nature. Recognizing this, the British authorities put a stop to its lottery operations, which had generated the financial resources with which the MCA eased the hardships of being "resettled" into the new villages and provided various amenities to make life in these compounds more tolerable and productive. MCA membership had boomed during the period of its lottery operations because, by law, only MCA members could participate in the lottery, which was a popular Chinese pastime.

For its Chinese founders the MCA was a vehicle to promote Sino-Malay cooperation and thereby safeguard the position and interests of the Chinese in Malaya. The MCA constitution cites the promotion and maintenance of interracial harmony as the first of its aims, but at the inaugural meeting of one of its branches MCA founder Tan Cheng Lock emphasized that its

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

chief task would be to secure justice for the Chinese in Malaya.<sup>53</sup> The conflicting nature of these two goals within the Malayan political context is well summarized and expressed by Roff:

This is the tightrope the MCA has, with some success, been attempting to walk ever since: trying on the one hand to assure the Chinese that it is the guardian of their rights and defender of their interests, and on the other to convince the Malays (and UMNO in particular) that it is wholly committed to the ideal of a united Malayan nation and is to be trusted to help in the building of it. At times, of course, so Janus like a stance has brought criticism from the more conservative and chauvinist of Chinese who feel their cultural heritage is being sold cheap for the figment of political influence. On other occasions, from the more wary elements within UMNO, has come to [sic] charge that MCA would place the immediate good of the Chinese community before the long-term good of the nation, and that its chief concern is the interests of those Chinese businessmen who form so prominent a feature of its leadership.<sup>54</sup>

In summary, the MCA can be characterized as a strongly anti-Communist party which represents "the conservative social and economic interests" of the Chinese community in Malaya.<sup>55</sup> Within the intercommunal Alliance Party structure its power and influence is clearly less than UMNO's. It is, nevertheless, a major force in Malayan politics. The same cannot be said for the third Alliance partner, the MIC.

#### The MIC (Malayan Indian Congress)

The MIC was founded in 1946 to express the interests of the Indian community that then constituted about 12% of the

<sup>53</sup> Roff, "The Malayan Chinese Association . . .," p. 42.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> James W. Gould, The United States and Malaysia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 101.

population of Malaya. Its political importance was slight until it was brought into the Alliance UMNO-MCA partnership just before the first federal elections in 1955. And even since joining the Alliance its political influence has remained small. A leading scholar of Malayan politics has concluded that the MIC's contribution to the "real strength" of the Alliance is "dubious," though it has added greatly to the "stature" of the Alliance by representing the third major racial community in that political organization.<sup>56</sup>

One reason for the MIC's weak political influence is the relative smallness (about 11% in 1960) of the Indian community in Malaya. The negative effect of this smallness of numbers is further enhanced by the scattered distribution of the Indian population; they do not constitute an important voting bloc in any federal electoral constituency.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the MIC does not even have a very large following within the Indian community itself.<sup>58</sup>

For all of these reasons, the role of the Indian community in general and the MIC in particular will not receive much attention in this study. The roles of the contending Malay and Chinese partners within the Alliance--and of competing factions within UMNO and the MCA--are of considerable importance for the analysis, however, especially in regard to the separation of Singapore. These cleavages and the nature

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<sup>56</sup>Ratnam, p. 155.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>58</sup>For evidence of this see the facts cited by Ratnam, ibid., p. 155.

of the most important opposition party in Malaya will be examined in Chapter VI.

In summary, this examination of background factors indicates that in recent times Malaya and Singapore have been divided by differences of racial composition, cultural tradition, and political sentiment. They are bound closely together, however, by ties of historic association, geographic contiguity, and economic interdependence. Indeed, it will be shown in the following two chapters that these economic, geographic, and political factors helped make Singapore and Malaya mutual core interests of the geopolitical type and thus motivated the formation of Malaysia in 1963.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE'S CORE INTEREST IN MERGER WITH MALAYA

#### Initial Indications of Singapore's Interest in Merger with Malaya

What proved to be a very significant variation on the theme of independence in Singapore politics took place at a big rally in November of 1954 when the People's Action Party (PAP) was established. Lee Kuan Yew's new party called for independence through merger with Malaya. This approach drew an immediate favorable response from large segments of the Chinese business community and the English-educated community, both of which had fears of a Communist take-over in the event of Singapore's becoming independent.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1955 elections for 25 seats in the Legislative Council of Singapore, the PAP won three of the four seats it contested. David Marshall's Labor Front came to power with "complete internal self-government and union with the Federation of Malaya"<sup>2</sup> as one of its goals. Marshall reportedly approached Malayan leader Tunku Abdul Rahman with merger proposals that owed much to the initiative of Malcolm

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold C. Brackman, Southeast Asia's Second Front (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p. 18.

MacDonald, then British Commissioner-General in South-East Asia, who envisaged a wider union which would also include the Borneo territories.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to save his shaky government Marshall apparently offered the British the following deal: British retention of the naval base and control of Singapore's foreign affairs and defense in return for internal self-rule. This proposal fell through, however, apparently because of the touchy problem of control over Singapore's internal security.<sup>4</sup>

After Marshall's resignation the Lim Yew Hock regime also favored merger, as evidenced by a resolution the Singapore Legislative Assembly adopted on Malaya's achievement of independence in 1957 which declared that a "prime interest" of both Singapore and Malaya was "to merge in a single political unit."<sup>5</sup> Lim's fear of Chinese chauvinism and Communism was indicated in his statement that "the MCP [Malayan Communist Party] makes me the more determined that we shall not become a Communist Trojan horse to be towed into the Federation of Malaya."<sup>6</sup>

Lim acted on these fears by ordering two major security sweeps against leftists in Singapore. The first netted over a

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<sup>3</sup>Michael Leifer, "Politics in Singapore: The First Term of the People's Action Party 1959-1963," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. II (May, 1964), p. 103.

<sup>4</sup>Brackman, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Merdeka Resolution, adopted August 21, 1957. Cited by Brackman, ibid., p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>Singapore Tiger Standard, May 17, 1958. Cited by Brackman, ibid., p. 21.

score of high PAP officials and the second brought under arrest enough of the extreme left wing of the PAP to enable Lee to regain control of that party. It is noteworthy that this second sweep against Communist power coincided with Malaya's independence and, according to Brackman, was at least partly designed "to demonstrate to newly independent Kuala Lumpur that Singapore could handle its internal-security problems."<sup>7</sup>

By the end of 1957 Lim's popularity was waning, particularly among the unassimilated Chinese-educated Chinese in whom Lim's security sweeps (which largely failed to distinguish between Communist and non-Communist leftists) had created the impression that he was anti-Chinese. This, coupled with reforms in 1958 that extended citizenship directly to the unassimilated Chinese and thereby doubled the electoral roll and brought the proportion of unassimilated mainland-born voters to over half,<sup>8</sup> led to his defeat in the next election.

In the election of 1959 the left wing PAP won an impressive majority of 43 of 51 seats over its right-wing rivals. Lee came to power by gaining the support of the important Chinese-educated portion of the population. To get this vote delivered by the extreme leftist wing of the PAP, Lee had had to pledge to obtain the release of the pro-Communist party leaders who had been detained and appoint them as

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<sup>7</sup>Brackman, *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

"political secretaries" in the new government. He was playing a dangerous game for these men were his main rivals for control of the PAP. In this manner, Brackman observes, the Communists had won their united front goal "from above."<sup>9</sup>

The PAP's Independence Through Merger Campaign

According to Brackman, Lee had begun pressing the British and the Malaysians on merger in 1956.<sup>10</sup> An indication that he was aware of an important part of the price Singapore would have to pay for merger came in 1958, when Lee took the politically difficult position of supporting the operation of the Internal Security Council, saying that if Singapore wanted to join the Federation it must be prepared to allow the Federation to have "a decisive voice in the affairs of Singapore."<sup>11</sup>

In 1959 Lee considered Singapore's economic prospects to be grim. Its rapidly growing population required jobs, the entrepôt trade seemed more likely to decline than to grow, and Malaya's independence had increased Singapore's economic isolation. In this situation, Lee has said, he felt that "the right thing would be a merger between Singapore and Malaya,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27; see also R. S. Milne, Government and Politics in Malaysia (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), pp. 45-46.

<sup>10</sup>Brackman, ibid., p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>Singapore, Legislative Assembly Debates, October 8, 1958, Col. 804, cited by Milton E. Osborne, Singapore and Malaysia, Data Paper No. 53 (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, July, 1964), pp. 6-7.

with the British Borneo territories coming in five years later."<sup>12</sup>

The British, however, favored the status quo. They failed to realize that "Singapore is an island with a base, and not simply an island base," Lee later explained. "Singapore is no Gibraltar."<sup>13</sup> And the Malaysians apparently wanted to know what would prevent the Chinese from becoming an entrenched majority during the five years in which the politically underdeveloped Borneo territories were being prepared for membership in the federation.<sup>14</sup> The Borneo territories also seemed to be content with things the way they were.

With all but Singapore satisfied with the status quo, the prospects for merger were poor. Lee and the PAP nevertheless worked hard to pave the way for eventual merger.

The PAP, in a policy statement made in 1958, was realistic in assessing the obstacles to merger within Malaya:

The present [Malayan] government is anti-merger for different reasons . . . but we can summarize them into two: First Singapore has about one million Chinese. . . . The inclusion of this one million into the Federation will upset the racial balance of power in the Federation. Second: Singapore has too many 'leftists' who are supported by the one million Chinese in Singapore. The Alliance [the ruling party in Malaya] leaders are not very clear in their distinction between Communists and socialists. They believe all 'leftists' may be Communists of varying degrees.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Brackman's report of an interview with Lee Kuan Yew on March 20, 1964. Brackman, pp. 24-25.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25. <sup>14</sup>Brackman, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>People's Action Party, "The New Phase After Merdeka--Out Tasks and Policy," 1958. Reprinted in Lee, p. 149.

The statement goes on to recognize that the Alliance's position represented the fears of the bulk of the Malay people in Malaya, and thus it was the PAP's "duty" and "immediate task" to "allay these fears and create the conditions for merger."<sup>16</sup>

To allay the second fear, the PAP resolved itself to the task of demonstrating clearly to the Malays the distinction between democratic socialism and Communism. To allay the first fear, the PAP noted that:

It must be demonstrated to three million Malays in the Federation that the one million Chinese in Singapore are ready, willing and able to be absorbed as one Malayan people, all able to speak Malay, and willing to work together for the economic betterment and upliftment of the Malays as equals of the other races.

Malay fears that the Chinese will outnumber and overwhelm in the economic, social and cultural fields of human endeavour must be dispelled. The Malays will want to be satisfied that their language and culture are not relegated to second place. Hence the paramount importance of settling once and for all what is the premier language of Malaya. It is for us in a mainly Chinese Singapore to show that we accept this and welcome any steps to make the Malay language the national language spoken by all.<sup>17</sup>

Thus the PAP government, despite the fact that over three quarters of Singapore's population was Chinese, designated Malay as the national language, and the ministries of education and culture promoted a large scale program to "learn Malay." Also a Malay was made Yang di-Pertuan Negara (Malay for Head of State) of Singapore.

One observer characterized this "Malayanization" campaign as an attempt to give Singapore a "Malayan veneer,"<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.      <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>18</sup> Leifer, p. 104.

but, as will be shown, the PAP also developed a regime security type of interest in Malayanizing the Singapore Chinese to the point where they would "talk, think and act not like traditional Overseas Chinese whose first loyalty was to China but as one who regards Malaya as his permanent home and over-all Malayan welfare as his personal concern."<sup>19</sup>

Such a Malayanization program would bolster Lee's PAP and its independence through merger policy vis-à-vis potentially formidable political opponents advocating an independent Singapore. Proponents of an independent Singapore fell into two groups: the unassimilated Chinese who envisioned an independent Singapore as a "third China" (not necessarily Communist), and the Communists, who sought an independent Singapore as a base of operations for the subversion of Malaya through the peninsular Chinese.<sup>20</sup> The first group was referred to as "political illiterates" and "cranks" by the PAP and dismissed rather lightly. But the second group, labeled left-wing adventurers, appears to have been considered a serious threat.

The PAP devoted a large part of a major policy statement made in 1960 to an attack on the idea of an independent Singapore. It argued that, once established, an independent Singapore would cause vested interests based on Chinese appeals to become permanent, and political power would go to

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<sup>19</sup> Willard A. Hanna, Sequel to Colonialism (New York: American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1965), p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> Brackman, pp. 29-30.

those who would "pander to chauvinist sentiments of the Chinese." Such an independent Singapore would become an Israel in the midst of 100 million hostile Moslem Malays and Indonesians, making merger by consent between Singapore and Malaya (as distinct from merger by conquest) "as remote as merger between Israel and any one of her Arab neighbours." While an independent Chinese state might be sustained for some time if "all the Chinese in the world" were prepared to back it with guns, money and a salt water conversion plant, the PAP concluded that it would be not only stupid but "plain lunacy to pay with peoples' lives for the creation of an independent Singapore which cannot be viable politically, economically or militarily."<sup>21</sup>

Thus it is not surprising that this same policy statement designated independence through merger as "our immediate task to be accomplished."<sup>22</sup> But the prospects for merger remained as dim as ever. Lee had admitted as much when he predicted that Malaya and Singapore would fuse in another ten years.<sup>23</sup> Lee relentlessly pressed his case for merger during the many hours he spent on the golf links with Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, during 1960-1961.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>People's Action Party, "The Fixed Political Objectives of Our Party," 1960. Reprinted in Lee, pp. 169-71.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>23</sup>Hindu Weekly Review (Madras), January 4, 1960. Cited by Brackman, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup>Brackman, ibid.



These conversations, aided by some important political developments, were eventually fruitful. In an historic speech in May of 1961 Rahman opened the Malayan door for merger negotiations. The factors motivating Singapore in these negotiations are analyzed in the following section.

The Development of the PAP's Core Interest  
in Merger with Malaya

After being voted into power in 1959, Lee and the PAP, it will be shown, developed a core interest in attaining merger with Malaya. This core interest is made up of economic, military security, and internal political elements and thus will not be classified as being primarily either geopolitical or ideological in nature.

The Economic Factor

As noted above, in 1959 Lee had considered Singapore's economic prospects to be grim. It appears that his outlook was influenced by the ideas and interpretations of Lim Tay Boh, then Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Professor of Economics at the University of Malaya at Singapore.<sup>25</sup>

Traditionally, Singapore's economy has been based on its external trade and the British military bases. But as Lim pointed out, Singapore's external trade was exposed to three basic threats:

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<sup>25</sup>Several of Lim's speeches and articles of the 1957-1959 period were later published in book form. Lim Tay Boh, The Development of Singapore's Economy (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1960).

1. the nationalistic policy of neighbouring countries [i.e., Malaya and Indonesia] in the region, which aims at establishing rival ports and trading centres within territories under their control and diverting trade from Singapore;

2. the economic policy of the Federation and its attempt to promote industrialisation through protective tariffs;

3. the protectionist measures that are being proposed by the Singapore Government.<sup>26</sup>

The condition of external trade is not of fundamental concern to some countries, but to Singapore it is of crucial importance because, Lim points out, Singapore's standard of living is based on the prosperity of its external trade.<sup>27</sup> And because about 80% of this external trade is entrepôt in nature (half being with Malaya and most of the rest being with Indonesia) Chinese Singapore was especially vulnerable to politically motivated trade diversion policies by its two independent Malay neighbors, Indonesia and Malaya. This, plus the fact that its entrepôt trade had not increased significantly since 1955, made it unwise for Singapore to continue to rely on its entrepôt trade as the basis of its economic future.

The second pillar of Singapore's economy, the British military bases, employed an estimated 40,000 workers (including their families a total of about 160,000 of Singapore's approximately 1,600,000 people were dependent upon these jobs) and generated as much as 25% of Singapore's Gross National Product. The importance of base employment is further

<sup>26</sup>Lim, *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup>*ibid.*, p. 14.

indicated by Lim's estimate that Singapore would have to find jobs for about 30,000 additional workers each year in the short term future. This figure was roughly corroborated by the estimate that jobs would have to be created for 84,000 people during the period of Singapore's 1961-1964 Development Plan. The government planned to invest U. S. \$300 million, but this would provide only half the needed jobs; the rest would have to come from private industrial development.<sup>28</sup>

The non-entrepôt fifth of Singapore's external trade is generated by its domestic market. This market is not large enough to support the efficient development of national industry because of the economy of scale factor. In short, to create new jobs Singapore needed industrial development, but for efficient industrial development it needed access to a larger market.

Thus Singapore's economic future, both as a trading center and as an industrializing area, appeared to require economic policies which would treat Malaya and Singapore as one economic unit:

The establishment of a common market by a political merger of both territories would be the ideal solution. But if a political union is considered to be premature, immediate steps should be taken to remove conflicts of policies by establishing effective machinery for joint consultation and co-ordination of development programmes.<sup>29</sup>

Such coordination of policies, Lim concluded, was essential to the rational planning of industrial development in both

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<sup>28</sup>Emily Sadka, "Malaysia: The Political Background," The Political Economy of Independent Malaya, ed. T. H. Silcock and E. K. Fisk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 41.

<sup>29</sup>Lim, p. 24.

Singapore and Malaya.<sup>30</sup>

That Lee was well aware of these economic factors and shared Lim's views is indicated in a talk he gave over Radio Singapore in September of 1961:

Everyone knows the reasons why the Federation is important to Singapore. It is the hinterland which produces the rubber and tin which keep our shop-window economy going. It is the base that made Singapore the capital city. Without this economic base Singapore would not survive. [*Italics mine.*]

Without merger, without a reunification of our two governments and an integration of our two economies, our economic position will slowly and steadily get worse. Your livelihood will get worse. Instead of their being one unified economic development for Malaya, there will be two. The Federation instead of cooperating with Singapore will compete against Singapore for industrial capital and industrial expansion. In this competition both will suffer.

But Singapore will suffer more, because we have less resources to fall back on. We have no rubber and tin, no large land mass. For 140 years we have grown, developed and prospered because we bought and sold for the Federation. Through Singapore they imported what they wanted from the outside world. Through Singapore they sold their rubber and tin.

Merger means that there will be one integrated economic development, and that the wasteful duplication of facilities in the two territories will come to an end.

.....  
 With a Singapore separated from the Federation, we will be cutting each others throats.<sup>31</sup>

Singapore's unencouraging economic prospects were made to appear all the more crucial in Lee's mind because of the threatening political repercussions he feared they would produce. A few months after being expelled from the PAP (largely because of a personal feud with Lee) ex-mayor of Singapore Ong Eng Guan, described as a "jingoist-nationalist"

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Lee, p. 5.

type,<sup>32</sup> resigned his Assembly seat to force a by-election in his Hong Lim constituency. Under the banner of his newly formed United People's Party (UPP), Ong waged a chauvinistic campaign and advocated complete independence for Singapore rather than independence through merger with Malaya. He defeated the PAP candidate in the May, 1961 election by a 7,747 to 2,820 landslide. This decisive defeat shocked the PAP and raised general public doubts about whether the PAP was still "the almost irresistible force" it appeared to be after its 1959 election success.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, two other PAP Assemblymen promptly defected to Ong's UPP. As the U. S. Consul General in Singapore at the time put it, the facade of PAP solidarity had been cracked.<sup>34</sup> In reality, the PAP was an "uneasy alliance between the English educated socialists and the Chinese chauvinists and extreme leftists."<sup>35</sup>

Only five months later Lee explained that after this election defeat:

We wanted to resign. We had lost because there was discontent over unemployment, lack of cheap housing, lack of social welfare benefits, strictness in immigration controls and the issue of citizenship papers.<sup>36</sup>

The vital importance that merger (and all that it would make possible) was taking on in Lee's mind is indicated in his elaboration on the situation:

<sup>32</sup>Brackman, p. 33.      <sup>33</sup>Milne, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup>William P. Maddox, "Singapore: Problem Child," Foreign Affairs, Vol. XL, No. 43 (April, 1962), p. 48.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 482.      <sup>36</sup>Lee, p. 40.

But these economic and social problems cannot be solved until we get merger and [a] common market with the Federation. Merger will bring political certainty and stability. And [a] common market will provide a bigger market for manufactured goods, in other words a wider economic base for expansion. Then we can begin to solve the people's dissatisfaction.

. . . . .  
 We saw no resolution to our economic problems after the defeat in Hong Lim because the Federation was not eager either for merger or [a] common market. We wanted to resign and have fresh elections rather than carry on without a visible solution to our basic problems.<sup>37</sup>

Ironically, this PAP defeat was an important factor (Lee apparently exploited it in his talks with Malayan leaders) in Malaya's forthcoming decision to reverse its previous policy and open the door for the merger negotiations that Lee had so long and diligently sought.<sup>38</sup> In an historic speech to the Foreign Correspondents Association in Singapore less than a month after the PAP's Hong Lim defeat, Rahman announced:

Sooner or later . . . [Malaya] should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the Territories of Singapore, Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak.

It is premature for me to say how this closer understanding can be brought about, but it is inevitable that we should look ahead to this objective and think of a plan whereby these territories can be brought closer together in political and economic cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

Such a merger would ease greatly Singapore's precarious economic position. It would also, as will be shown next, enable Lee and his regime to survive a strong challenge for

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>38</sup> This will be shown in Chapter V.

<sup>39</sup> Sunday Times (Singapore), May 28, 1961.

control of the Singapore government that was to be made by an extreme left wing splinter group of the PAP.

#### The Internal Political Factor

Though the door to merger was now opened, Lee and his PAP government still had a perilous and challenging "battle for merger" ahead of them. Shortly after the Hong Lim by-election defeat exposed the English-educated socialist versus Chinese-educated chauvinist fissure within the PAP, a chasm between the democratic socialist and the extreme leftist pro-Communist wings of the PAP opened. It will be shown that defections and finally the split of the PAP and formation of a powerful new rival extreme left wing type of party not only shattered the broad electoral base of the PAP (and hence jeopardized its control of the government) but also threatened the future existence of Singapore itself, as Lee's PAP conceived of this existence.

Not all of the PAP was happy about Rahman's merger speech. Indeed, as Leifer put it, the prospect of merger served to "crystallize publicly outstanding differences" between the extreme left and the moderate wings of the PAP.<sup>40</sup> Within the week Lim Chin Siong and five other prominent PAP trade union leaders called for "full internal self government" for Singapore and declared that such a government must be popularly elected and have full control over internal

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<sup>40</sup>Leifer, p. 108.

security. The PAP itself reconfirmed its independence through merger objective and pointed out that this would abolish the Internal Security Council in another way.<sup>41</sup> But this other way was unacceptable to Lim and his cohorts; they feared that the transfer of internal security powers to a central government controlled by the conservative and anti-Communist Malays might "amount to their political death warrant."<sup>42</sup> Given the security arrests and detainments by previous Singapore governments (in which Lim Chin Siong, for one, had been a victim) such fears were well grounded.

A second by-election (made necessary by the death of the PAP assemblyman from the Anson ward) provided the battleground for the incipient civil war within the PAP. First Lim Chin Siong and his group made a conditional offer of support in the Anson election. Their key condition was that local control over internal security be written into the new constitution in the 1963 constitutional talks.<sup>43</sup> When this failed they embarked on a strategy which would gravely threaten the very existence of the PAP.

Encouraged by Ong's victory, David Marshall had entered the Anson election and campaigned for complete independence, the abolition of the Internal Security Council, and the dismantling of the British naval base. These stands were

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<sup>41</sup>Brackman, p. 38.

<sup>42</sup>Maddox, loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), June 3, 1961. Cited by Osborne, p. 17.



obviously compatible with the interests of the PAP left wing extremists. The strategy Lim and his associates had engineered did not become apparent until the day before the July 15 vote. Then, in a move that Lee labeled "treachery," eight PAP assemblymen threw their support to Marshall by publicly denouncing the PAP position and endorsing full internal self-government and the other trade union demands.<sup>44</sup> This clever maneuver apparently confused many voters, for although voting was compulsory, there were over 1,400 abstentions. Marshall squeaked by on the slim margin of 546 votes out of the total of 9,870 cast.

On July 21 Lee got only 27 votes of confidence (versus 8 against) as 13 PAP Assemblymen abstained. In a purge the following day Lim Chin Siong and 21 other high PAP officials were expelled from the party. With the thirteen Assemblymen (including six parliamentary secretaries) split off, the PAP now controlled the Assembly by the precarious margin of only one vote!

On July 26 the left wing splinter group formed a new party, which was formally registered as the Barisan Sosialis (Socialist Front) on August 13, 1961. The seriousness of this blow to the PAP is indicated by the fact that 60 to 70% of the PAP cadres defected to the Barisan Sosialis.<sup>45</sup> Bellows points

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., July 14, 1961. Cited by Leifer, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup>Thomas J. Bellows, "The Singapore Party System," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March, 1967), p. 129. Bellow's estimate is corroborated by Leifer's that approximately 37 of the 51 PAP branches plus a significant number of key headquarters staff went with the extreme left. Leifer, p. 110.

out that these trade unionists and Chinese middle school student leaders were the people with roots in the Chinese-educated and unassimilated masses that had come to form the majority of the electorate, and it was they who had delivered the votes for the PAP's 1959 electoral victory.<sup>46</sup> Clearly the PAP was now in a battle for its political life.

A primary political objective of the Barisan Socialis was to fight merger; its themes of local control over internal security and independence were couched in terms of anti-colonialism. Interestingly, Lee indicated he no longer felt the frustration and discouragement that had made him feel like resigning after the Hong Lim defeat. "After the Anson by-election in July when we saw merger and Malaysia ahead," he claimed two and one half months later, "we wanted to carry on but the Communists wanted us to resign."<sup>47</sup>

Lim Chin Siong and the Barisan were spoiling for an electoral fight. Lim claimed that the Barisan could route the PAP at the polls "today or any day," that Lee was "running scared," and that the Barisan had the "overwhelming support" of the people.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the U. S. Consul General allowed that in any general election at this moment they might emerge "with the largest number of votes."<sup>49</sup> And a leading scholar on Southeast Asia noted that the "pro-Communist element

<sup>46</sup> Bellows, *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Lee, p. 67.

<sup>48</sup> According to Oscar Villadolid in the Manila Bulletin, February 1, 1963 as cited by Brackman, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> Maddox, p. 483.

appeared to have a real chance for gaining control of the government" at the next elections.<sup>50</sup> Similar foreboding reports that the situation was "most precarious," that fears of "another Cuba" spread, that the PAP retained the firm backing of only the civil service and the English-speaking element, and that the conservative support for Lee's merger plan might be its "kiss of death" were made by such respected observers as Willard Hanna, Ronald Stead, Victor Purcell and K. G. Tregonning, respectively.<sup>51</sup>

Clearly Lee and his PAP were fighting for their political existence. And as Milne later concluded, "it was only by the skillful use of the Malaysia issue that the PAP leadership avoided further fatal defections and survived to win the Singapore Assembly elections in 1963."<sup>52</sup>

At first glance the impressive PAP victory of capturing thirty-seven of the fifty-one Assembly seats in the 1963 Singapore elections conducted just after Malaysia was proclaimed might seem to indicate that the Barisan Sosialis threat was vastly overrated. But a closer analysis of the election returns indicates otherwise. For despite the excitement and enthusiasm for independence and merger that was

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<sup>50</sup>George McT. Kahin, "Malaysia and Indonesia," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3 (Fall, 1964), p. 257.

<sup>51</sup>Willard A. Hanna, The Formation of Malaysia, p. 24; Ronald Stead, Christian Science Monitor, July 24, 1962, cited by Brackman, p. 40; Victor Purcell, Malaysia (New York: Walker and Co., 1965), p. 141; Tregonning, p. 42.

<sup>52</sup>Milne, p. 50.

whipped up and all the favorable publicity Lee received in his skillful negotiation of the terms of merger, the actual margin and nature of the PAP victory was not really very impressive.

Consider the following facts:

1. While the PAP won 72% of the seats, it polled only 47.4% of the votes.
2. The PAP won only twenty of its thirty-seven seats by an outright majority; of the remaining seventeen at least seven were won because of the split of the left wing opposition vote between Ong's UPP and the Barisan Sosialis.
3. The Barisan Sosialis polled 32.1% of the vote (while winning only 25.5% of the seats) and managed to retain thirteen of its fourteen seats.

Furthermore the Barisan showing was made in the face of several political handicaps.<sup>53</sup> The first was the masterful job the PAP did in terms of timing which gave the opposition only seventeen days from the time the election was sprung on them to the day of the voting. The PAP called for the election on September 3, set the nomination day for September 12, and set the voting day the legal minimum of only nine days later. One of the nine days was a Sunday leaving eight days for campaigning; and of these Monday the 16th was Malaysia Day and Tuesday the 17th was also proclaimed a legal holiday. The

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<sup>53</sup>These are described by Leifer, and Frances L. Starnes, "The Singapore Elections of 1963," in K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964 (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1964), pp. 312-58.

opposition thus had great trouble reaching the voters either in person or by mail. And they found it virtually impossible to get any printing done because local printers were so busy with government Malaysia Day orders. (The PAP, of course, had had all of its printing done three months earlier in Hong Kong!)<sup>54</sup> Secondly, the Barisan's party organization had been seriously disrupted. Several key cadres and union supporters, including some of the party's strongest potential candidates, had been arrested in a security sweep the previous February and were still under detention. The author of the most complete analysis of the election concludes that this factor was a "major handicap" for the Barisan.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore seventeen Barisan ex-detainees were rounded up the morning of nomination day before the centers opened to receive filing papers--which were required by law to be presented by the candidate in person--and not released until after closing time. Also, the PAP government proscribed some Barisan activities (such as open air meetings), cancelled the registration of seven Barisan controlled unions, and froze the bank accounts of three union groups to prevent these funds from being used in the campaigning.

Other noteworthy Barisan handicaps were the following: the PAP government had just secured convictions in criminal proceedings against eight Barisan leaders involved in an earlier riot; the Barisan had become partially associated with

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<sup>54</sup>Starner, ibid., p. 324.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

Indonesia's confrontation against Malaysia and thus Javanese anti-Chinese outbursts did not help their cause; the PAP government controlled the mass media and used it to represent the Barisan as an anti-national force while focusing the main spotlight on its own successful merger activities; and Lee's last minute hard bargaining successes with the Malayan leaders had given the impression that he had secured the best terms possible for merger.

Despite all these Barisan handicaps the outcome was still very much in doubt on election eve. As Starner described it:

A number of observers noted a decided lack of enthusiasm for Malaysia during the ceremonies marking the transfer of sovereignty and concluded from this that the PAP's support was less than they had previously thought. . . . And for those examining the signs there were also the tremendous crowds which the Barisan drew at its evening rallies, which led many observers to believe that the government party was in extreme danger from this quarter. Indeed there were indications that the PAP itself was distinctly worried, although this was, of course, not openly admitted.<sup>56</sup>

In summary the fact that the Barisan Sosialis received the number of votes it did despite all of its handicaps and all of the political advantages the ruling PAP had exploited reinforces the observations that the Barisan challenge was truly (i.e., in the operational environment) a most serious threat to the regime security of the PAP. That this threat also existed in the minds (i.e., in the psychological environment) of the PAP decision-makers is evidenced by the great

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 348.

care and effort they demonstrated in planning for and staging the 1963 elections. Though the PAP did not express great fear of the Barisan Sosialis challenge publicly, this obviously would not have been a politically wise thing to do. Surely the PAP was more painfully aware than anyone else of the fact that the Barisan Sosialis splinter group took with it much of the talent and organizational lifeblood that had brought the party into power in 1959. As indicated in the chart below, the PAP managed to survive the loss of its extreme left wing support only by scrambling to the right in Singapore's political spectrum for the necessary votes to remain in power.

#### CHART

A COMPARISON OF THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF SINGAPORE'S MAJOR PARTIES IN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN 1959 AND 1963<sup>a</sup>  
(Based on percentages of total vote received in the elections by each party)

1959	PAP			SPA	UMNO-MCA	LS
1963	BARISAN SOSIALIS	P R	UPP	PAP		SA

<sup>a</sup>Presented by Starner, p. 351.

Thus the evidence indicates that the regime security factor was an important motivating force in Singapore's interest in merger with Malaya. Clearly the merger issue had formed the basis for the PAP's successful defense of its control of the Singapore government against the Barisan Sosialis challenge.

Thus the PAP regime moved from a most precarious political position (just before the election it controlled only twenty-five of the fifty occupied Assembly seats) to a quite secure one (thirty-seven of fifty-one seats) and was ready to get on with the task of building an economically viable and prosperous Singapore within Malaysia. Singapore would become "the New York of Malaysia," it was proclaimed.

#### The Military Security Factor

That Singapore and Malaya are inseparable from the point of view of military defense and security is evident from the geography and the modern history of the area. As it was put in a PAP document in 1960:

Militarily . . . Singapore and Malaya are one unit. Colonialism has made a technically international frontier on the Straits of Johore and created two states. But no soldier can devise a front to make Singapore and the Federation two instead of one military situation. He who conquers Malaya conquers Singapore. The Japanese proved it. And conversely he who holds Singapore absorbs Malaya. Stamford Raffles proved it. <sup>57</sup>

From the beginning of the merger discussions it was clear that control over national defense, foreign affairs, and internal security (Singapore's especially) would be in the hands of the central government in Kuala Lumpur. The preliminary agreement on the basic terms of merger (reached on August 23, 1961) stated this and also provided that Singapore's police officers would "automatically come under the

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<sup>57</sup> People's Action Party, "The Fixed Political Objectives . . .," p. 171.



jurisdiction of the Federation Police Force Commission."<sup>58</sup>

To Lee, who had previously been bailed out of the predicament of being out maneuvered for control of the PAP by an internal security sweep, these security provisions were not unacceptable. Indeed, as Hyde observed, they would make Singapore "more secure from enemies within and without than would ever be possible if she stood on her own."<sup>59</sup>

#### Conclusions Regarding Singapore's Core Interest in Merger

The evidence indicates that Singapore developed a core interest in merger with Malaya because of economic, regime security, and military security factors. It seems certain that merger came to be seen as vital to the existence of Singapore as a political entity, at least as the decision-makers (i.e., Lee and his PAP) conceived of this existence, by the summer of 1961 at the latest.

Singapore's economic prospects were so dim before Rahman's historic speech opened the door for merger that Lee was on the verge of resigning. With the two by-election losses, the defections from the PAP, and the formation of the rival Barisan Sosialis party combining to form a serious regime security threat to the ruling party, merger clearly became "a way to restore the political fortunes of the

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<sup>58</sup> Singapore, Heads of Agreement for a Merger between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, Command Paper 33 of 1961, November 16, 1961.

<sup>59</sup> Douglas Hyde, Confrontation in the East (Singapore: Donald Moore Books, 1965), p. 40.

PAP."<sup>60</sup> Also, having internal security in the hands of the central government in Kuala Lumpur would contribute to the regime security of the PAP decision-makers.

Finally it is clear that Lee and his PAP considered Singapore and Malaya to be integrally related for purposes of defense. They painted unpleasant pictures of what would take place if the two units became hostile. And in the event of hostilities Singapore was clearly at a military disadvantage vis-á-vis Malaya because of its smaller population, its tiny<sup>61</sup> and vulnerable territory, and its dependence on Malaya for water.

This whole situation was summarized well by Lee in September of 1961:

It [merger] is as inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun. The two territories are so intertwined and interwoven in their economic, political and military complex that no man can keep up the artificial barrier at the Causeway for long.

If merger does not come by the consent of the people of the two territories, then inevitably it will come by the use of force by one territory over the other, because each is vital to the survival of the other. [*Italics mine.*]<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Michael Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia: The Politics of Federation," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. VI, No. 2 (September, 1965), p. 55.

<sup>61</sup>The area of Singapore is only 226 square miles--and this is at low tide!

<sup>62</sup>Lee, pp. 4-5.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALAYA'S CORE INTERESTS IN MERGER WITH SINGAPORE AND THE BORNEO TERRITORIES

#### Factors Making Merger with Singapore a Core Interest Threat to Malaya

Despite the strong historic, geographic, economic and defense ties between Malaya and Singapore, Malaya had never been eager for merger. As has been noted, the Malays were happy not to have Singapore included in the Malayan Union plan of 1946. This attitude persisted after Malayan independence in 1957. In the late 1950's Prime Minister Rahman had pointedly rejected merger--even as a possibility--in the near future. He noted that the overwhelming majority of the people of Singapore spoke Chinese while the national language of Malaya was Malay, that the Chinese were unlikely to pay homage to a Malay monarch as head of state, and that the Chinese were hardly likely to accept Islam as the state religion.<sup>1</sup> In short, in Brackman's words, sovereign Malaya was determined "to treat the Strait of Johore as an English Channel."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>According to Brackman, p. 22. Brackman does not cite a source but Rahman said essentially the same thing in his Federal Parliament speech of October 16, 1961. Reprinted in Lee, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

The two basic reasons for this policy were accurately assessed in the PAP's 1958 policy statement.<sup>3</sup> First, merger with Singapore would upset the racial balance of power in the Federation. Secondly, Singapore had too many leftists who were supported by its Chinese population. Together, it will be demonstrated, these two factors constituted an ideological core interest threat to Malaya, according to the perceptions of its ruling Alliance party leaders.

The precarious racial balance of power situation that merger would entail is evident in the population statistics of the areas involved. In Malaya alone Malays outnumbered Chinese by over 900,000. But with merger with Singapore, the balance would be reversed, and the Chinese would outnumber Malays by 95,000.<sup>4</sup> This population balance was a critical factor, for it seems certain that if the population ratio in Singapore had been reversed, i.e., if it had had five Malays for every one Chinese instead of the opposite, Malaya would have been merged with Singapore long ago.

It was not only the raw numbers of the Chinese in Singapore but also their political ideology that caused them to be viewed as a serious threat to the regime security of the ruling Malayan elite. During the Communist guerrilla war "Emergency" of 1948-1960 many of the Chinese guerrillas and much of their

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted above, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Computed from the population statistics for mid-1960 presented in Appendix A.

financial resources emanated from Singapore. The threatening chauvinistic and extreme left wing tendencies of Singapore also had been highlighted by the student riots of the 1955-57 period. Furthermore, Malayan observers had watched the political center of gravity in Singapore shift from the right to the center and then to the left as the number of registered voters grew from a mere 35,000 in 1948 to virtually the entire adult population (530,000) in 1959. The liberalization of voting requirements to enfranchise more of the mass of unassimilated Chinese had produced marked shifts to the left in each successive election in Singapore.

Since the radical left-wing image of the PAP in 1959 had frightened the Malaysians, it is most probable that the emergence of the extreme left wing element of that party to a strong challenging position was viewed as a core interest threat to the Malayan leadership in the event of merger. As Kahin put it:

Should these [Singapore] Chinese be given the opportunity to participate in the local political life of Malaya, the supremacy of the conservative Chinese leaders of the MCA on the peninsula would be gravely threatened, with the consequence that the basis of cooperation between the Malay and Chinese communities might well be undermined. This would presage the collapse of the political coalition upon which Rahman's government rested.<sup>5</sup>

In short, the whole structure of Alliance political control would be gravely threatened by political merger with Singapore.

That this threat was real and that it was of core interest magnitude is borne out by the fact that, as will be

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<sup>5</sup>Kahin, p. 257.

demonstrated later, it was the basic reason for the Alliance government's expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia less than two years after merger was finally achieved. Indeed, the main reason why merger finally took place despite the double barreled threat of the numbers and ideology of the Singapore Chinese was that the conditions in Singapore that underlay this threat were progressively worsening. As will now be shown, a Singapore outside the Federation eventually came to be viewed as an even more dangerous threat to the existence of Malaya than a Singapore within it.

Factors Causing Merger with Singapore to  
Become a Malayan Core Interest

It has been shown how merger with Singapore was viewed by the Malayan Alliance leaders as constituting what has been defined as an ideological core interest threat. It will now be demonstrated that the prospect of an independent Singapore after 1963 eventually came to be considered a geopolitical core interest threat to Malaya, according to the perceptions of these same Alliance decision-makers. The core interest dilemma which resulted was finally resolved by a special formula for merger that reduced the ideological threat to Malaya to a tolerable level, at least for a few years. This was accomplished by including the Borneo territories in the merger and by subjecting Singapore to terms of merger which limited its federal representation and provided its population with a special type of citizenship.

### Background

After the Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) hopes for a successful guerrilla war were dashed (circa 1955), its tactics changed to the peaceful policy of infiltrating left-wing political and labor organizations. Instead of leaving to join the guerrillas in the Malayan jungles, the energetic, pro-Communist Chinese youths now remained in Singapore. As has been shown, there soon developed a steadily increasing danger that their "fanaticism, devotion and organizing ability"<sup>6</sup> might topple the left wing but non-Communist government headed by Lee Kuan Yew.

While Singapore remained a colony it was not viewed as a geopolitical threat by Malaya because the friendly British rulers had the island safely under control. Even when arrangements were made for Singapore to become semi-independent in 1959, Malaya's security interests there were safeguarded by the fact that the British retained control over foreign affairs and defense and the difficult problem of internal security was solved by the creation of the Internal Security Council.

The ISC is of special interest because it consisted of three members each from Singapore and the U.K. and a seventh from Malaya. Malaya, by implication, had the decisive vote, and its inclusion in the Council was also evidence of its great interest in Singapore. Malaya's membership, according

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<sup>6</sup>Tregonning, p. 41.

to an official document, gave it "access to all information relating to internal security which may be made available . . . to the Government of the United Kingdom."<sup>7</sup>

The 1958 agreement also provided that in 1963 (after a five year trial period) there would be a revision of Singapore's status and Constitution along with new elections. Consequently, as Brackman put it:

The reforms contained a built-in time bomb. As the clock ticked away, it became increasingly apparent that the PAP campaign for 'independence through merger' and the Communist chauvinist drive for 'complete independence' were moving toward a climax.<sup>8</sup>

In short, as the PAP noted perceptively in 1960, the Malaysians "could sit back and say they don't want Singapore because the British forces are ensuring that no hostile or Communist government takes over power in Singapore."<sup>9</sup> But the Malaysians could not sit back and relax for very long because of the stunning PAP defeat in the Hong Lim by-election of April, 1961 and the Communist instigated campaign to abolish the ISC in the forthcoming 1963 constitutional talks.

#### The Hong Lim By-Election

As late as January of 1961 Rahman had spoken of merger as having "to wait some time."<sup>10</sup> Only four months later the

<sup>7</sup>Federation of Malaya, Participation by the Federation in the Singapore Internal Security Council: Exchange of Letters between the Federation and the United Kingdom Governments, No. 18 of 1959.

<sup>8</sup>Brackman, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup>People's Action Party, "The Fixed Political Objectives . . .," p. 172.

<sup>10</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), January 31, 1961. Cited by Osborne, p. 24.



Tunku opened the door for merger. It seems most likely that the catalyst that produced this about face in Malaya's policy regarding merger was the Hong Lim by-election result<sup>11</sup> with all of its ominous implications. The prospect of an extreme left wing regime coming to power in a Singapore that would soon be due for independence, it will be shown, constituted a core interest threat to Malaya in the eyes of the key Alliance decision-makers.

After this Hong Lim defeat of the PAP the subsequently formed Barisan Sosialis party came to be viewed as posing a real threat to the PAP's control of the government after the next (i.e., 1963) Singapore elections. American scholar George Kahin wrote that they "stand a real chance";<sup>12</sup> a former (1959-1961) U. S. Consul General in Singapore thought they "might emerge with the largest number of votes";<sup>13</sup> and British scholar T. E. Smith warned that the Barisan "could well be voted into power."<sup>14</sup> The general alarm and fear that characterized this situation is evidenced by the following: Willard Hanna wrote in an American Universities Field Staff Report that the situation was "most precarious;"<sup>15</sup> Ronald Stead of the

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<sup>11</sup>In this April, 1961 by-election the PAP "undertook a massive campaign" but was dealt "a stunning blow" when its specially picked candidate lost in a 73% to 27% landslide. (The numerical result of the two candidate contest was 7,747 to 2,820.) Starner, p. 318.

<sup>12</sup>Kahin, p. 257.

<sup>13</sup>Maddox, p. 483.

<sup>14</sup>T. E. Smith, The Background to Malaysia (Singapore: Craftsman Press Ltd., 1963), p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>Hanna, p. 24.

Christian Science Monitor reported that fears of "another Cuba" spread;<sup>16</sup> and scholar Michael Leifer stated that "Ong's victory was widely considered to be an indication that the demise of the PAP was only a matter of time." [*Italics mine.*]<sup>17</sup>

According to Tregonning, a scholarly on-the-spot observer who knows the area well, the Malayan politicians reluctantly came to realize that "it was either merger with Singapore or communism on their doorstep."<sup>18</sup> Evidence that Rahman himself viewed the situation in this way is his later statement that "without . . . Malaysia, I do not think the PAP would have survived."<sup>19</sup>

The Malayan leaders may have been aided in forming this interpretation of the election results by Lee Kuan Yew. It has been opined that Lee was quick to exploit the silver lining that came with the ominously dark cloud of defeat in Hong Lim by pointing out its implications to Malayan Alliance leaders. Osborne states that it "would not have been out of character" for Lee to have pressed his case on this basis;<sup>20</sup> Leifer holds that Lee "exploited an undoubted anxiety";<sup>21</sup> and Brackman feels that it was "not improbable" that the PAP capitalized on

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<sup>16</sup>Christian Science Monitor, July 24, 1962. Cited in Brackman, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup>Leifer, "Politics in Singapore . . .," p. 108.

<sup>18</sup>Tregonning, loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 29, 1964.

<sup>20</sup>Osborne, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>Leifer, "Politics in Singapore . . .," p. 104.

the defeat to indulge in a "bit of blackmail" in Kuala Lumpur by threatening to resign.<sup>22</sup>

Lee probably also exploited the campaign to abolish the ISC to further his case for merger. In the fall of 1961 Lee claimed that on May 11 (shortly after the Hong Lim defeat but sixteen days before Rahman's merger speech) he had met with the "plenipotentiary of the MCP in Singapore." The "Plen" reportedly pressed him to agree to the abolition of the ISC as the immediate target for the 1963 talks while deferring the question of independence for Singapore either alone or through merger.<sup>23</sup> Lee, Brackman contends, advised Rahman of this Communist strategy, thereby putting Kuala Lumpur on the spot: Malaya could either agree to merger while a moderate left-wing regime ruled or sit idly by while Singapore shifted farther to the left and perhaps abolished the ISC.<sup>24</sup>

#### Singapore as a Core Interest of Malaya

It seems quite certain that in these circumstances Singapore constituted a geopolitical core interest threat to Malaya. An independent and potentially Communist Singapore, in sovereign control of its own internal security and foreign affairs, clearly constituted a potential base for the

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<sup>22</sup>Brackman, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup>Lee, p. 37. This account tends to be corroborated by the fact that a few weeks later future Barisan Sosialis leader Lim Chin Siong and others stated a demand for the abolition of the ISC in 1963.

<sup>24</sup>Brackman, p. 35.

subversion of Malaya. Two highly regarded scholarly observers characterized Singapore in such a situation as being like a "poisonous thorn in the side"<sup>25</sup> and a "running ulcer on the leg" which would infect the whole body of Malaya.<sup>26</sup> But even more important than these opinions are the perceptions of Malaya's leaders. In this regard the views of Prime Minister Rahman and his heir apparent, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Razak, merit quotation at some length.

On October 16, 1961 Rahman made many revealing statements about the situations and motives that were to result in merger less than two years later. In regard to the conditions in Singapore which led to Malayan reconsideration of merger, the Tunku noted the "complete break" between "the non-Communist and pro-Communist elements in the PAP" and stated:

Therefore the Prime Minister of Singapore felt rather concerned and approached me with some of his problems and difficulties. We made a careful study of the situation and came to the conclusion that the only salvation for Singapore would be in some form of closer economic and constitutional association with the Federation. [Italics mine.]<sup>27</sup>

The importance of the Internal Security Council arrangement to Malayan security interests, the threat implied in the 1963 constitutional revision talks and Singapore's probable achievement of independence through them, the Communist infiltration and subversion threat assumed to be inherent in an

<sup>25</sup>Purcell, p. 185.

<sup>26</sup>Tregonning, *loc. cit.*

<sup>27</sup>Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Tungku's Merger Speeches in Federal Parliament," October 16, 1961, Appendix 4 in Lee, p. 126.

independent Singapore, and the geopolitical core interest magnitude of the threat an independent, Communist Singapore posed to Malaya are all evidenced in Rahman's further remarks:

The division of the two territories might be all right at a moment when Singapore was still under the control of Great Britain, as the security of the island was in the hands of the U. K. Government, in other words safe hands, but a time would come when Singapore would ask for and be given independence, and that time is not far off for new talks on the Constitution are to be held in 1963.

Would Singapore then be strong enough to look after its internal security, external affairs, defence, finance, etc., and would it still be possible for the Federation to keep its gateway open to allow the free flow of people [regarding the subversion threat] and goods between the two territories?

It would probably be impossible to do that . . . we do it now because we are represented in the Internal Security Council, but we will not be in an independent Singapore.

While Singapore is under the British there is no threat of open action by the Communists which might endanger the peace and security of the Federation, but with an independent Singapore anything could happen.

One thing is certain, and that is a newly independent Singapore would not submit to an arrangement whereby her sovereignty would be compromised by having the Federation in the [Internal] Security Council.

I can assure you that the leaders in Singapore and my colleagues here consider that independence is not practicable, and so we have been working hard to find a solution whereby we can co-exist in the closest association.

Having gone into it thoroughly we are convinced that we can find a way satisfactory to both.

We must prevent a situation in which an independent Singapore would go one way and the Federation another.

The way Singapore would go then would be toward another camp which is hostile to the Federation [i.e., the Communist camp], and this would be quite unacceptable to us. [Italics mine.]<sup>28</sup>

Corroboration of these Malayan perceptions and further elaboration indicating the core interest magnitude of

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-27.

geopolitical threat Rahman perceived in an independent Singapore are evidenced in these remarks he made almost one year later, but still one year before merger:

The constitution for Singapore comes to an end in 1963, and with it two issues will be faced: firstly, whether Singapore should become independent; secondly, should it merge with the Federation.

It is impossible to grant independence to Singapore because of the danger of it going Communist, and if it goes Communist it would, with the help of the Communist powers, try to overrun the whole of Malaya.

We can fight with the help of our British and American friends, but the inevitable result will be catastrophic, with suffering, misery and distress facing the people of Malaya and perhaps disasters never before experienced in this country. [Rahman probably means a Chinese-Malay racial war.]

The resultant losses would be so tremendous that the gains would not be noticed. 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 [proposed] Federation of Malaysia.<sup>29</sup>

Further corroboration that an independent Singapore was viewed as a subversive threat to Malaya of core interest magnitude that its decision-makers would actively prevent is contained in a statement by Abdul Razak, the number two man in the Alliance hierarchy and Rahman's heir apparent. After noting that it was conceivable that Singapore would have demanded, and been given, complete independence in the 1963 constitutional review talks, Razak stated:

It is . . . likely that an extreme left wing group led by Communist elements and their proxies [i.e., the Barisan Sosialis] would then gain power in Singapore.

Singapore would serve as an ideal base from which subversive operations would be mounted against neighbouring territories. . . .<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Rahman quoted by reporter Taminuddin Karim in the Straits Times (Singapore), September 25, 1962.

<sup>30</sup>Reuters report of Razak's speech before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. in the Straits Times (Singapore), April 21, 1963.

On the other hand, Razak indicated, merger would eliminate this threat: "Malaysia would prevent the Communist minded from being able to align independent Singapore with the Communist bloc."<sup>31</sup> To stress the seriousness of this threat Razak made an analogy that his American audience would understand, stating that if Singapore were permitted to achieve independence on her own, Malaya would have another Cuba just off her southern shore.

It is also important to note the indications that Rahman also felt that even with Singapore within the Federation it would still pose a serious threat to Malaya. In his 1961 statement quoted above consider the phrase ". . . and so we have been working hard to find a solution whereby we can co-exist in the closest association." [Italics mine.]<sup>32</sup> That Singapore within the Federation might come to pose a threat of core interest magnitude to Malaya is evidenced in this additional rather candid remark reported in Karim's 1962 press article: "What I am afraid is that if after merger the extreme left wing gets into power [in Singapore] and refuses to cooperate with the Federation, then we will have trouble galore."<sup>33</sup> As Lee Kuan Yew put it one year later:

You see, the Central Government cannot allow a Communist-controlled party to control Singapore--a State Government with a budget nearly half that of the Central Government, with its own Radio Station and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Rahman, "Tungku's Merger Speeches . . .," p. 127.

<sup>33</sup> Starner, p. 331.

Television Station, more powerful than the Central Government [sic].<sup>34</sup>

At the time, however, the best way to safeguard Malaya's vital interests in Singapore appeared to be through merger. Hopefully, merger would bring about the control and the eventual decline of the extreme left wing threat in Singapore. Thus the tone of public statements was that of friendly cooperation with Singapore in the joint endeavor to work out a mutually satisfactory and beneficial plan of merger. The ingenious formula for merger that was finally agreed upon is analyzed in the next section.

The Formula for Resolving Malaya's  
Core Interest Dilemma

It has been shown that, traditionally, merger had been viewed as a regime security core interest threat by the Malayan leadership and that later the prospect of an independent Singapore likewise came to be viewed as a threat to Malaya of core interest magnitude. This results in what has been defined as a core interest dilemma. This dilemma regarding merger was resolved, it shall be shown, when the Malayan leaders became convinced that the terms of merger could be manipulated in such a way as to reduce the threat posed by merger with Singapore to a tolerable (i.e., not of core interest magnitude) level.

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<sup>34</sup>Starner, p. 331.



That merger with Singapore continued to be viewed as a core interest threat is implied by Kahin's contention that Rahman remained opposed to merger--because of extreme apprehension over its domestic political consequences--until persuaded "that there existed a political formula which would insure that the Chinese would remain in a minority position, not merely in population but also--and most important--in political representation and power."<sup>35</sup> As Maddox put it, Rahman's fear that an enlarged Federation would "fall under Chinese control" still remained and was of "paramount importance."<sup>36</sup>

The problem of Chinese numbers could be solved neatly by widening the proposed federation to include the Borneo territories of North Borneo (Sabah), Sarawak and Brunei. In these territories the population ratio of Chinese to Malays plus other indigenous peoples was conveniently reversed, hence the Malays would not be swamped by the Chinese in such a new federation. Without the Borneo territories merger would result in the Malays being outnumbered by the Chinese by a margin of 95,000; by including the Borneo territories, however, merger would leave them in a majority,<sup>37</sup> though by a reduced margin of 423,000 (compared to their 909,000 edge in Malaya). Thus it is not surprising that at the

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<sup>35</sup>Kahin, p. 257.

<sup>36</sup>Maddox, p. 485.

<sup>37</sup>If the "Borneo indigenous" peoples are included in their number. Calculated from Appendix A.

TABLE 1

THE BORNEO TERRITORIES AS A COUNTERWEIGHT  
TO THE CHINESE IN SINGAPORE<sup>a</sup>

	Malays plus Borneo Indigenous	Chinese
Malaya	3,461,000 (50.1%)	2,552,000 (36.9%)
Malaya plus Singapore	3,688,000 (43.2%)	3,783,000 (44.3%)
Malaya plus Singapore and the Borneo Territories	4,562,000 (46.4%)	4,139,000 (42.1%)

<sup>a</sup>Calculated from the population statistics presented in Appendix A.

negotiations in London regarding these British territories the Malayan representatives were reported to be "adamant that they cannot accept Singapore unless North Borneo and Sarawak come in at the same time" in the face of British preference for a "transitional stage" for the Borneo territories.<sup>38</sup>

Historical and Geopolitical Factors Relevant to  
the Inclusion of the Borneo Territories in Malaysia

In contrast to Singapore, the Borneo territories were not a natural component of a Malaysian federation from the standpoint of location, for they are separated from Malaya and Singapore by from four hundred to over one thousand miles of the South China Sea. But despite this and the fact that they are part of one island with Indonesian Kalimantan, there

<sup>38</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), July 29, 1962.

are significant historic, geographic, economic, racial, and cultural factors which tie them to Malaya and Singapore and hence serve to justify their inclusion in Malaysia.

Historically the Dutch did not make very serious attempts to expand into the northern part of Borneo because they were frugal with their manpower and materials and the political instability (pirates, etc.) of the area discouraged capital investment there. This Dutch inaction allowed private individuals to move into the area, but they met with little economic success.

Britain was finally motivated to move into the northern Borneo vacuum by commercial and strategic interests. In the 1940's they used their annexation of Labuan Island (just off the coast of present-day Brunei) and Brooke's acquisition of Sarawak as bargaining concessions to persuade the Dutch to liberalize their trade policies in the Indies. The British were also interested in protecting the eastern flank of their China trade.<sup>39</sup> Consequently they gradually stamped out piracy in the area and established naval facilities on Labuan Island.

In 1888 Brunei, North Borneo and Sarawak became British protectorates, and after the Second World War the latter two became Crown Colonies. Also, after the war some of the inefficiency resulting from the lack of administrative coordination among the Borneo territories was overcome through the use of a common currency (the Malayan dollar), the

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<sup>39</sup>John F. Cady, Southeast Asia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 439.

adoption of a customs agreement, the formation of a common supreme court, and the introduction of various forms of technical cooperation. In short, the three territories shared with Malaya and Singapore the similar experience of British legal and administrative institutions in contrast to the Dutch impact on the rest of the island.

Geographically, Fisher contends, this division of Borneo into Dutch and British spheres was sound, despite its arbitrary appearance on a political map.<sup>40</sup> For, in Allen's words, this is an area in which "land--fragmented by mountain ranges--divides, while the sea unites."<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the physiography of Borneo effectively reinforces the political division of the island. A mountainous divide with summit levels mostly between 4,500 and 7,500 feet runs along much of the 900 mile border with Indonesia. Although these mountains are rugged, it is their "water-parting" nature which makes them such an effective divide, for:

In view of the almost continuous cover of dense equatorial rain forest, rivers provide the only effective inland routes, and although jungle paths interconnect the head-waters of many of the rivers in the hill country, there are very few such links across the major divides of the remote interior.<sup>42</sup>

The few people who live along this border are hardly aware of its existence, and some parts of this interior area

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<sup>40</sup> Fisher, p. 662.

<sup>41</sup> Sir Richard Allen, "Britain's Colonial Aftermath in South East Asia," *Asian Survey*, Vol. II (September, 1963), p. 413.

<sup>42</sup> Fisher, p. 665.

are largely unknown to the outside world.<sup>43</sup> The bulk of the population of the northern part of Borneo lives in coastal settlements situated on the rivers which flow down from the mountainous interior. It is truly the sea that unites the area because the connections between these settlements are by water rather than by land.

Most of northern Borneo's overseas trade routes run through Singapore, and the territories form a single trading area with Singapore. Economist T. H. Silcock has long advocated the thorough integration of Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories because:

The commercial skill, technical training and surplus labor of Singapore could help to develop the Borneo territories as a whole, while the oil revenues of Brunei and Sarawak would pay for development not merely in the British Borneo area but in Malaya itself as well.<sup>44</sup>

Also, it should be noted, North Borneo contains valuable timber resources. Thus, economically the Borneo territories could be considered a rational component of a Malaysia federation.

The components of Malaysia also share ties of language, culture, and racial composition. They have a common lingua franca in English, common ties of Moslem and Chinese culture, and similar communal mixtures of Malay, Chinese, and various tribal peoples.

<sup>43</sup> Human Relations Area Files, North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1956), p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> T. H. Silcock, The Commonwealth Economy in Southeast Asia (Durham: Duke University Press, 1959), p. 75.

There are several other factors beside that of the racial population statistics which probably contributed to Malaya's desire to include the Borneo territories in the new federation. Economic inducements to merger included Brunei's oil revenues (it is second to Canada in Commonwealth oil production), Sabah's vast tracts of timber, and the expanded market the Borneo territories would provide for Malaya's developing industrial production.

Brackman contends that there was a military security inducement for the Malayan leadership to include the Borneo territories in Malaysia. His argument is based on an alleged fear of "thoughtful Malays" that the West would write off mainland Southeast Asia and withdraw to the offshore islands of the Malay world (i.e., the Philippines and Indonesia) as its line of defense. Thus for many Malays in Malaya:

Malaysia was not only a step toward blocking Chinese Communist expansionism from within, but also insurance from without that the West would not abandon the peninsula, since its integrity would be linked to the integrity of the islands (Borneo). The peninsular Malays would not have to submit to Javanese domination to escape Chinese domination.<sup>45</sup>

"Sophisticated Malays" felt strongly about this point, Brackman concludes.<sup>46</sup>

The Borneo Territories as a Positive Influence  
Type of Core Interest of Malaya

Even if the existence of these inducements in the perceptions of the Malayan decision-makers were to be granted, it

<sup>45</sup>Brackman, pp. 36-37.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

it is contended that the key element that made Malaya adamant that the Borneo territories (at least Sabah and Sarawak) be included in any merger with Singapore was that of racial population. This factor alone made the inclusion of the Borneo territories a Malayan core interest because the Alliance leaders felt that merger with Singapore would not be tolerated by the Malays of Malaya if it would render them numerically inferior to the Chinese in their "own" country.

The inclusion of the Borneo territories in any merger with Singapore was a positive-influence type of core interest, it should be noted, because political annexation was what was required to satisfy this Malayan interest. None of the other possible inducements for including the Borneo territories, it appears, can be considered to be factors of core interest magnitude.

In short, it is contended that the Borneo territories became a Malayan core interest requiring annexation not because they were of any crucial intrinsic importance to Malaya but because they were required to make merger with Singapore politically acceptable to the Malays of Malaya. Indeed the inclusion of part of southern Thailand or of Indonesian Sumatra would have served the same purpose (and would have been much more logical and preferred annexations in many ways), but these areas were not available whereas the Borneo territories were. Only because they were viewed as the only area available (for realistic and practical reasons) to Malaya did the inclusion of the Borneo territories in any

merger with Singapore become a Malayan core interest. Finally, note should be taken of the fact that Brunei eventually decided not to join. This does not weaken the above argument (as at first glance it might appear) but rather reinforces the contention that the racial arithmetic factor was the crucial one. It strengthens this argument because of the three Borneo territories Brunei (with its huge oil royalty reserves) was clearly the most important one to Malaya from the economic point of view. But it is the least important one from the point of view of racial statistics. This is because Brunei had only a 37,000 surplus of Malays (plus Borneo indigenous peoples) over Chinese compared to Sarawak's 278,000 and North Borneo's 203,000. In terms of racial percentages the effect of Brunei's failure to join Malaysia was thus insignificant: the percentage of Chinese increased from 42.1% to 42.3% and the percentage of Malays (plus Borneo indigenous people) decreased by the same slight amount from 46.4% to 46.2%.<sup>47</sup>

Consequently it must be concluded that Malaya's positive-influence type of core interest in including the Borneo territories in a merger with Singapore applied to only two of the three Borneo territories. Though Brunei's inclusion in Malaysia was undoubtedly desired by Malaya (probably more because of its economic value and its geographic location than its racial composition) it was not viewed as being vital.

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<sup>47</sup> Calculated from the population statistics presented in Appendix A.



Thus Rahman could say of Brunei's decision-makers, "if they choose to stay out they are allowed to do so."<sup>48</sup>

#### The Terms of Merger

An "essential concession"<sup>49</sup> that Singapore had to make to Malaya in order to make merger politically acceptable to the Malays concerned the island's representation in the federal parliament and the nature of its population's citizenship within the new federation. Both of these provisions were designed to decrease the danger of Singapore's Chinese being able to threaten the political dominance of the Malay-dominated Alliance Party in Malaysia.

In regard to its representation in the Malaysian House of Representatives, Singapore had to be content with only fifteen of the 159 seats. Compared to Malaya, this was nine less than it merited on a strict one-man-one-vote basis.<sup>50</sup> Sarawak

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<sup>48</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), September 25, 1962. While Brunei could become a core interest threat to Malaysia, the facts that it remains a British protectorate and that its internal security has been closely watched since the December, 1962 revolt appear to satisfy what is assumed to be a Malaysian core interest in the area. This appears to be a negative-influence type of core interest which merely requires the absence of a credible threat to Malaysian security. A detailed analysis of Malaysia's interests in Brunei is outside the scope of this work.

<sup>49</sup> As Osborne accurately describes it, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Malaya received 104 seats for its population of 6,909,000 or one seat for each 66,433 people. On the basis of one seat for each 66,433 people Singapore would merit 24 seats, Sarawak 11 seats and Sabah 7 seats. In fact, however, Singapore received only 15 while Sarawak got 24 and Sabah 16! Computed from Appendix A.

and Sabah, in contrast, were grossly overrepresented in terms of this criterion, receiving thirteen and nine seats more than they merited, respectively.<sup>51</sup> Put another way, Singapore got only 62% of the seats its population merited while the Borneo territories got 222% of the seats their population merited according to a one-man-one-vote criterion. As a result the average number of people per representative in the Malaysian House in each of the four components of the Federation was as follows:

Sabah:	28,438
Sarawak:	31,000
Malaya:	66,433
Singapore:	108,933 <sup>52</sup>

Thus the effectiveness of the Bornean political counterweight to Chinese Singapore within Malaysia was magnified by two factors, Borneo's overrepresentation and Singapore's underrepresentation.

The provision for special Singapore citizenship also "reflected the reality" that the Malay decision-makers in Malaya were prepared to agree to a merger only if, "they could be assured that they would not be swamped politically as a result of re-union across the causeway."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup>It could be argued that Singapore should have fewer seats and the Borneo territories more seats because rural areas are overrepresented in Malaya and Singapore is basically an urban area while Sarawak and Sabah are primarily rural. An additional argument why Singapore should have fewer seats is the fact that it was allowed to keep a large percentage of its revenues and retain control of its own health, education, and welfare in contrast to the Borneo territories.

<sup>52</sup>Calculated from statistics presented in Appendix A.

<sup>53</sup>Leifer, "Politics in Singapore . . .," p. 110.

The citizenship problem from Malaya's point of view stemmed from the fact that Singapore's citizenship requirements were less strict than Malaya's. This plus the sheer number of Chinese voters in Singapore caused Malaya to fear that Singapore politicians and voters might move into Malaya and upset its racial "balance" (i.e., the Malay preponderance of political power via UMNO's clearly predominant position within the Alliance).

The solution adopted for this knotty problem was to continue these two types of citizenship. While they would have "parity of status," only Singapore citizens would be allowed to run for a legislative seat (i.e., federal or state) or vote in Singapore, and only federal citizens could run for a legislative seat or vote in Malaya. These provisions were of crucial importance because they limited the ability of a party established in one of the areas to expand into the other--e.g., a Singapore Chinese party from expanding into Malaya.<sup>54</sup>

In short, the specific terms of merger Malaya was able to secure for the entry of Singapore and the Borneo territories into a wider federation further reduced the internal political threat Singapore would be able to pose within Malaysia. For not only were the Borneo territories brought in as a counterbalance to Chinese Singapore but also, by the special terms of merger, the political weight of the Borneo

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<sup>54</sup>Citizens of one, however, could still campaign in the territory of the other. This partial loophole became very significant later in regard to the PAP's entry into the 1964 elections in Malaya.

territories was greatly increased and that of Singapore was significantly decreased. As a result, a Singapore within Malaysia came to be no longer viewed as a core interest threat to Malaya. Thus Malaya's core interest dilemma regarding merger was resolved and Malaya proceeded to negotiate the finer details of a merger agreement.

The Core Interest Implication of the Singapore Referendum  
and the United Nations Assessment in Borneo

It could be argued that the Singapore government's willingness to hold a referendum on the question of merger with Malaya and the Malayan government's willingness to allow a U. N. assessment of the wishes of the Borneo peoples regarding merger (as agreed at the 1963 Manila Conference) indicate that merger was not an interest of core interest magnitude for the leaders of either Singapore or Malaya. This argument is based on the assumptions that the respective governments were committed to abide by the results of the referendum and the assessment and that there was a possibility that the results might not be in favor of merger. Accordingly, the Singapore referendum and the U. N. assessment in the Borneo territories merit examination.

The Singapore Referendum

Faced with some vocal opposition to his plans for merger, Lee mentioned in early 1962 that the best way to test Singapore opinion regarding merger would be to have a referendum. This worried many backers of Lee and/or merger because a heavy anti-

Malaysia vote from the extreme left wing was certain. Lee remained calm and confident, however, and his handling of the issue indicated why.

To begin with Lee and his PAP controlled the nature, number, and wording of the alternatives that would be voted upon in the "referendum." The voters were not given the chance to vote for or against merger per se but merely could choose between three different ways of federating. They could vote to merge on the terms of the Singapore Government's White Paper (which included automatic citizenship and autonomy in labor and education), or on terms giving them the same status as the Malayan states, or on no less favorable terms than those given to the Borneo territories.<sup>55</sup> The first alternative was the obvious choice because the second was a little less favorable and the third had no appeal to a Singaporean.

Secondly, just in case the desired alternative did not win, Lee arranged for the referendum in such a manner that its outcome would not have any binding legal or constitutional effect. Thus even if the vote went badly Lee could still, legally, go ahead with merger in the manner he desired.

Finally, after the Barisan Socialis and the United People's Party urged their followers to cast blank ballots in protest to what they considered to be rigged alternatives, Lee arranged for all blank votes to be counted officially as

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<sup>55</sup> A reproduction of the official ballot appeared in the Straits Times (Singapore), August 20, 1962.

indications of support for the government's proposal, on the argument that the undecided voter is willing to let the government decide.<sup>56</sup>

In short, Lee managed to stack the referendum in such an advantageous way that it became a "Heads I win, tails you lose" type of vote. The outcome of the vote, held in September of 1962, is shown in the following table:

TABLE 2  
RESULTS OF THE SINGAPORE REFERENDUM<sup>a</sup>  
(September, 1962)

Alternative	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
A	397,626	71.1
B	9,422	1.7
C	7,911	1.4
Blank	144,077	25.8
A plus Blank	541,703	96.9

<sup>a</sup>Malaysia, Department of Information, Malaysia in Brief (Kuala Lumpur: Lai Than Fong Press, 1963), p. 115.

The size and discipline of the extreme left wing was indicated by the number of blank votes cast. Other than this little was clear except that most voters wanted merger on the best possible terms.

<sup>56</sup>Gordon P. Means, "Malaysia--A New Federation in Prospect," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (Summer, 1963), p. 145.

Hanna described Lee's handling of the referendum as a "virtuoso performance in counter-Communist one-upmanship,"<sup>57</sup> and McKie commented that the referendum was a classic if you believe that the end justifies the means.<sup>58</sup> Lee rationalized his strategem as follows: "We were meeting cardsharppers and we were not going in like spring chickens."<sup>59</sup>

In short, it is clear that the Singapore government was not committed to abide by the results of the referendum. It is also clear that there was little, if any, possibility that the results might not have been in favor of merger. Thus it must be concluded that the Singapore government's willingness to hold this so-called referendum on merger does not indicate that merger with Malaya was not an interest of core interest magnitude.

#### The United Nations Assessment in Borneo

Faced with opposition by Indonesia and the Philippines to the inclusion of the Borneo territories in the new federation, Rahman agreed to meet with Sukarno and Macapagal at Manila for a summit conference that lasted from July 30 to August 5, 1963. In the Manila Accord that resulted, Indonesia and the Philippines stated that "they would welcome the formation of Malaysia provided the support of the people of the

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<sup>57</sup>Hanna, p. 113.

<sup>58</sup>Ronald McKie, The Emergence of Malaysia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963), p. 260.

<sup>59</sup>Hanna, loc. cit.

within the requirements embodied in principle 9, taking into consideration:

- (I) the recent elections in Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak but nevertheless further examining, verifying and satisfying himself as to whether
  - (a) Malaysia was a major issue, if not the main issue;
  - (b) Electoral registers were properly compiled;
  - (c) Elections were free and there was no coercion; and
  - (d) Votes were properly polled and properly counted; and
- (II) the wishes of those who, being qualified to vote, would have exercised their right of self-determination in the recent elections had it not been for their detention for political activities, imprisonment for political offences or absence from Sabah (North Borneo) or Sarawak.<sup>63</sup>

George Kahin, a highly respected scholar who was in a position to know,<sup>64</sup> reported that "both leaders [Macapagal and Sukarno] expected the U. N. to find in favor of Malaysia" and that they had "privately so advised" U Thant!<sup>65</sup> Kahin thus characterized the agreement as one in which everyone's face would be saved.<sup>66</sup>

What could be interpreted as additional evidence that Indonesia actually felt that such a Borneo assessment would support the formation of Malaysia was an earlier indication made by Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio. When asked

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<sup>63</sup>Malaysia, Tripartite Summit Meeting . . . , p. 6.

<sup>64</sup>It is important to note that Kahin talked to several Indonesian leaders during the month before the conference regarding the Malaysia issue, went to and from it on the Indonesian delegation's plane and had informal discussions with many delegation members, and talked with many cabinet officers immediately after the conference. Kahin, p. 269.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.



whether he felt a referendum would find most people in favor of Malaysia he reportedly replied, "Yes."<sup>67</sup>

U Thant's clarification of the task with which he was entrusted also tends to corroborate this interpretation:

There was no reference to a referendum or plebiscite in the request which was addressed to me. I was asked to ascertain the wishes of the people . . . [by a fresh approach] which in my opinion was necessary 'to ensure complete compliance with the principle of self-determination . . .' taking into consideration certain questions relating to the recent elections.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, a statement made by Sukarno in his autobiography does not contradict this interpretation. He notes that at Manila "I agreed to accept Malaysia" provided a "U. N.-sponsored unbiased determination of the people's will in North Borneo was first undertaken."<sup>69</sup>

That the Malayan Government did not consider a favorable U. N. assessment to be necessary for the formation of Malaysia is indicated in a revealing official statement made by the Malayan Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, Inche Ghazali bin Shafie that, "it has been clear to Malaya that the formation of Malaysia is not contingent upon the ascertainment by the Secretary-General . . ."<sup>70</sup> Rather, Ghazali made it clear, the U. N. factfinding mission, as

<sup>67</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), July 16, 1963.

<sup>68</sup> Malaysia, Department of Information, United Nations Malaysia Mission Report (Kuala Lumpur: Lai Than Fong Press, September 16, 1963), p. ii.

<sup>69</sup> Cindy Adams, Sukarno: An Autobiography (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), p. 301.

<sup>70</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), September 7, 1963.

agreed to at the Manila summit conference, was "only to enable Indonesia and the Philippines to welcome the formation of Malaysia."<sup>71</sup> In an earlier statement Sabah leader Donald Stephens had made this same point even more firmly. He declared that Malaysia would be formed "come hell or high water" and that, "if, in the unlikely event the report says the majority do not want Malaysia, we will still go ahead with Malaysia, but without the blessings of Indonesia and the Philippines."<sup>72</sup>

In short the evidence indicates the following. First, that there was probably some kind of informal understanding or agreement at the Manila Conference that the U. N. assessment would be favorable to Malaysia. Second, that even if the U. N. assessment did not turn out to be favorable to the proposed federation, Malaya reserved the right to go ahead and form Malaysia anyway. Thus it must be concluded that the possibility that Malaya's agreement to the U. N. assessment in Borneo demonstrates that Malaya's interest in a Federation of Malaysia which included the Borneo territories was not of core interest magnitude is not supported by a closer examination of the situation.

Conclusions Regarding Malaya's Core  
Interests in Merger

In this chapter it has been shown how merger with Singapore had traditionally been viewed as a core interest

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1963.

threat to Malaya because of the racial and ideological characteristics of Singapore; how the prospect of an independent and extreme left wing or Communist Singapore after 1963 caused merger with Singapore to become a core interest of Malaya; how the resulting core interest dilemma for Malaya was eventually resolved by the development of a special plan for merger which would bring the Borneo territories into the new federation and give Singapore reduced political representation (but greater autonomy) and a separate type of citizenship and thus reduce the threat to Malaya of merger with Singapore to a tolerable level; and how neither the Singapore referendum nor the U. N. assessment in Borneo contradict this core interest interpretation of the formation of Malaysia.

The inclusion of the Borneo territories (or rather two of them, Sarawak and North Borneo) became a Malayan core interest not because of any intrinsic value they had for Malaya but because they were the only available counterweight to Chinese Singapore. Malaya's core interest in the Borneo territories was of the positive-influence type because their annexation was required to satisfy it.

Because of Singapore's and Malaya's mutual core interests in merger (and the lack of any more satisfactory alternatives for Sarawak and North Borneo) the negotiations for the formation of Malaysia were eventually successful. Though Malaysia Day had to be postponed to allow for the completion of the U. N. assessment in Borneo, the Federation of Malaysia

was officially established on September 16, 1963. The life of the Federation in its original form was short, however, for less than two years later the separation of Singapore from Malaysia was announced. The factors causing this separation are analyzed in Part III of this work.

PART III

THE SEPARATION OF SINGAPORE

## CHAPTER VI

### THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The two states are obviously dependent upon one another, but such is the extent of the racial and political antipathy that political or even economic merger seems distant.<sup>1</sup>

The observer who made this statement in August of 1960 did not appear to be very astute when the Tunku delivered his merger speech less than one year later, but with the separation of Singapore and Malaya five years later the basic accuracy of his perception was vindicated. In Part III it will be demonstrated that a core interest threat generated by factors of "racial and political antipathy" within Malaysia--rather than the external pressures of Indonesian confrontation--was the cause of the breakup of the new federation.

Because a core interest is defined in terms of the psychological environment of a state's decision-makers, their perceptions of event--not some other observer's perceptions--are the key to gaining an understanding of their decision-making behavior. And to understand a leader's perceptions, particularly those regarding threats to his country's existence, a knowledge of the general political environment in which he operates, the nature of his political party and its popular

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<sup>1</sup>Hanna, Sequel to Colonialism (New York: American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1965), p. 18.

support, and his personality, political ideology, and political style can be of great value and importance. Thus before the events leading to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia are described and analyzed, these important political background factors will be examined.

#### The Political Environment of Malaysia

A perceptive observer of the Malayan political scene has noted that the Malayan state seems to be based largely on what he terms an "eggshell syndrome," i.e., "the shared value of sensitivity to intercommunal tensions." Maryanov explains:

Malays and Chinese . . . share the awareness that they are part of Malaya. In what might be called an 'eggshell syndrome,' they all know, often intuitively, that they must tread carefully so as not to go beyond the limits of possible differences with the implicit threat of the destruction of the whole society. Social behavior as well as political behavior is adjusted accordingly. (Emphasis added.)<sup>2</sup>

The emphasized phrase indicates that a threat to the delicate communal harmony of Malaya would most likely be viewed as what has been defined as a core interest threat to the Malayan state, because it could entail the destruction of its whole society via communal riots or a race war.

#### The Alliance Party

In this political environment the Alliance Party has been in power ever since the first elections in 1955, two

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<sup>2</sup>Gerald S. Maryanov, "Political Parties in Mainland Malaya," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March, 1967), p. 106.

years before Malaya achieved its independence from Britain. As has been indicated, the Alliance is made up of three separate communal political parties: The United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). This is a politically fascinating partnership. As Geertz has put it, the Alliance is "a federated noncommunal party of subparties themselves frankly, explicitly and on occasion enthusiastically communal in appeal, set in a context of primordial suspicion and hostility that would make the Hapsburg Empire seem like Denmark or Australia."<sup>3</sup>

This partnership is a very unequal one, however, because UMNO is by far the most powerful and the MIC is extremely weak. UMNO's predominance is based on the fact that it is the party of the Malays, who constitute the largest percentage of the electorate. The Malays form a solid voting block because, as Parmer notes, "to most Malays, political unity is considered essential to their welfare or indeed to their survival." (Emphasis added.)<sup>4</sup>

During the 1950's UMNO clearly could have controlled the government even without the aid of its Chinese and Indian Alliance partners because of the racial composition of the electorate. By the 1960's, however, more of the non-Malays

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<sup>3</sup>Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," in Geertz (ed.), Old Societies and New States (Glencoe: Free Press, 1963), p. 134 as quoted by Milne, p. 246.

<sup>4</sup>Parmer, p. 333.



had qualified to vote, and the Malay proportion of the electorate had diminished greatly. Statistics for the years of 1955 and 1959 indicated that the Malay portion of the electorate had fallen dramatically from 84.2% to 56.8% while the Chinese portion of the electorate had increased from 11.2% to 35.9%.<sup>5</sup> T. E. Smith, a close student of Malayan population statistics, predicted in 1960 that the extent to which the Alliance could find a real basis of Chinese and Indian support might determine the outcome of Malaya's next (due by 1964) parliamentary election.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as has already been indicated, with the prospect of merger the Malay political leaders were extremely concerned about the racial composition and the citizenship provisions of any enlarged federation.

The stresses and strains within the Alliance are often quite severe because each of the two main components (UMNO and the MCA) is faced with demands from its own communal constituency which often conflict greatly with the demands the other race is making on its party representative within the Alliance. Political disagreements within the Alliance, King observed in 1957, are resolved in closed sessions and all formal voting is with the party. Individual members may express their concern with particular issues on the parliamentary floor, however, and also may make their individual views known to the public through off-the-record techniques. A war of nerves often

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<sup>5</sup>R. K. Vasil, "The 1964 General Elections in Malaya," International Studies (New Delhi), Vol. VII, No. 1 (July, 1965), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>As quoted by Purcell, p. 138.

precedes the making of compromises, but so far they have been made.<sup>7</sup>

That this method for handling conflicting racial interests has continued is indicated in Gagliano's recent description of the process:

Each of the racially exclusive party affiliates of the Alliance claimed to embody every legitimate interest of the ethnic community it represented. Through these ethnic-party components, the Alliance condominium asserted a monopoly on the process of articulating and integrating communal interests.

Racial claims recognized at the sub-party level were taken by communal leaders to the Alliance Executive Committee. Here intense, informal racial bargaining took place in camera and communal interests were integrated into an Alliance national program. The low visibility of the bargaining was carefully maintained because of the fear that public discussion would harden communal positions and rupture the entire Alliance entente. Disputes were resolved, issue by issue, in a series of pragmatic compromises, with Alliance leaders seeking to keep concessions from each ethnic party within the toleration limits of its supporters and rank-and-file memberships. While each new issue required the rebalancing of an already delicate racial equilibrium, with no major political opposition, the Alliance formula worked. (Emphasis added.)<sup>8</sup>

Thus it is at the top leadership level<sup>9</sup>--and not at the mass or village level nor even at the secondary leadership level--that the political understanding, trust, and willingness

<sup>7</sup> King, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Felix V. Gagliano, Communal Violence in Malaysia 1969: The Political Aftermath (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1970), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Most of the upper echelon Alliance leaders of all races are former civil servants, businessmen, or professionals. Typically they have had an English language medium secondary education in Malaya and some university study in England.

to compromise that holds the Alliance together and provides some basis for an intercommunal Malayan government exists.

The compromise solutions that are achieved are not the product of abstract racial enlightenment and goodwill. The "hard fact" that brings the MCA and MIC leaders to accept compromise solutions, despite strong communal pressures to the contrary, is their realization that without UMNO "they would probably have little chance of winning any of their goals except at the price of communal conflict, which they are unwilling to contemplate."<sup>10</sup> For their party, UMNO leaders make some accommodation to the MCA and the MIC because they realize they must have substantial non-Malay support to ensure the general progress and welfare of the country. Parmer's basic conclusion that "among the leaders of all three parties there is a profound conviction that they must cooperate"<sup>11</sup> tends to corroborate Maryanov's "eggshell syndrome" thesis.

#### "The Terms of 1957"

Many of the fundamental compromises that formed the foundation for intercommunal cooperation within the Malayan state are embodied in the 1957 Constitution of Malaya. Others have been agreed to on an informal basis. Taken all together they constitute what Parmer has labeled "the terms of 1957"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Parmer, p. 335.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> J. Norman Parmer, "Malaysia 1965: Challenging the Terms of 1957," Asian Survey, Vol. VI, No. 2 (February, 1966).

and what Tilman calls "the unspoken simbiotic bargain."<sup>13</sup> The basic points of this "bargain" have been summarized extremely well by Milne:

Roughly speaking, the Malays were to have political power, while the Chinese were to have economic power. The structure of government, including the Rulers, would remain Malay. Citizenship requirements for non-Malays would be liberalized, but for more than a decade over fifty percent of the electors would be Malays; additionally, where Malays predominated, rural seats would have fewer electors than urban, so Malay votes would be more heavily weighted than non-Malay. The Malays were also given special rights, the most important of which, politically, was the provision that in certain sectors of the civil service a quota of appointments would be reserved for Malays. The Chinese and other non-Malays, in addition to the citizenship changes, benefited from an unwritten understanding that their predominance in business would continue, modified by the fact that control of a large part of rubber and tin production and of the export-import trade was in the hands of foreigners. The non-Malays would not be harassed or squeezed in the pursuit of business as were their counterparts in some adjacent countries. In the very remote future, no doubt, it was envisaged that the racial division of labor between the elites would disappear. Chinese would play a greater part in politics and government, while Malays would become more active in business. However, by the time Malaysia was formed in 1963, there was not much change compared with 1957.<sup>14</sup>

As will be demonstrated, an important factor in the decision to expel Singapore from Malaysia was the challenge to these "Terms of '57" that Lee Kuan Yew came to personify.

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<sup>13</sup>Robert O. Tilman, "Malaysia and Singapore: The Failure of a Federation," in Tilman (ed.), Man, State and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 502.

<sup>14</sup>R. S. Milne, "Singapore's Exit from Malaysia; the Consequences of Ambiguity," Asian Survey, Vol. VI, No. 3 (March, 1966), p. 178.

The Potential for Communal Strife

Milne's pessimistic conclusion regarding the general lack of improvement in the situation between 1957 and 1963 is corroborated by such other well qualified observers as T. H. Silcock and J. Norman Parmer.<sup>15</sup> Silcock, for example, noted that there are many Chinese who "firmly believe that their wealth and Malay poverty are the natural consequences of Chinese industry, thrift and adaptability to modern ways, and of Malay indolence, thriftlessness and conservatism."<sup>16</sup> And Gagliano notes that most young Chinese "who experience disappointment in their career aspirations" blame the special Malay rights and privileges regarding scholarships, government jobs, business permits, and professional licenses.<sup>17</sup>

A study of educational and occupational aspirations by Takei and Bock indicates that Malay students have "somewhat higher aspirations" and "significantly higher expectations" than their Chinese counterparts. But despite this sharp rise in Malay wants and aspirations since independence, they find, "the generally low level of Malay performance norms has remained relatively unchanged."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Takei and Bock

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<sup>15</sup>Cited by Gagliano, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Silcock, "Communal and Party Structure," p. 5 as quoted by Gagliano, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Gagliano, *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Yoshimitsu Takei and John C. Bock, "Ethnic Sponsorship in Education: A Case Study of Malaysia," Paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies Meeting at San Francisco, California, on April 5, 1970 (Mimeographed).

report that "the government policy of manipulating the educational system as a means of sponsoring Malay mobility" appears to be contributing to "a growing sense of alienation" within the non-Malay communities, producing a "devaluing of the government's effectiveness as the legitimate representative of all Malaysia's ethnic communities" and a "reaffirmation of communal values and solidarity as a defense against Malay militance."<sup>19</sup> The authors' closing observation and conclusion have serious implications for this study and thus merit quotation in full:

It is important to consider the potential for alienation and even for anomic activity which such marked disparity between expectations and the realities of Malaysian society may be creating. For as the Malays, in disappointment and frustration at their failure, come to feel increasingly rebuffed by the mainstream of modernization they are too ready to attribute their plight to the 'avarice' of the immigrant minorities. In response, the Malays appear to be increasingly turning inward to their own community for social and psychological shelter. It is indeed an unhappy circle: the culturally disadvantaged state of the Malay community has required government programs for alleviation, but those policies which have been implemented--by reinforcing those very characteristics of the Malay value system which are most incapacitating and by failing to achieve their stated objective of significantly improving the lot of the rural Malay--have tended to increase rather than decrease Malay communal embeddedness.

In conclusion, then, we would submit that the most significant overall consequence of the government's attempts to provide a more equitable redistribution of social and economic benefits by manipulation of the educational system has been an increasing ethnic polarization of the Malaysian polity--with both the Malays and the non-Malays believing that the educational system is serving as an instrument for sponsoring the interests of the rival group.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

Gagliano states that there is "a widespread preception [sic] of 'relative deprivation'"<sup>21</sup> within both the Malay and the Chinese communal groups of Malaya. Within the Malay community this perceived relative deprivation is primarily economic in nature while among the Chinese it is largely political.<sup>22</sup> The ominous significance of these perceptions of relative deprivation is suggested by Gurr:

. . . relative deprivation is the basic precondition for civil strife of any kind, . . . the more widespread and intense deprivation is among members of a population, the greater is the magnitude of strife in one form or another.<sup>23</sup>

That perceptions of relative deprivation could be a dangerous factor in the Malaysian political environment is indicated in Scott's study of political ideology in Malaysia. He notes that in Malaysia, with the exception of only a few party leaders, most party members are "largely concerned with retaining or expanding the privileges their group enjoys rather than with devising policies to enlarge the pie." Thus Scott concludes that a constant pie orientation is prevalent in Malaysia, and, indeed, he observes that this psychological orientation

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21. "Related deprivation" is defined as actors' perceptions of discrepancy between their value expectations (the goods and conditions of life to which they believe they are justifiably entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts of these goods and conditions that they think they are able to get and keep). Ted Gurr, "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXII, No. 4 (December, 1968), p. 1104, as quoted by Gagliano, p. 4.

22 Gagliano, ibid., pp. 3-4.

23 Gurr, loc. cit.

"does not seem to be contradicted by any of the evidence."<sup>24</sup>

The implications of a "constant pie" in a political system are great. When the pie is perceived as expanding, cooperation and generosity are possible, but where it is viewed as being constant or, worse yet, declining in size, "there is no substitute for strength and ruthlessness." In the former situation "groups fight to preserve a rate of advance in an atmosphere of economic growth," while in the latter "a group fights to preserve its share of a fixed pie against the assaults of opposing groups." In short, Scott notes, it is the difference between the politics of scarcity and the politics of affluence. "In one people can get rich and no one suffers, while in the other, the poor must plunder the rich if they are to advance."<sup>25</sup> This difference helps to explain both the appeal of, and the hostile reactions to, Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign.

Another serious effect of a constant pie orientation is that it leaves little room for social trust and cooperativeness which, as Almond and Verba indicate, are extremely important for a political culture because "they reduce partisanship and fragmentation, facilitate the formation of groups, encourage the use of persuasive strategies, and make for some measure of confidence in the elite and in the

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<sup>24</sup> James C. Scott, Political Ideology in Malaysia, Reality and the Beliefs of an Elite (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 114-15.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



political system."<sup>26</sup> As will become apparent, the Malaysian political culture is seriously lacking in these healthy qualities which are extremely important for the successful functioning of a democratic political system.

#### The History of Communal Violence in Malaya

Several significant outbreaks of racial violence occurred in Malaya between the end of World War Two and the formation of Malaysia. Before the British had reoccupied Malaya after the end of the war, the predominantly Chinese Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) guerrillas stirred up racial tension by announcing that they would punish all those that had assisted the Japanese. The racial implications of this were obvious because most of those who had collaborated were Malays or Indians. The result was tragic for all. Vindictive score-settling by the guerrillas against Malay collaborators in some areas generalized into Chinese-Malay communal violence as Malay majorities retaliated against the Chinese living among them in other areas. This communal violence was fairly widespread and threatened to escalate into racial warfare before the British were able to restore peace and order. Only three years later (1948) many of these same Chinese MPAJA personnel launched a guerrilla war that had strong communal overtones and plagued Malaya for over a decade.

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<sup>26</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), pp. 356-60 as quoted in Scott, ibid., p. 116.

In 1950 the Maria Hertogh race riots erupted over the validity of an Islamic marriage between a Malay and a teenage Dutch girl of that name. When the marriage was annulled by the High Court in Singapore, Malays viewed the decision as a public insult to Islam and rioting mobs attacked Europeans and Chinese. Sixteen persons lost their lives before responsible leaders could mobilize opinion against the violence.

In addition to such eruptions of racial rioting, frequent clashes took place throughout the 1950's and the early 1960's between Malay authorities and non-Malay students, trade unionists, and secret society members.<sup>27</sup> It was only too apparent to all that general racial discontent, mistrust, and animosity was such that a single racial incident could spark a communal riot at almost any time in Malaya or Singapore. While the underlying causes of racial tension and rioting had usually been held in check, little had been done to eliminate them. With the racial communities of a merged Malaya and Singapore so evenly matched numerically (3,688,000 Malays to 3,783,000 Chinese)<sup>28</sup> it is obvious that a major outbreak of communal violence could threaten the very existence of Malaysia.

This unpleasant reality was the basis of the "eggshell syndrome" Maryanov detected in the Malayan political environment. People of both major races are thus motivated to "tread

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<sup>27</sup>Michael Leifer, "Communal Violence in Singapore," Asian Survey, Vol. IV, No. 10 (October, 1964) as cited by Gagliano, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>Computed from Appendix A.

carefully\* in order to avoid sparking a racial bloodbath that could lead to a repressive new political situation for their communal group. Gagliano notes that what Geertz said of independent Malaya applied also to Malaysia:

One of the more effective binding forces that has held Chinese and Malays together in a single state, despite the tremendous centrifugal tendencies the racial and cultural difference generates, is the fear on the part of either group that, should the federation dissolve, they may become a clearly submerged minority in some other political framework: the Malays through the turn of the Chinese to Singapore and China; the Chinese through the turn of the Malays to Indonesia.<sup>29</sup>

In the nearly two years between the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore, both these threats were to be publicly raised. The former threat arose through a bid by a Singapore-based and Chinese-dominated left wing political party (the PAP) for Chinese political support in Malaya and through a public suggestion by the Chinese Prime Minister of Singapore that a new federation of largely Chinese populated states within Malaysia (Singapore, Penang and Malacca) might be created. The latter threat materialized in Indonesia's confrontation efforts, in Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) actions favoring unification with Indonesia, and in Philippine President Macapagal's call for a federation of the states of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia to be called Maphilindo.

#### The Political Terms of Singapore's Entry

As has been shown, in the 1963 merger plan the problem of safeguarding Malay political supremacy against the left

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<sup>29</sup> Clifford Geertz (ed.), "The Integrative Revolution," Old Societies and New States (Glencoe: The Press Press, 1963), p. 115, as cited by Gagliano, p. 5.

wing Chinese electorate of Singapore was met by giving Singapore fewer (fifteen)<sup>30</sup> and the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak more (sixteen and twenty-four respectively) of the 159 federal parliament seats than their populations merited according to a one-man-one-vote criterion. Also Malaya was protected against the intrusion of Singapore's energetic Chinese politicians by the creation of separate Singapore and Malayan citizenships and the provision that neither could run for office within the territory of the other.<sup>31</sup>

There was a flaw in this constitutional prophylactic measure, however, that left Malaya vulnerable to the penetration of Singapore's politics. As the 1964 Malayan elections were to show, there was nothing to prevent Malayan citizens from running for office under the PAP banner in elections in Malaya. Also there were no legal measures to stop Lee Kuan Yew and other Singapore politicians from entering Malay and campaigning for such candidates.

There are indications, however, that Malaya had secured some type of informal understanding or agreement before merger regarding the political place of Singapore and its politicians within Malaysia. Apparently the Alliance leaders thought they had a pledge from Lee that he and his PAP would stay out of

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<sup>30</sup>As Tilman notes, Singapore "might have expected at least twice as many seats" on the basis of its population. Tilman, p. 500.

<sup>31</sup>See above, pp. 132-34.

Malayan politics.<sup>32</sup> Pledge or no pledge, it seems clear that the Alliance leaders were laboring under a false assumption regarding the political aspirations of the Singapore Chinese as represented by Lee and the PAP. As Milne put it, just as the moderate Malay leaders had assumed in 1957 that what the Chinese of Malaya wanted to do within Malaya was to make money, they assumed in 1963 that the main thing the Chinese of Singapore wanted to do within Malaysia was to make Singapore "the New York of Malaysia."<sup>33</sup> Within less than a year, however, the falseness of this latter assumption would become frighteningly clear to the Alliance leadership.

#### Political Parties in Malaysia

The strength, nature, and political goals of the Malaysian political parties that played roles in the decision to separate Singapore should be examined in any analysis of that important event. Thus the People's Action Party of Singapore and the Pan Malayan Islamic Party of Malaya will be described and additional aspects of the Alliance Party (described in Chapter III) will be examined.

#### The People's Action Party

The strength, the nature, and the political philosophy and goals of the PAP will be considered before an assessment

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<sup>32</sup>See below, pp. 193-94, for this evidence.

<sup>33</sup>Milne, "Singapore's Exit . . .," p. 179.

is made of the threat a Singapore within Malaysia could pose in the minds of the Alliance leaders. The fact that the PAP had the talented and dynamic Lee Kuan Yew as its leader is an extremely important part of this threat, and this factor will be considered later in this chapter.

After winning a comfortable majority (thirty-seven of fifty-two seats) in the 1963 elections, held only a few days after Malaysia Day, the PAP was extremely successful not only in consolidating this margin but also in increasing it. Although the Barisan Sosialis opposition was not formally eliminated until after separation, the PAP was in firm political control of Singapore well before separation. The Barisan was wracked by internal disputes and its representatives later resigned from the Singapore Legislative Assembly and vowed to take their fight to the streets.<sup>34</sup> This rather effective ending of the Barisan's political threat of coming to power in Singapore, it will be contended, was an important factor in the dramatic change in the nature of Kuala Lumpur's interest in Singapore from being a positive influence type of core interest calling for merger to a core interest threat calling for Singapore's expulsion from the newly created Federation.

In regard to the nature of the PAP, it is important to note that Chinese constitute about 75% of Singapore's population. Since the Chinese were not handicapped in obtaining

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<sup>34</sup> Milne, Government and Politics in Malaysia, pp. 203-04 and Bellows, pp. 126-27. In the 1968 elections the party failed to contest any seats, and the PAP won them all.

citizenship and their voting power vis-à-vis the Malays was not diluted by unfavorable apportionment, it is obvious that any party seeking control of Singapore's government must have a strong foundation of Chinese support. Thus the PAP, though it sported a multiracial veneer in theory and to a significant extent in practice, is clearly dependent on its Chinese base of support for its continued political dominance of Singapore.

In regard to its political philosophy the PAP stresses that "we are democratic socialists, not Communists, and we believe in achieving the socialist society through peaceful methods of persuasion, and the vote . . ." <sup>35</sup> The basic goal of the PAP since its inception in 1954 has been to create "an independent, democratic, non-Communist, socialist" Malaya which would be expanded to include Singapore. <sup>36</sup> Because the non-socialistic Alliance Party was in firm control of Malaysia, the PAP's proclaimed goal of achieving a socialistic Malaysia made it a potential threat to the Alliance's political control of Malaysia.

#### The Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP)

The Malay community of Malaya is split between two fundamental positions in regard to provisions for special Malay rights and privileges. Advocates of what will be labeled the "moderate" approach are generally satisfied with the present

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<sup>35</sup> People's Action Party, "The New Phase . . .," p. 152.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, People's Action Party, "The Fixed Political Objectives . . .," p. 66.

provisions in terms of scope and accept the principle that these special rights and privileges should be continued only for as long as the Malays are unable to compete successfully with the other communities on an equal basis. The Malay "extremist" group, in contrast, maintains that not only should these special provisions be extended and increased substantially but also that they should be made permanent. Thus instead of being temporary "special privileges," these provisions are viewed as constituting "natural rights."<sup>37</sup> In short, the Weltanschauung of the Malay "extremist" group is this: the country belongs to the Malays and to the Malays alone; the other communities are aliens enjoying only those rights and privileges which the Malays see fit to grant.

The PMIP is the party that officially espouses this "extremist" position. In marked contrast to UMNO, which officially subscribes to the "moderate" approach, the PMIP is openly anti-Chinese, favors more restrictive citizenship laws, advocates greater protection and privileges for the Malays, and seeks to transform the country into an Islamic theocratic state.<sup>38</sup> In short, its official political goal is the creation of a "Malay" rather than a multi-racial "Malaysian" state.

The PMIP's center of political strength is in the predominantly Malay inhabited northeastern states of Trengganu and Kelantan. Here economic grievances, geographic isolation, the simplicity of rural life, and a large percentage of

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<sup>37</sup>Ratnam, pp. 111-12.

<sup>38</sup>Gould, p. 102.



conservative Islamic religious teachers combine to create conditions highly conducive for the PMIP's political philosophy and goals. And it was in these two states that the PMIP won all nine of its seats in the Malaysian House of Representatives in the 1964 election.

Holders of extremist views, however, are not confined to either the Northeast or the PMIP. Many Malays in UMNO--especially at the grass roots and lower leadership levels in rural areas--are either sympathetic to or support such political viewpoints. Ratnam warned in 1960 that such an outlook "may be said to represent the present trend in Malay nationalism."<sup>39</sup> As we shall see, this trend grew rapidly in the year preceding the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia and was an extremely important factor in the decision to take such a harsh and important step.

#### The Alliance

The UMNO-dominated Alliance has been described as being basically conservative in complexion, protective of traditional values and interests, and an advocate of private enterprise.<sup>40</sup> Lee put it too harshly when he characterized the Alliance leadership as having maintained "the privilege and the power position" of a few "Malay traditionalists" sharing the spoils of office with a few "wealthy Chinese" and

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<sup>39</sup>Ratnam, p. 114.

<sup>40</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 54.

"fortunate Indians" who were "chosen" (by UMNO) to represent their communal groups.<sup>41</sup> Farmer notes that while most of the Alliance leaders are conservative in their social and economic outlook, they are generally enlightened and willing to use government power to alleviate social and economic inequities.<sup>42</sup>

Alliance leaders shun ideological labels, preferring to view themselves as pragmatists serving their people and promoting evolutionary rather than revolutionary social change and economic development. It is not surprising that many such leaders viewed the socialistic PAP with distaste and had an attitude toward Lee Kuan Yew that "verged on the pathological."<sup>43</sup> Such emotions help to explain Kuala Lumpur's seemingly irrational decision to expel Singapore from the Federation less than two years after its national interest calculations called for merger with the island state.

UMNO's preeminent position within the Alliance has already been noted. Gagliano mentions the importance to UMNO of its maintenance of this "dominant role":

To maintain non-Malay support, UMNO has made real concessions to its party affiliates in the Alliance, . . . but the price extracted has always been non-Malay acceptance of UMNO-led Malay political paramourcy [sic] within a Malay political culture. To UMNO these issues have been non-negotiable. This setting has assured the maintenance of a Malay preponderance of political power, and a virtual Malay monopoly upon the symbols and framework of political life. (Emphasis added.)<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Petir, April, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>Farmer, "Malaya and Singapore," p. 336.

<sup>43</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia," p. 54.

<sup>44</sup>Gagliano, p. 6.

Clearly, any threat to UMNO's dominant position within the Alliance or to the Alliance's dominant position within Malaysia would be likely to be viewed as a threat of core interest magnitude by the leaders of UMNO.

As we shall see, soon after the formation of Malaysia Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP would make a bid to replace the MCA as the Chinese partner within the Alliance. When this failed, Lee led a campaign for a "Malaysian Malaysia" and was the driving force behind the formation of a Malaysian-wide coalition of opposition parties that had the potential to challenge the Alliance's control of the Malaysian Government.

Dramatis Personae: The Key Decision-Makers

The contrasting talents, personalities, political styles, and political roles of the two key decision-makers in the political units of Singapore and Malaysia are important to note because the "fundamental differences in temperament and outlook" of the two Prime Ministers were to result in "personal tensions which both reflected and magnified conflicts over racial privilege, party politics and states' rights."<sup>45</sup> Both Rahman and Lee project potent images as racial, party and state leaders, Hanna argues, and both are men of charisma having "intuitive rapport with 'emerging peoples' in search of 'identity.'"<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Lee Kuan Yew

That Lee Kuan Yew is a brilliant man, both intellectually and politically, is conceded even by his most bitter enemies and his harshest critics. Academically he compiled an outstanding record both in the English language schools he attended in Singapore and in England, where he achieved an extraordinary "double first" while studying law at Cambridge. After completing his formal training, Lee continued to exercise his intellectual prowess by learning the very difficult Chinese language (Mandarin) as well as Malay. As a result Lee is one of the few politicians in Malaysia who can deliver extemporaneous political speeches in all three of Malaysia's major languages (Malay, English and Mandarin) plus one other Chinese dialect (Hokkien).

Politically, it is clear that Lee is the dominant leader within the PAP. As one writer has put it, Lee stands "head and shoulders above his colleagues, both intellectually and politically."<sup>47</sup> And it seems that other party leaders do not venture to criticize him much to his face even in private.<sup>48</sup> His ability to campaign in four languages and his considerable personal charisma complement his great intellectual and political skills to make Lee the key element in the PAP's electoral victories.

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<sup>47</sup>David Bonavia, "Has Singapore an Opposition?" Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. LV, No. 5 (February 2, 1967), p. 168.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

Lee has been aptly described as a "pugnacious independent personality"<sup>49</sup> possessing "unbounded energy" and a "perpetually active brain."<sup>50</sup> This brilliance and dynamism, however, are accompanied by traits of arrogance and ruthlessness. And, "the heart of gold, if it is there, is thickly encased in a lawyer's logic." Lee has a very quick mind, another observer notes, "and a tongue that is quicker, which often gets him into trouble."<sup>51</sup> These personal characteristics combine with his intellectual ability, professional training, and linguistic accomplishments to make Lee Kuan Yew more than a match for any of his Malaysian contemporaries in public political debate.

Lee's political talents have enabled him not only to survive but to flourish in Singapore's challenging political environment. Since coming to power in 1959 Lee, "a tough, pragmatic, Marxist maverick," has "consistently outwitted his one time Communist associates," and has brought Singapore "honest, efficient government."<sup>52</sup> And his PAP government has produced "the most dramatically successful state-development program in Southeast Asia." which has "transformed Singapore

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<sup>49</sup> Seymour Topping, "Lee Kuan Yew is Singapore," New York Times Magazine (October 31, 1965), p. 67.

<sup>50</sup> Han Suyin, "Singapore Separation," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 8 (August 19, 1965), p. 350.

<sup>51</sup> Gould, p. 105.

<sup>52</sup> Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 4.

island by providing huge new housing and industrial developments, schools, clinics, and community centers."<sup>53</sup>

During the period under study in Part III, Lee came to project two very different images that would have very important political repercussions for the future of Malaysia. To the international press in particular and to Westerners in general, Lee was "a hard-hitting, fast-thinking, Communist-fighting patriot" who "seemed virtually unique among Southeast Asian politicians in being both honest and competent."<sup>54</sup> To the Malays of Malaysia, however, he was "a double-dealing Chinese Machiavelli" who was "frighteningly smart."<sup>55</sup>

Lee's political style has been a major factor in his success, but almost every aspect of it either annoyed, frustrated or scared the decision-makers in Kuala Lumpur. Thus it was an important factor motivating their decision to expel Singapore. Lee has "the political intellect and the public personality of a computer," one talented observer noted. "He projects Singapore's and Malaysia's problems a decade hence and demands crash programs now."<sup>56</sup> His "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign is a prime example of this trait and, as will be demonstrated, this campaign was an important element of the core interest threat a Singapore within Malaysia presented to Malaysia, as the Alliance decision-makers conceived of the state. Another liability of Lee's political style in the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

period to be analyzed has been described well by Gamer, who noted that Lee's great skill in using the public platform for "exposing his enemies' unreasonableness," administering "verbal bludgeonings," and "airing great issues" was no substitute for genuine negotiation and bargaining with one's political adversaries.<sup>57</sup>

Lee is a good example of a political realist in his approach to political conflict. He likes to milk every political situation for the maximum gain possible, as evidenced by his statement: "We extracted every ounce of political and material advantage out of the dispute with the colonial government and got the maximum benefits."<sup>58</sup> And his statement that "in the last resort, however, it was power which decided things"<sup>59</sup> is also indicative of his power politics type of thinking.

Lee's talents and personality make him a formidable politician but they also constitute some serious political shortcomings. As one perceptive observer put it, "Like the good constitutional lawyer he is, Mr. Lee argues too much from precedent, represents only his client, presumes the worst (especially about his opponents), and is more concerned with

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<sup>57</sup> Robert E. Gamer, "The Lee Kuan Yew Style," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. L, No. 6 (November 11, 1965), p. 287.

<sup>58</sup> This statement was made in regard to his labor union defense work as a lawyer in the early 1950's. Quoted in ibid., p. 104.

<sup>59</sup> "University of the Air" forum, October 31, 1966, Straits Budget, November 9, 1966, p. 5. Quoted by Gould, p. 104.

making a point to obtain a verdict than with waiving a point to secure justice."<sup>60</sup> In short, Lee is a relentless politician who has a tendency to push too hard, too far, and too fast on political matters, especially sensitive ones. As we shall see, Lee's calculating approach to politics and his "utter inability to see that 'magnimity [sic] in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom'"<sup>61</sup> would exacerbate his relations with the Alliance decision-makers and contribute to some very unfortunate political actions and events.

#### Tunku Abdul Rahman

Tunku (Prince) Abdul Rahman, born in 1903, is the seventh child of a late Sultan of Kedah. In social status, academic achievement, personality, and political style he contrasts greatly with Lee. Only in the area of policy making power within his political party does Rahman occupy a position similar to Lee. During the period of the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore, Rahman's influence within UMNO (and hence the Alliance also) appears to have been decisive. He had a broad basis of public support (To non-Malays he was clearly the most acceptable Malay politician) and also had supporters "strategically placed in most government departments, the police and armed forces."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Harvey Stockwin, "The Reason Why Not," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. LII, No. 10 (September 8, 1966), p. 447.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Bob Reece, "The Tunku's Last Election," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 19 (Mary 8, 1969), p. 334.



Rahman was educated in the Malay and English languages in Malaya, and then went to England to study at Cambridge. Although he received his B.A., he barely passed his exams. Thus, in contrast to Lee, his academic achievements were not noteworthy. His interests in cars and girls, however, were, and perhaps this partially explains why he could not pass his law exams despite five years of further study.

Also in great contrast to Lee, the Tunku is described as being "affable, convivial, and by nature carefree."<sup>63</sup> In his political style and role he is also completely different from Lee. Rahman is said to be "impatient only of crisis" and to prefer to play the political role of an "elder statesman whose sage counsel is sought in matters of no great urgency." His dream, Hanna notes, was to preside over a "Happy Malaya" and later a "Happy Malaysia."<sup>64</sup> The first part of this dream was fulfilled; the second part has not been.

Within Malaya, and even within Malaysia despite all the trouble, the Tunku, far more than any other politician, is identified with interracial liberality and cooperation and thus commands the trust and respect of most people of all the races. As Parmer notes, he is a truly national leader because he is liked and respected by members of all the racial communities and is considered to be honest, fair, and tolerant.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 5.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Parmer, "Malaya and Singapore," p. 336.

It was widely felt that the Tunku acted as a kind of tranquilizer when communal tensions threatened,<sup>66</sup> and thus he performed a key role in keeping the country relatively peaceful and prosperous, if not always happy.

As we shall see, Lee's penchant for publicly recognizing--and especially for debating--sensitive communal and other political issues greatly annoyed, frustrated, and finally antagonized Rahman. He much preferred to meet privately with Lee (preferably at his own home or on the golf course) calmly and quietly to talk over their differences regarding sensitive issues in hopes of reaching some agreement or understanding about them. In the nearly two years of the original Federation of Malaysia's existence, unfortunately, there was a seemingly never-ending string of political disagreements.

In the description of this stormy period that follows, the reader's mind will probably return often to Hanna's neat summarization of the two contrasting Prime Ministers, and what they represented: "The Tengku not only rules but is traditionalistic, gradualistic Malaya, a man and a nation not to be hustled. Lee Kuan Yew is brash, activist, ulcer-prone Singapore." (Italics his.)<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>67</sup> Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 3.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE AS A CORE INTEREST THREAT WITHIN MALAYSIA: PHASE I, THE FIRST YEAR

Within a year after the formation of Malaysia in September of 1963 the Alliance decision-makers were having serious second thoughts about the wisdom of their merger with Singapore. On the one hand, their primary motive for merging with Singapore--the threatened communist take-over of Singapore in the form of a Barisan Sosialis election victory--was neatly removed by Lee's skillful political maneuvering against the Barisan in the Singapore elections immediately following Malaysia Day and the PAP's subsequent consolidation of political power in Singapore. On the other hand, there were alarming indications that the Chinese of Malaysia might be mobilized by Lee and his PAP into a powerful political force which would pose either an immediate threat to the MCA within the Alliance and a longer term threat to UMNO position of paramouncy within the ruling coalition or the immediate threat of a significant coalition of opposition parties to the Alliance government and the longer term threat of this opposition coalition winning control of the Malaysian government in a future election.

Hovering over all this was the realization that the mere prospect of either of these longer term threats materializing

would raise racial tensions to the point where communal violence would be probable. If violence did not precede any election or other political adjustment that might produce a basic change in the Malay vs. Chinese political balance of power within Malaysia, racial violence would almost certainly follow such an outcome. In other words, any such basic change in the political balance of power within Malaysia in the foreseeable future would not be a peaceful change. This was the sword of Damocles that was suspended precariously above the superficial communal harmony of multiracial Malaysia.

In this chapter the conflicts and tensions between Singapore and Malaya that appeared during the final stages of the merger negotiations and intensified during the first year of the existence of the Federation of Malaysia will be described and analyzed. The PAP's unexpectedly strong showing in the Singapore elections, the PAP's fateful decision to enter the 1964 elections in Malaya, and the ugly Singapore race riots during the summer of 1964 are the political highlights of this eventful year.

#### Early Singapore--Malaya Conflicts and Tensions within Malaysia

Tensions regarding Malaysia developed between Singapore and Malaya as soon as serious negotiations for the merger began. Some of these conflicts of interest were to be expected, such as the financial terms of Singapore's entry and the various common market issues. These were aggravated,

however, by a growing rivalry between the MCA and PAP which was augmented by a personal feud between the two Chinese leaders of these political parties, Tan Siew Sin and Lee Kuan Yew. This admixture of personal and philosophical animosities plus the genuine but not insurmountable conflicts of interest produced a layer of mistrust and emotional hostility which underlay the celebrations surrounding the birth of the new Federation in September of 1963.

#### The Merger Negotiations

Though merger promised economic benefits to both Singapore and Malaya, their different economic situations led to immediate points of contention between the negotiators. The basic short-run problem was that of integrating the two divergent economies with as little disruption and disadvantage as possible to each. In regard to the common market, which Singapore viewed as the key to its economic future, Malaya was understandably reluctant to remove its tariff protection against Singapore's lower labor costs and free port rates for industrial raw materials.<sup>1</sup> After what Purcell described as "acrimonious bargaining"<sup>2</sup> the difficult issues regarding the formation of a common market were left to be ironed out later.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Osborne, for an illuminating analysis of these factors.

<sup>2</sup>Purcell, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup>Even after merger, however, little progress would be made on this important matter.

There was also a genuine economic problem regarding the proportion of its revenues Singapore was to pass on to the Central Government. Singapore had stressed government expenditures in education, housing, and health to a greater degree than Malaya and was anxious to retain control over enough of its revenues to maintain this rapid development. Kuala Lumpur, on the other hand, wanted more revenue for federal projects and programs and for such national functions as internal security and defense. With the advent of Indonesia's confrontation policy against Malaysia, defense costs soon skyrocketed. This put serious strains on the Central Government's finances and led to renewed demands for a larger share of Singapore's revenues.

#### PAP-MCA and Lee-Tan Friction

These economic and financial points of contention were exacerbated by the PAP-MCA party rivalry and the Lee-Tan personal feud. Tan Siew Sin, the wealthy and conservative Malayan Minister of Finance and leader of the MCA, was viewed by Lee and the PAP as a "compradore" who compromised Chinese racial interests for Malay tolerance of Chinese economic interests and activities. For its part the MCA regarded the PAP, with its vision of a socialistic and more egalitarian society, as a natural enemy and a potentially dangerous rival for the political support of the Chinese electorate.

Given this background the heated exchanges between Lee and Tan over Singapore's financial terms of entry are not so

surprising, for much more was at stake than the ostensible points under discussion. Lee exploited the talks to gain political capital in Singapore. Leifer observes that "as a piece of political theater, it was a masterful and accomplished performance" for Lee returned to Singapore "to be feted as a heroic fighter for the rights of the island state."<sup>4</sup> While this would help Lee in his domestic political battles (especially, as has been noted, in the forthcoming 1963 Singapore elections), it would hurt his future relations with the Alliance leaders in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>5</sup>

With the prospect of Malaysia in 1963, the MCA moved to entrench itself within Singapore's business community by exploiting its prospects for a strong economic influence in the forthcoming Central Government of Malaysia. Lee castigated this move as an attempt by "merchant adventurers" to loot the material spoils of Singapore.<sup>6</sup> The key issue in the PAP-MCA rivalry, however, proved not to be this MCA thrust into Singapore but rather the corresponding role Lee and the PAP were to play throughout Malaysia, and particularly in Malaya.

#### The Political Role of Singapore within Malaysia

A basic difference in understanding regarding the role Singapore's politicians would play in Malaysia was publicly evidenced over a year before Malaysia was officially proclaimed. In May of 1962 Lee had replied very candidly to a

<sup>4</sup> Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.      <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

question regarding what political role he and the PAP would play in the proposed federation: "I certainly do not intend to remain in Singapore politics. We have been boxed in for the past seventeen years. This has had a claustrophobic effect. We want to get out."<sup>7</sup> And in the official party publication, Petir, the possibility of the PAP establishing branches throughout Malaysia was mentioned.<sup>8</sup>

It was in this context that the Tunku announced that a Malaysian Cabinet would include representatives from Brunei, Sabah, and Sarawak but none from Singapore, because the latter's ministers would be of the "same rank" as the federal ministers.<sup>9</sup> Lee was quick to reply that although the PAP was not out for Cabinet seats because it was not part of the Alliance, this did not mean that PAP members were not legally eligible for Cabinet seats, "for every Parliamentary representative was entitled to become a Minister or even a Prime Minister if he could command a majority in the House." (Emphasis added.)<sup>10</sup>

The role Lee envisioned for the PAP in Malaysia and his designs for displacing the MCA became clearer a year later on the eve of merger when Lee predicted defeat for the MCA (in the forthcoming 1964 Malayan elections) and ultimate cooperation

<sup>7</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), May 5, 1962.

<sup>8</sup> Reported in ibid., July 27, 1962.

<sup>9</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1962.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., August 16, 1962.



between UMNO and the PAP.<sup>11</sup> This statement, Leifer notes, was regarded at the time as an attempt to split the Alliance coalition.<sup>12</sup> As will be shown, the PAP's entry into these 1964 elections was a key factor in precipitating Singapore's later expulsion from Malaysia.

#### The Malaysia Day Squabble

A further development that hurt Lee in the eyes of the Alliance leaders centered around the date Malaysia was to be proclaimed. At the July/August Manila Conference, Kuala Lumpur had agreed to postpone Malaysia Day beyond the scheduled August 31 date in order to allow the United Nations time to complete its assessment in Borneo. In a dramatic step that was related to Singapore's internal political situation and to some "unfinished bargaining" over its terms of entry into Malaysia,<sup>13</sup> Lee announced that he would declare Singapore's de facto independence on the August 31 date. Lee's threat and its fulfillment understandably annoyed and angered the Alliance leaders as did his pointed reference a few days later to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., September 10, 1963. Lee's first tactic, however, apparently had been that of trying to become the head of the Singapore branch of the Alliance. Tan stated that Lee originally suggested to Rahman that he was prepared to join the Singapore Alliance on the condition that he was made its leader. Rahman reportedly told Lee that he would have to seek this through direct negotiations with the Alliance leaders in Singapore. Tan contended that such negotiations were held but nothing came of them because of Lee's usual arrogant and bullying attitude. Straits Times (Singapore), September 11, 1963.

<sup>12</sup> Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> See ibid., p. 57 and Osborne, pp. 46-7.

the "naive approach" of some people (i.e., the Alliance leaders) to whom power was handed over "on a silver platter with red ribbons by British Royalty in uniform."<sup>14</sup>

#### The 1963 Elections in Singapore

The first round in the PAP-UMNO political competition within Malaysia was fought in the September, 1963 elections in Singapore. As has been noted, the PAP's main concern in this election was to defeat the serious Barisan Socialist challenge to its control of Singapore. This was accomplished by winning thirty-seven of the fifty-one seats compared to the Barisan's thirteen. But some unexpected icing was provided for the PAP's victory cake by the fact that even the three predominantly Malay constituencies, which had been considered the private domain of the Singapore branch of UMNO, elected PAP candidates!

The Alliance leaders actually would have preferred not a defeated but a "less assured PAP" and a "somewhat chastened Lee," Hanna observed, and viewed the victory of the three Malay PAP candidates with the "gravest concern."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, this must have led to nightmares of a multiracial PAP entering candidates and winning in Malay as well as non-Malay constituencies in Malaya. As Lee later put it, this PAP victory

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<sup>14</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), September 4, 1963.

<sup>15</sup>Willard A. Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore from Malaysia," American Universities Field Staff Reports, Southeast Asia Series, Vol. XIII, No. 21, 1965, p. 10.

in the Malay constituencies "triggered off a reaction on the other side that we should never be allowed to do that in Malaya,"<sup>16</sup> for "this was something which could not be tolerated if their [i.e., the Alliance's] perpetual dominance was to be assured."<sup>17</sup> Clearly the PAP represented a potential core interest threat to the Alliance's political control of Malaysia. After the election the PAP quickly set out to consolidate its newly won political position in the Malay areas, while the stunned UMNO politicians organized to regain their position. The next major confrontation did not erupt until March of 1964 when the PAP challenged the MCA in the Malayan elections.

The 1964 Malayan Elections: The PAP  
Crosses the Rubicon

In the Spring of 1964 the PAP, perhaps overconfident from its unexpectedly complete victory in the 1963 Singapore elections, moved to extend the geographical base of its political power within Malaysia by contesting the Malayan federal and state elections. This competition proved to be so threatening and divisive in its long run implications (as opposed to its short run outcome) that in retrospect this move by the PAP can be designated as a watershed in the short history of Singapore-Malayan relations within Malaysia. In a sense the

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<sup>16</sup> Singapore, Ministry of Culture, One Hundred Years of Socialism (Singapore: Malaya Engraving and Litho Printing CO., n.d.), p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> Lee Kuan Yew, Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia? (Singapore: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 10.

PAP's crossing of the Strait of Johore is comparable to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, for in so doing the PAP engaged the Alliance in direct (although limited) political combat that eventually escalated to the point where a renegotiated compromise political working arrangement within Malaysia became impossible and Singapore was expelled from the Federation.

#### The PAP's Decision to Enter

Since the PAP's decision to enter the April, 1964 Malaysian elections proved to be almost more important than the results themselves,<sup>18</sup> it will be examined closely. Evidence that Lee and the PAP had long been considering extending their political influence into Malaya has already been cited.<sup>19</sup> In September of 1963, however, Lee indicated that the PAP did not intend to enter the 1964 mainland elections, but he predicted MCA losses and the future necessity of UMNO and the PAP working together.<sup>20</sup> Lee's remarks in Singapore's Legislative Assembly on December 9, 1963 also indicated that the PAP would not make a move into Malaya until after the 1964 elections there. If the MCA candidates were rejected in the urban areas there would have to be a reappraisal by the UMNO leaders, Lee reasoned, implying that the PAP might then move in to fill the Chinese gap in the

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<sup>18</sup>Osborne, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup>Supra, pp.

<sup>20</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), September 10, 1963.

Alliance but confirming that the PAP did not intend to enter.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye's March 1, 1964 announcement that the PAP would contest the Malayan election of April 25 took the state by surprise. Toh was careful to stress that it was not the PAP's intention to challenge the Central Government of Malaysia or UMNO.<sup>22</sup> The following day he reiterated this assurance and elaborated on the PAP's motives for entering:

1. The PAP, 'instead of being cornered like a rat in Singapore,' wanted to play a wider part in building the Malaysian nation.
2. The PAP would make only a token entry of a 'few candidates' this time. But Toh hoped that in five years (within which Malaya's next federal elections would have to be held) the party would be 'a force to be reckoned with' in Malaysia.
3. The PAP feared that if it did not enter the present elections, the Communist influenced and anti-Malaysia Socialist Front would make substantial gains.<sup>23</sup>

The party manifesto promulgated by Rajaratnam elaborated on this third point, stating that the PAP had to help to assure that the anticipated urban protest vote against the MCA's "ineffectiveness" did not become a vote "against Malaysia and for Sukarno." But the manifesto stressed that the PAP's first objective was to show what Singapore's "democracy and socialism can mean to the ordinary man" in jobs, schooling, social amenities, and housing.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Singapore, Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. XXII, No. 4, Cols. 141-42.

<sup>22</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 2, 1964.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.      <sup>24</sup>Ibid., March 20, 1964

Here, then, are a variety of campaign rationalizations for the PAP's decision to contest the elections. The party's underlying motives and goals require further scrutiny.

#### The PAP's Motives and Goals

Osborne surmises that Lee's calculation that the Singapore electorate would increasingly resent the island's underrepresentation in the Federal Parliament as anti-Chinese discrimination plus Lee's belief that the Alliance Government's decision to hold the Malayan state elections at the same time as the Federal elections (thereby denying the PAP an intermediate opportunity to test Malayan opinion) were likely to have motivated the PAP decision to enter the 1964 Malayan elections.<sup>25</sup> Lee's statements that the 1964 election was really "the preliminary of the elections in 1969" and that if it were possible to get the "winds of change" to blow gently this year, "so much less of an upset it will be all around in 1969"<sup>26</sup> lend credence to the contention that the latter factor was significant.

Lee, however, claimed higher motives, explaining that the PAP could not wait until the (anticipated) 1969 elections because it feared Malaysia would not be able to "survive the great tests" posed by the internal Communist and external Indonesian threats to the country.<sup>27</sup> His desire for some

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<sup>25</sup> Osborne, pp. 74, 83.

<sup>26</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), March 23, 1964.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., April 13, 1964.

kind of partnership with the Alliance was indicated in his explanation that, "For us to stay out in the opposition, sniping at the Government and exposing their follies without helping to put things right would be to court disaster for the country."<sup>28</sup>

It seems clear that Lee hoped to induce UMNO to come to some terms with the PAP by defeating the MCA candidates running in urban constituencies. Lee stated that the PAP was fielding only a token number of candidates because if it went all out "not only the MCA but the UMNO would have been upset."<sup>29</sup> But, as he later pointed out, this "token" was of considerable significance because if the urban areas (which constituted over half of Malay's population) gave "their verdict for the winds of change" no leader "could afford to ignore it."<sup>30</sup> The rational choice for Malaya, he concluded, was a party which could hold the rural Malay mass base to build a Malaysia distinct and separate from Indonesia (i.e., UMNO) and at the same time work with a non-communal party representing the urban areas (i.e., the PAP).<sup>31</sup>

However rational and appealing Lee's argument might be in the abstract, it had no appeal for UMNO. The fact that UMNO was greatly upset even by this so-called "token" PAP entry is a reflection of the depth of its general fear and distrust of Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.                      <sup>29</sup>Ibid., April 12, 1964.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., April 24, 1964.                      <sup>31</sup>Ibid.

The Immediate Reactions of UMNO and the MCA

The importance of the PAP's election decision in regard to Singapore's later expulsion is indicated by the Alliance partners' interpretations of and reactions to this move. Here again, it must be emphasized, what is important is their perceptions of the PAP's motives, not what these motives actually were. Thus the reactions of the UMNO and the MCA leaders merit examination in some detail. And, in a word, they were infuriated by the PAP's decision to enter the election.

The MCA's "instantaneous reading" of the move was that the PAP was out to smash the MCA by crudely attempting to proselytize its members, undercut its candidates, and conspire with the rebels who had almost wrecked the party in 1959.<sup>32</sup> MCA leader Tan Siew Sin responded harshly to Toh's entry statement by branding it a "masterpiece of prevarication"<sup>33</sup> and charging: "In fact it is quite clear, absolutely clear, that the PAP's intention is to destroy the MCA . . . although they did not have the guts to tell the truth."<sup>34</sup> Tan added, "We in the MCA accept this challenge because it is nothing less than a challenge to the MCA as to whether it is the PAP or the MCA that should represent the Chinese in Malaysia."<sup>35</sup> Clearly Tan viewed the PAP move as a challenge to the very existence of the MCA. Ratnam and Milne, co-authors of a book-length

<sup>32</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," pp. 11-12.

<sup>33</sup>Webster's Dictionary defines "prevaricate" as follows: "to deviate from the truth; speak equivocally or evasively; loosely, to lie."

<sup>34</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 3, 1964. <sup>35</sup>Ibid.



study of the elections, agree with Tan's assessment, stating that the MCA recognized the challenge as a "mortal attack on itself."<sup>36</sup>

Tan's political secretary in the MCA, Mr. Lee San Choon, later elaborated on this interpretation. Broadening the PAP target to that of the Central Government in general, he argued that the PAP's decision was "really a move to confront the Central Government face to face" because its intention was to defeat the MCA and then "demand an alliance with UMNO to replace the MCA, thereby ending the present structure of the Alliance Party."<sup>37</sup>

In the heat of the election Tan said some very nasty things about the PAP. Comparing the PAP with the hated Communists, he stated:

We know the Communists. But we do not know the PAP. They may be for you one day. But this is no guarantee that they will not stab you in the back the next.

If one examines their past record coldly and carefully one cannot escape the conclusion that it is far safer to be their enemy than their friend.<sup>38</sup>

The core interest threat to Malaysia's communal harmony Tan appears to have perceived in the PAP is evidenced in additional excerpts from the same speech:

We stand at a very solemn moment in our history. We have come to the parting of the ways.

One way leads to peace and prosperity based on communal harmony. The other road leads to national disintegration, communal strife and disorder. (Emphasis added.)<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup>K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964 (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967), p. 25.

<sup>37</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 17, 1964.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1964.      <sup>39</sup>Ibid.

In its thirst for power, Tan continued, the PAP was prepared to collaborate with anybody, "including the devil," if such collaboration served its own immediate ends. Tan concluded: "As such, we in the Alliance maintain that the PAP is a grave security risk to this country." (Emphasis added.)<sup>40</sup>

The UMNO leaders' perceptions of the PAP's entry motives were similar to the MCA's. "What the PAP really wants is to displace the MCA," Rahman stated.<sup>41</sup> Later an Alliance Party statement accused the PAP of trying to destroy its unity by attacking one Alliance partner while praising another. The PAP's move was viewed as an attempt

to kill the MCA and later force UMNO to accept the PAP as a partner or compel UMNO to work with it. If the PAP succeeds in destroying the MCA it will no doubt later turn on UMNO itself. UMNO regards any attack on any of its partner [sic] as an attack on itself.<sup>42</sup>

Rahman reaffirmed this position with a firm pledge of loyalty to the MCA: "Even if there are only five MCA members left [the number of MCA candidates running in non-urban areas and hence not challenged by the PAP] . . . we will always stand together united in common purpose."<sup>43</sup> Alliance Cabinet Minister Khir Johari elaborated on this theme by explaining that UMNO would not accept the PAP in place of the MCA because it knew the story of the Arab and the camel: "The Arab, out of kindness, invited the camel into his tent. Finally it ended up with the camel taking over the whole tent and driving the Arab out altogether."<sup>44</sup> This story probably reflected the general

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., <sup>41</sup>Ibid., March 15, 1964.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., March 21, 1964. <sup>43</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1964.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1964.

misgivings of UMNO regarding the merger with Singapore.

Since the moderate top level of the UMNO leadership publicly expressed such opinions as have been cited, it is likely that many of the more communal-minded rank and file members of UMNO felt, as Bradley claims, that the PAP's objective was "to make Lee the Chinese Prime Minister of Malaysia and add Chinese political domination to their existing stranglehold over the Malaysian economy."<sup>45</sup> Clearly, such an objective would be a challenge to the "terms of '57" and a threat to the existence of the state, at least as the Malays conceived of it.

There is evidence that Lee's appeal to the "have-nots" of all the races to reject the MCA and set in motion the "winds of change" of an economic and social revolution (one of Lee's proclaimed campaign goals was to make UMNO leaders "adjust their social and economic policy to take into account the wishes of the people in the towns") was also viewed as a serious threat. Rahman labeled "revolution" as "an alien ideology unsuited to the genius of our people and therefore unwelcome to them" and warned that Lee's goal of changing the Alliance policy constituted "a real threat to us all."<sup>47</sup> And Hanna reports that UMNO leaders said the PAP was also (i.e., in

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<sup>45</sup>C. Paul Bradley, "Rupture in Malaysia," Current History, Vol. L, No. 294 (February, 1966), p. 99.

<sup>46</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 23, 1964.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1964.

addition to destroying the MCA) trying to split the Malay vote and build up a new party capable of challenging "not only the MCA but the very Alliance itself." Indeed, Hanna continues, Lee was "widely known" to be musing about a new Malaysia-wide political organization.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, then, the PAP was being viewed as a possible long range, if not immediate, threat to UMNO itself, as well as to its MCA partner.

An Assessment of the PAP's Entry Goals and  
the Initial Effects of Entry ✓

The main goal of the PAP in entering the 1964 elections in Malaya appears to have been that of setting in motion a chain of events that would bring the party and its leader into a position of significant political power and influence at the national level. As Parmer points out, there appeared to be only one way for the PAP to come to play an important national political role in Malaysia and still observe the terms of 1957: to become a partner of UMNO in the Alliance.<sup>49</sup> As has been noted, Lee apparently had previously tried to bring the PAP into the Alliance via the Singapore branch of the party (to which Rahman had referred him for consultations) but his overtures had been rejected.<sup>50</sup> It was probably because it became apparent that words alone could not persuade Rahman and UMNO that the MCA was a declining political force, Leifer concludes,

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<sup>48</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 12.

<sup>49</sup>Parmer, "Malaysia 1965 . . .," p. 113.

<sup>50</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), September 11, 1963.

that Lee and the PAP reversed their earlier position and decided to contest the mainland elections.<sup>51</sup>

This move also may have been prompted, if not provoked, by the aggressive activities of the Singapore branch of the Alliance party (particularly the Singapore MCA) on the home grounds of the PAP.<sup>52</sup> But whatever were the motives, the most important thing for the purposes of this analysis was the effect that this PAP move had on the Alliance leadership in regard to their later decision to expel Singapore from the Federation.

The evidence indicates that the leaders of the two important Alliance partners interpreted this PAP move to be a violation of an informal understanding the Alliance thought it had with the PAP regarding the political role of Singapore's politicians within Malaysia. During the campaign Tan charged that when Lee "came to the Tengku pleading for help" (in the form of merger) against the Barisan Sosialis, Lee had "pledged that he would never contest any elections on the mainland."<sup>53</sup> That Rahman also thought he had such a pledge from the PAP is indicated in this statement:

When Singapore came into this new nation of Malaysia, we had agreed under the Constitution that she should have representation in our Parliament [i.e., Singapore's allotted 15 seats] and fit into the pattern by having her own administrative machinery and her own elections.

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<sup>51</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 59.

<sup>52</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 11.

<sup>53</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), March 29, 1964.

The first sign of Singapore's attempt to have a hand in the affairs of Malaysia was in the last [i.e., April, 1964] elections when the PAP contested some of the constituencies.

That was contrary to what we had agreed. (Emphasis added.)<sup>54</sup>

Apparently these Alliance leaders felt they had a commitment from the PAP that it would settle for a fifteen seat allotment for Singapore in the Malaysian House, and they apparently assumed that the PAP would not seek more seats by entering federal elections in other areas of the Federation.

Lee's appeals for support for a token number of PAP candidates in order to "trigger off" a social revolution by proving that the urban population of Malaya wanted social change toward a just and more equal society<sup>55</sup> also undoubtedly antagonized the Alliance. Although Lee's development efforts in Singapore were more spectacular and impressive, the Alliance leaders pointed to their own development programs with justifiable pride and were sensitive to any criticism, implied as well as direct, of their efforts.

The socialistic elements of Lee's appeals to the electorate also appear certain to have antagonized the conservative, private-enterprise oriented Alliance leaders. Lee, while publicly admitting that a "golden age" could not be created merely by grabbing property and capital from the "haves" and redistributing it equally, advocated the policy of getting the "haves" to pay more of the cost of running a

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., September 21, 1964.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., March 23, 1964.

modern society.<sup>56</sup> Lee also combined this theme with his criticism of MCA President Tan by demanding that the "next Finance Minister" (Tan was the present one) consciously plan to close the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" by making the former pay more for the educational, social, health, and housing facilities of the latter.<sup>57</sup> This ideological threat Lee posed to the Alliance was further developed and articulated in the campaign for a "Malaysian Malaysia" that Lee waged the following Spring, which will be described in the next chapter.

A final aspect of the PAP's participation in the elections that undoubtedly antagonized and threatened the Alliance was the welcome Lee and his PAP received from the urban election rally crowds in Malaya, for they were able to attract "the largest crowds all over Malaya."<sup>58</sup> For example, at Lee's first speech of the campaign at a "giant" rally in the Malayan capitol he was given a three minute standing ovation when he took over the microphone!<sup>59</sup>

That the PAP seriously miscalculated the threatening way in which its entry into the 1964 Malayan elections in general and its challenging campaign in particular would be perceived by the Malays is indicated in a subsequent admission

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., March 27, 1964.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., April 15, 1964.

<sup>58</sup> R. K. Vasil, "The 1964 General Elections in Malaya," International Studies (New Delhi), Vol. VII, No. 1 (July, 1965), p. 51.

<sup>59</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), March 23, 1964.

by the PAP Central Executive Committee:

It was unfortunate that the participation in the Peninsula elections was to exacerbate the fears of the Malay leadership which had barely recovered from the loss of the three Malay constituencies in the Singapore elections only six months ago.<sup>60</sup>

And "the fears and anxieties of the Malay rural base which would be aroused by large urban crowds mainly of Chinese and Indians rallying to our party was [sic] underestimated."<sup>61</sup> Lee himself publicly evidenced qualms in this regard even before the vote was taken when he stated his worry, "We may have been misunderstood as a challenge and an alternative to UMNO as the next Government."<sup>62</sup> The after-effects of this important election will be examined in some detail after the election results are analyzed.

#### The Election Results and Aftereffects

The balloting resulted in a landslide victory for the Alliance in both the state and federal elections. The PAP, in contrast, won only one (and that by a narrow margin) of the nine federal parliament seats it finally contested and was shut out on the state level, losing in all of the fifteen constituencies it contested. Its one success in 24 attempts gave it the dismal batting average of .042.

Neither Rahman nor any other Alliance leader warmed to Lee's hearty congratulations; nor did they warm to his

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<sup>60</sup> People's Action Party, Our First Ten Years, PAP 10th Anniversary Souvenir (Singapore: Tiger Press, 21 November 1964), p. 111.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Straits Times (Singapore, April 24, 1964).



insinuations that the self-invited PAP losses contributed significantly to the Alliance's great success.<sup>63</sup> Whether the PAP's entry actually helped the Alliance much is doubtful. Though Leifer hastily concluded that the PAP probably cost the Alliance's chief rival (the Socialist Front) five seats,<sup>64</sup> Ratnam and Milne carefully scrutinized this claim and, after a detailed analysis of the returns, disagree with Leifer's assumptions and interpretation. Instead, they conclude, the PAP entry probably gave the Alliance one seat but deprived it of one, or maybe two, others.<sup>65</sup>

Why did the PAP make such a poor showing after drawing the largest and most enthusiastic rally crowds of the campaign? The high level of prosperity in Malaya, the inability of the opposition parties to unite, and pressure on the Chinese to demonstrate loyalty to Malaysia in the face of Indonesia's confrontation have been cited as factors contributing to the success of the MCA in holding off the PAP challenge.<sup>66</sup> The last factor seems particularly important, and Ratnam and Milne explain how it operated. The more the PAP attacked the MCA the more firmly UMNO supported its ally, which "must have made it clear to the Chinese" that voting to support the

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<sup>63</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 12.

<sup>64</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 62.

<sup>65</sup>Ratnam and Milne, p. 389.

<sup>66</sup>Frances L. Starnes, "Malaysia's First Year," Asian Survey, Vol. V, No. 2 (February, 1965), p. 117.

government against confrontation "meant voting for the MCA. . . . It was no longer possible for anyone to believe he could do this by voting for the PAP." In short, the PAP's whole argument collapsed as soon as Rahman gave his full support to the MCA.<sup>67</sup>

Another major culprit in the PAP's poor showing was the PAP itself. Its reputation as a clever and calculating party was belied by its woeful lack of advance research and planning for its electoral invasion of Malaya. The PAP, in its sudden decision to contest the elections soon after the date was announced, left itself less than eight weeks to set up an organization and conduct the campaign in Malaya. Furthermore, it aroused hostility because some of its candidates and workers were not local men but rather "imports" from Singapore.<sup>68</sup> Also it failed in its homework by not analyzing the constituencies closely enough. Most contained urban plus rural areas, many of the Chinese were shopkeeper types and thus pro-MCA, and the PAP was not able to get into the rubber estates to campaign.<sup>69</sup> In short, the PAP paid a heavy price by merely entering races where MCA candidates were standing rather than doing advanced research and organizational work in order to pick the spots where it had a good chance to win.

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<sup>67</sup> Ratnam and Milne, pp. 429-31.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 429.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Roger Sullivan, Head of the Political Section, United States Embassy, Singapore, June 12, 1967.

The MCA, however, should not have been very reassured by the election results, R. K. Vasil points out. In his analysis of the elections, Vasil demonstrates that the MCA was able to win "only in those constituencies where the defection of substantial numbers of Chinese voters could be compensated for by the votes of the Malays," who generally voted solidly for an Alliance candidate irrespective of the race of the candidate. And in constituencies where the electorate was predominantly Chinese and where there was only a small number of Malays, MCA candidates were generally defeated.<sup>70</sup> Thus Vasil concludes:

The MCA could not deceive itself and feel that with the increased vote in 1964 [compared to 1959] the worst was over. It was primarily a vote for Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, and for his stand against Indonesia, which has treated the Indonesian Chinese most shabbily.<sup>71</sup>

Another foreboding fact Vasil detected in the election returns was that no Malay won either a state or a federal seat as a candidate of any non-communal party. This is an indication, he contends, of Malay consciousness of the increasing non-Malay threat to their pre-eminent political position in the country. Vasil's conclusion had disturbing implications for the future: "They [i.e., Malays] believe that it is only through exclusive Malay communal parties [e.g., UMNO and the PMIP] that their interests can be safeguarded."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Vasil, p. 49.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 56. Note: the results of the 1969 elections tend to corroborate this assessment.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

Lee himself publicly placed the blame for the PAP's poor showing on the party's lack of adequate planning and preparation for the campaign. Only two days after the crushing election defeat Lee contended that "every analysis I have made of the basic political situation in Malaya remain undemolished" and vowed: "We shall build up our organisation and recruit able and honest men in Malaya to help carry on the battle for a more equal and more just society."<sup>73</sup>

Thus while the PAP's poor showing in the elections ended the immediate threat it presented to the MCA, it did not eliminate Lee and the PAP as a long term threat to the MCA. And even more importantly, it is clear that the PAP came to be perceived by UMNO leaders as a threat not only to the Alliance's hold on Chinese voters but also to its overwhelming support from the Malay population. Thus the most important result of the 1964 Malayan elections for this study was not the actual returns but rather the implications the campaign battle had for the future. Catley summarizes them well and indicates their threatening nature:

The Alliance parties recognised that the PAP could constitute a serious threat to their supremacy: for the MCA its very existence was at stake; for the more communally minded members of UMNO Lee personified the Chinese threat to Malay political supremacy. (Emphasis added.)<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), April 27, 1964.

<sup>74</sup> R. Catley, "Malaysia: The Lost Battle for Merger," Australian Outlook, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (April, 1967), p. 56.

largely intraracial in their manifestations. Overtly it was the PAP versus the MCA as personified by the Lee Kuan Yew versus Tan Siew Sin rivalry, i.e., Chinese versus Chinese. But after the elections overt Malay versus Chinese political frictions heated up communal relations in Singapore to the point where a single incident or provocation could spark a dreaded race riot. Two such riots were to occur before Singapore's "long, hot summer"<sup>75</sup> of 1964 had passed.

#### The UMNO Agitation Campaign

Encouraged by the PAP's failure in the Malayan elections, UMNO accelerated its drive in Singapore to rebuild itself after being shut out by the PAP in the 1963 Singapore elections. The developing Malay versus Chinese confrontation was personified by clashes between Lee Kuan Yew and Syed Ja'afar bin Albar, Secretary-General of the Malayan branch of UMNO.

Ja'afar has been described as a "stirring orator," an "indefatigable traveler," and an "astute organizer" noted for his "fiery zeal" and his familiarity with the people and problems of the Malay villages in all parts of Malaya and Singapore. His message of "one race, one language, one religion" makes him the prototype of the Malay ultranationalist.<sup>76</sup> A product of Malay medium secular schools and Arabic

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<sup>75</sup>Unfortunately, Singapore has hot and humid weather all year long!

<sup>76</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," pp. 7-8.

Clearly, the PAP was coming to be viewed as a potential core interest threat to Malaya in the eyes of the Alliance decision-makers.

In retrospect the 1964 elections appear as to be a watershed in the development of Singapore as a core interest threat to Malaya within Malaysia, for they marked the transition in Singapore-Malayan relations from a PAP versus MCA dispute to one between the PAP and UMNO. And this latter dispute, which pitted Chinese against Malay rather than Chinese against Chinese, is the one that led to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia.

An immediate result of the PAP's poor electoral performance, however, was its inspiration of an Alliance political counter-attack across the Strait of Johore. The PAP's capturing of all three Malay constituencies in the 1963 Singapore elections had left the Singapore branch of UMNO in a state of shocked and disheartened disorganization. The elections in Malaya the following year not only provided more incentive for UMNO to challenge the PAP on the latter's home-ground but also made it more confident of achieving some success. As will now be shown, it was an agitation campaign in Singapore led by a resuscitated UMNO that paved the way to the ugly and frightening race riots in Singapore during the summer of 1964.

#### The Singapore Race Riots

Up to and including the April 1964 Malayan elections the Singapore-Kuala Lumpur tensions within Malaysia were

medium religious schools, Ja'afar is much more representative of the UMNO rank and file than are the top level Malay government officials, who received English medium educations in Malaya and England and had long-established social and working relationships with the Chinese and the British.<sup>77</sup> Hanna concludes his sketch of Lee's new protagonist by reporting that Ja'afar "stirs up intense emotionalism" by contending that the Malays are poor because the Chinese monopolize the wealth and threatening that if the Chinese do not submit to Malay political dominance they will risk Malay reprisals.<sup>78</sup>

Ja'afar's arrival in Singapore to spearhead UMNO's reorganization also bolstered a campaign by Singapore Malays demanding that the PAP government grant them special rights and privileges like those enjoyed by the Malays of Malaya.<sup>79</sup> The Malay community was psychologically ripe for such a drive because its hopes of improving its general status and conditions under a Malay-dominated federal government of Malaysia were dashed by Indonesia's konfrontasi policy, which diverted political attention and undermined its economic position in economically hard-hit Singapore.

An important medium and stimulus for the efforts of the Malay agitators was the Utusan Melayu. This newspaper was not only written in the Malay language but in the jawi (Arabic)

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> The Malaysia Agreement stipulated that the special privileges granted to the Malays of Malaya would not be extended to Singapore by the merger.

script rather than in the more commonly understood rumi (Roman) script. Most non-Malays who could read Malay could read only the rumi script and thus could not read the Utusan Melayu. The newspaper's motto is "to fight for religion, race and homeland" and in the summer of 1964 the Utusan Melayu was continually harping on the depressed economic situation of the Singapore Malay and charging that Malays were being persecuted by the PAP government.<sup>80</sup>

An immediate issue exploited in the UMNO-Ja'afar-Utusan Melayu agitation campaign was a PAP urban renewal project which required the relocation of about two hundred Malay families.<sup>81</sup> Demands were made for relocation in racially exclusive rather than integrated housing complexes (where the Malays would constitute only a small percentage) and for lower rates than other races were charged. The PAP government was put in a difficult position because to yield to demands for special privileges for the 14% Malay minority would have presented its chief political rivals for the support of the 75% Chinese majority with an even more powerful communal issue than the UMNO Malays were exploiting.

Lee moved to mitigate the developing Malay campaign by inviting representatives of 103 Malay "non-political bodies"<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 63.

<sup>81</sup> Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Malaysian Situation (Singapore: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 14.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-18.



to meet with him and his Social Affairs Minister (a Malay) on July 19 to discuss the grievances of the Malay community. UMNO, which was not included on Lee's long invitation list, countered by organizing a meeting of its own which met a week earlier on July 12.

In addressing the estimated 12,000 people at this July 12 UMNO-sponsored gathering<sup>83</sup> Ja'afar described the situation of the Malays in Singapore as being worse than under the Japanese occupation and likened Lee to "an Ikan Sepat which lives in muddy waters only."<sup>84</sup> Demands for such advantages as job quotas, lower rents, and student stipends were drafted, and any Malays who would attend Lee's meeting were branded in advance as "traitors" by a Malay Action Committee that was established.<sup>85</sup>

Lee responded by labeling the Malay charges untrue and pinning the blame for a recent racial clash in Malaya on this Malay campaign:

I believe that . . . the vast majority of Malays are not represented by these extremist sentiments. I have been around the Malays in Singapore. I found no hatred even after this campaign has been mounted. If there was a basis, if there was truth, that we are in fact twisting the Malays by the arm and pushing them out of the towns, I don't think it needed a Malay newspaper campaign to work up a Bertha Hertogh situation. You know, what happened, 14 years ago, one night suddenly reason left, the primitive instincts took over, and for three days, this place, Singapore, was bedlam.

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<sup>83</sup> Leifer notes that it included members of groups noted for their radicalism, bigotry, and Indonesian sympathies. "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 64.

<sup>84</sup> Utusan Melayu, July 13, 1964 as cited by Leifer, ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 13.

I don't believe it will happen in Singapore, not if we keep calm in the face of provocation . . . I would like the press to keep this part out. But because of the sustained campaigning meant really for Malaya-wise consumption, now you have had the first racial clash in Bukit Mertajam.<sup>86</sup>

Lee continued saying he regretted that:

Whilst we can deal firmly with the Chinese chauvinists because the majority of my colleagues are Chinese and therefore there is no accusation that we are keeping the Chinese down, I cannot deal as swiftly with the Malay chauvinist. . . .

But I do suggest that Malay leaders in authority can do that, and if they don't: I say that we may well perish by default.<sup>87</sup>

At the end of this speech, which was made only three days before Singapore's first 1964 race riot was to break out, Lee warned of the continual danger of racial violence:

You know, never believe that it cannot happen to us. Always prepare for it. There is no reason why the British Guinean Indian should be burning the house of the British Guinean Negro; but they are doing it. There is no reason why the Indians in Burma should leave Burma stripped off [sic] their worldly possessions. But 28 million Burmese are doing that to 1 million Indians.

So . . . everytime you meet a Malay friend, just try and add one little bit more word of understanding to dispel this hysteria which is being worked up by a group of extremists.<sup>88</sup>

The approximately one thousand Malays who attended Lee's meeting (the opposition charged that many were government Work Brigade Malays trucked in to fill empty seats) were addressed in Malay by Lee, who rejected the demands for special Malay privileges but promised that every effort would be made to

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<sup>86</sup>Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Malaysian Situation, p. 21.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-4.

train and equip Malays to compete with non-Malays in finding jobs. Employment, education, and housing were the answer for the Malays, Lee argued; agitation for special privileges merely played into Indonesia's hands.<sup>89</sup>

Lee lashed out at UMNO's political propaganda campaign and warned that if they went too far in their efforts "the country will break up and collapse."<sup>90</sup> He also expressed bewilderment that the Malay Action Committee the UMNO meeting had created included "PMIP extremists and racists" and an individual who had been publicly identified by the Malaysian Government as a "close Indonesian agent."<sup>91</sup>

Predictably, Lee's policy toward the Singapore Malays was denounced bitterly the following day by the Malay Action Committee. Leaflets circulated under its name charged that groups of Chinese in Singapore had drawn up plans to kill Malays and exhorted: "Before Malay blood flows in Singapore, it is best to flood the state with Chinese blood."<sup>92</sup> It should be noted that racial antagonism was also being stirred up by Radio Jakarta's day and night propaganda which sought to poison Malay-Chinese relations within Malaysia and thus aid Indonesia's konfrontasi efforts to crush Malaysia.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-18.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Dennis Bloodworth in The Observer (London), July 26, 1964. Cited by Michael Leifer, "Communal Violence in Singapore," Asian Survey, Vol. IV, No. 10 (October, 1964), p. 1115.

### The Riots and Their Aftermath

On July 21 (just two days after Lee's speech and one day after the inflammatory leaflets were distributed) an incident<sup>93</sup> during a Moslem procession celebrating the birth of Mohammed touched off the worst race riot in Singapore's history. At least a score of people were killed and hundreds injured; order was not restored fully for several days.<sup>94</sup>

A second riot broke out on September 3 when a Chinese trishaw rider was found murdered. Fortunately this rioting was on a lesser scale.

Given the "eggshell syndrome" prevalent among decision-makers of all races throughout Malaysia, these riots were very traumatic political events. Certainly general race riots would threaten Malaysia's very existence and probably destroy it as a multiracial state. The avoidance of such riots is thus an obvious core interest of the state. And any factors that were viewed as being likely to bring about such riots would be obvious core interest threats. In this regard Rahman's opinion of the cause of the riots is especially noteworthy. In a September 20, 1964 speech he blamed Singapore politicians for creating the conditions for the riots. Furthermore the Tunku, in an uncharacteristically harsh mood,

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<sup>93</sup>According to Hanna, either a Malay straggler tangled with a policeman (PAP version) or a bystander tossed a bottle at a marcher (UMNO version). "The Separation of Singapore . . .", p. 13. At any rate, Malays charged Chinese bystanders and the riot began.

<sup>94</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .", p. 65.

attacked the PAP for entering the Malayan elections, complained that there was an "undercurrent to contest my leadership of the Malaysian people by trying to make out that I am a leader of the Malays only," and pointedly warned the Chinese community that it "didn't have it so good anywhere else."<sup>95</sup>

To top things off it was known that this threatening speech had been modified to a more moderate version shortly before it was delivered!<sup>96</sup> Thus, as Leifer noted, there was a real danger that it might damage relations between the Central and Singapore governments beyond the point of repair.<sup>97</sup> Fortunately, the flashpoint potential of the situation was recognized and Lee did not rise to this challenge in his characteristic manner. Indeed, no public response was forthcoming. Instead Lee and some colleagues soon had dinner with Rahman in Kuala Lumpur and agreed upon what became known as a truce. Apparently both sides agreed not to raise any sensitive issues regarding the respective positions of the communities in Malaysia and to relegate party differences to the background for two years.<sup>98</sup> Unfortunately this truce would prove to be effective for only a few months.

Lee may have tried to capitalize on a possible political opportunity that might have been a by-product of the

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<sup>95</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), September 21, 1964. Cited by Leifer, ibid., p. 67.

<sup>96</sup>Leifer, ibid.      <sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Sunday Times (Singapore), September 27, 1964. Cited by Leifer, ibid.

tragic rioting. Much as he had previously exploited his party's shocking Hong Lim by-election defeat to help convince the Alliance leaders of the necessity for merger, it appears that Lee tried to exploit the rioting in order to attain his long sought goal of getting himself and his party into the national political power structure. Deputy Prime Minister Razak claimed two years later that shortly after the first riot Lee had "urged the Tunku and I to take the PAP into the Alliance Government."<sup>100</sup>

Lee, however, immediately put forth a different story, saying that in August of 1964 Rahman told him that the British had advised that the best way to consolidate Malaysia after the riot was to form a coalition with the PAP. But the Tunku, Lee continued, had replied that he could not accept this proposal for at least two years because "although he was not against it, his party, UMNO, would never accept it."<sup>101</sup>

What Lee was driving at about UMNO was an ominous trend he saw developing within that party, namely a trend regarding the relative power of the moderate, intercommunal top leadership level of UMNO versus the lower level leaders who were communalistic and ultranationalistic in regard to the Malay race and culture. Lee feared that during the 1964 Malayan elections:

The second-tier [Malay UMNO] leaders realised their importance--that they, not the [first tier] Ministers, they, the people who addressed the mass rallies, who

<sup>100</sup> Straits Times (Singapore, July 28, 1966.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., July 29, 1966.

spoke the patois of the kampong folk, it was they who rallied the masses. And they had very different ideas about what the nature or the texture of Malaysia should be.<sup>102</sup>

With this increasing power of what Lee labels the Malay "ultras" within UMNO, the UMNO-PAP, Malay-Chinese conflicts and frictions were bound to intensify.

The redrawing of the political battlelines from Chinese versus Chinese, MCA versus PAP, and Tan versus Lee to those of the PAP versus UMNO and Lee versus the Malay "ultras" or, more broadly, the Alliance ruling party versus the non-Malay opposition parties was accompanied by an escalation of public rhetoric that further polarized Malaysian politics along the potentially apocalyptic fault line of the Malay versus Chinese power rivalry. The public posture of non-Malay versus Malay and Singapore versus Kuala Lumpur relations steadily deteriorated through the second year of the Federation's existence. These relations plunged to an anticlimatic nadir during the parliamentary debates of May and June, 1965 before the Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relationship within Malaysia was terminated in August. This tragic train of events will be described and analyzed in the next chapter.

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<sup>102</sup> Lee, "Are There Enough Malaysians . . .," p. 6.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE AS A CORE INTEREST

#### THREAT WITHIN MALAYSIA: PHASE II, LEE'S

#### "MALAYSIAN MALAYSIA" CAMPAIGN

#### Lee's Drive for a "Malaysian Malaysia"

##### The "Malaysian Malaysia" Concept and Its Implications

Lee's leadership of the drive for a "Malaysian Malaysia" went far toward establishing Lee, the PAP, and Singapore as a core interest threat to Malaya (and Malaysia) in the eyes of the Alliance decision-makers. The "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan would have been a credit to any public relations firm indulging in the political campaigning field. One observer rates the choice of the phrase as being "near-brilliant."<sup>1</sup> If the Alliance reacted by attacking the idea it would seemingly place itself in opposition to a multiracial society; and if the Alliance praised the idea it would be building up Lee's image and prestige.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is not surprising that the Alliance found it quite difficult and frustrating to cope with Lee's new campaign drive.

The general idea of a "Malaysian Malaysia" was as difficult to oppose as God, motherhood, or law and order. It was

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<sup>1</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Parmer, "Malaysia 1965 . . .," p. 114.



defined as meaning that "the nation and the state is [sic] not identified with the supremacy, well being and interests of any one particular community or race."<sup>3</sup> Thus to oppose a Malaysian Malaysia would expose one to charges of racism and communalism.

Within the Malaysian political context, it is important to note, the concept of a "Malaysian Malaysia" had serious and far-reaching implications. The slogan oversimplified and dichotomized a complicated issue, boiling it down to whether the state was to be a "Malay Malaysia" (i.e., Malay oriented and dominated) or a "Malaysian Malaysia" (i.e., multi-racial with equal status, opportunity, and treatment for all). Clearly then, the campaign for a "Malaysian Malaysia" was a challenge to the perpetuation of the special rights, privileges, and political predominance of the Malays. Lee's immediate objective appeared to be that of obtaining a firm policy commitment that these special privileges of the Malays would be progressively diminished rather than be made permanent or extended. Given this context, the contention that "most Malays" regarded Lee's concept of a "multi-racial" society as an "insidious plan" against their rights and position<sup>4</sup> becomes quite credible.

In the PAP-Alliance exchanges that Lee's campaign produced, the threat that a Chinese Singapore posed to the Malay

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<sup>3</sup>Declaration of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention, May 9, 1965, as quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation (Singapore: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 17. The full text of this Declaration is presented as Appendix B.

<sup>4</sup>Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . . ," p. 70.

position in Malaysia became painfully clear. Whenever Lee elaborated upon his mathematical calculations or his political approach, sensitive Malay nerves were jabbed. These statements consequently merit quotation in some detail.

"Lee's Math" dealt with the mechanics of communal politics. It was based on the assumption that in ten to twenty years the present one-citizen-one-vote situation would become, in effect, a one-man-one-vote situation, since there would then no longer be many non-Malays who couldn't vote because they weren't citizens. "Lee's Math" can be summarized as follows:

1. In "old Malaya" the 50% Malays constituted 65% of the vote, thus anybody who could get the support of most of the Malays controlled the country. UMNO had little trouble doing this because the guerrilla war "emergency" united the Malays through their fear of being overwhelmed and subjugated by the Chinese; because UMNO's only Malay rival (the PMIP) took away only 15-20% of the Malay vote; and because several other parties split up the non-Malay 35% of the vote. Thus UMNO was firmly in power in Malaya, and it was seeking to perpetuate this position in Malaysia by encouraging communal Chinese and Indian parties. The non-Malay vote thus would be split safely between UMNO's Alliance partners (the MCA and MIC) and the various opposition parties.<sup>5</sup>

2. In the "new Malaysia," however, UMNO's Alliance had only to lose a majority of the 60% non-Malay vote and it

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<sup>5</sup>See Are There Enough Malaysians . . . , pp. 7-8.

might well be out of power. Thus when the non-Malay PAP won in the three Malay constituencies in Singapore (1963) UMNO's perpetual dominance was threatened. If a multi-racial party's social and economic action programs could win over the Malays in Singapore, the same might happen if that party moved into Malaya. And "if part of the 65% [i.e., the Malays] joins the others [i.e., the 35% non-Malays] in a multi-racial party (e.g. the PAP) then what happens?"<sup>6</sup>

The answer to Lee's rhetorical question was only too painfully obvious to the Alliance; as Lee put it: "This was something that could not be tolerated if their perpetual dominance was to be assured."<sup>7</sup>

Lee's political approach was based on these mathematical calculations and, as will be obvious in the quotations below, had ominous implications for the Alliance as well as striking hard at many sensitive nerve endings of the party's leaders. Lee first attacked the Alliance's communal party "building block" approach to "Malaysian unity":

They say that first they have three little unities, i.e. "Malays unite," "Chinese unite," "Indians unite" and then the three unities unite into one big unity.

They have been doing this in Malaya for the last decade and successfully maintained the privilege and power position of a few privileged Malay traditionalists sharing the spoils of office with a few wealthy Chinese and a few fortunate Indians who were chosen [by the "Malay traditionalists"] to represent the Chinese and Indians respectively.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Lee Kuan Yew, "Dangers of Segregated Communal Parties," Petir (April, 1965), p. 7.

This approach is a bad one, Lee continued, because "If communally organised parties were genuinely so organised . . . it is . . . a dangerous and unstable arrangement, fraught with constant strife, because the three different communal bases are kept separate and distinct, having different attitudes and values and being fed with different and often conflicting communal sentiments."<sup>9</sup> But the Alliance is not even following this approach in practice, Lee charged:

The political structure of the segregated communal parties is brittle and unstable because any cooperation is only at the top between a few individuals and it is an unequal cooperation.

The leaders of the dominant communal party are unlikely to have the same regard for the views of the leaders of the other communal parties when they [i.e., the latter] are in effect appointees of the dominant communal party.<sup>10</sup>

Lee presented his multi-racial PAP alternative in the following language:

If instead of getting caught in the stupidities and dangers of communal politics, the Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, Ceylonese, Eurasians, Dayaks, Ibans, Kadayans [the latter three are various "Borneo indigenous" groups] and others, and most important of all, the Malays, get together on the basis of their collective economic and social interests, then the majority of the people, i.e. the majority of Malaysian "have-nots" which will include the Malays, Chinese and Indians and others will all win.

In the end only multi-racial politics, in which the ground is integrated . . . along economic and social group interests, will provide a permanent basis for sound popular government in Malaysia.<sup>11</sup>

This was not only the right approach in principle, Lee argued, but the only one that can work for the non-Malays in practice. After explaining in detail how a Chinese communal

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

party could win a maximum of only four<sup>12</sup> of Malaysia's total of 159 federal parliament seats (thus becoming "a permanent minority") and how an Indian communal party could not win a single seat, Lee wrapped up his argument:

We are against communal politics on principle. But in case an appeal on principle is not strong enough, those who preach communal politics, particularly the Chinese and the Indians, are preaching weakness and isolationism which can only harm the communities they pretend to represent.<sup>13</sup>

The implications of all this for the Alliance were serious. In Lee's words: "If we stand firm on our basic rights as Malaysians and refuse to be side-tracked into segregated communal parties, the traditionalists will see that unless they change their policies and attitudes they will lose everything in the end."<sup>14</sup>

#### The Alliance Reaction to the "Malaysian Malaysia" Campaign

The Alliance in general and UMNO in particular interpreted Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign as a definite threat to their political position and reacted in a hostile and often very emotional manner. Various observers reported that "no one" doubted that Lee meant to oppose Malay political dominance,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lee's estimate might be low because the Chinese constituted an absolute majority in thirty-two Malayan federal parliamentary districts in 1964. Lee estimated that a Chinese communal party could win only about twenty seats in Malaya.

<sup>13</sup> Lee, "Dangers . . . ," p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Parmer, "Malaysia 1965 . . . ," p. 114.

that UMNO leaders felt that the campaign threatened to bring about a premature abolition of Malay special privileges,<sup>16</sup> that Lee "sounded frightening" to his opponents,<sup>17</sup> and that, consequently, the Alliance leaders often responded emotionally to Lee, thus indicating the depth of their anger and bitterness.<sup>18</sup> In short, Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign was viewed as a subtle communal appeal playing on the fears and the latent prejudices of the non-Malays.<sup>19</sup>

The Alliance's most rational and reasonable response to Lee's slogan was that they had always stood for a "Malaysian Malaysia" and that their record proved it. As Finance Minister Tan Siew Sin rebutted: "There would have been no Alliance . . . if we had not believed in a Malaysian Malaysia. (Applause) The concept of a Malaysian Malaya was born on the day the Alliance was born."<sup>20</sup>

As Lee's drive for a Malaysian Malaysia progressed, however, the reactions of the Alliance became more and more bitter, hostile, and emotional. As in a pressure cooker, the hot air engendered by all the hostile debate quickly brought the political situation to a boil, and the pressure continued to build up to the point where an explosion seemed possible. The political

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<sup>16</sup>Bradley, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . . ," p. 14.

<sup>18</sup>Panner, "Malaysia 1965 . . . ," p. 114.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Malaysia, ". . . Speech . . . by Tan . . . ," p. 14.

situation appeared to be heading out of control and threatened to plunge the nation into communal violence. This build up of pressure will now be described and analyzed in some detail in order to demonstrate how the threat posed by Lee, his party, and the Chinese state he led came to be viewed as a threat to the very existence of Malaysia, as the Alliance decision-makers conceived its existence.

### The "Malaysian Malaysia" Battle

#### Lee's Public Relations Activities Abroad

In retrospect the "Malaysian Malaysia" conflict appears to have had roots in some of Lee's public relations activities abroad. In fact, Lee was visiting Europe at the time of the second Singapore riot in September of 1964, and the apparent fruits of some of his activities there aroused disturbing suspicions among the Alliance leaders. They felt that Lee, whom they knew to be an impressive and persuasive spokesman abroad, was inspiring press reports favorable to the goals and ambitions of the Chinese in general and himself in particular within Malaysia.

A Sunday Telegraph editorial probably confirmed these suspicions. It contended:

Rahman . . . shows no signs of realizing the need for urgent and far-reaching Government measures to reassure the Chinese section . . . whose share of posts in the Army, the Civil Service and the state agencies is still intolerably small.

What is urgently needed is for the British Prime Minister to bring the strongest possible pressure on the

Tunku to give the Chinese a fair deal while there is still time for concessions to bear fruit. (Emphasis added.)<sup>21</sup>

In the context of Indonesia's active policy of crushing Malaysia and Malaysia's extreme dependence on the U.K. for defense against this dangerous threat, the Alliance government was quite vulnerable to such pressures. Thus the policy recommendation of the editorial must have been particularly disturbing: "Britain should make it absolutely clear that a condition of her willingness to succour Malaysia is the Malaysian Government's own willingness to build a multi-racial united community really worth saving."<sup>22</sup>

It was in this context one week later that Rahman complained that an effort was being made to portray him as a leader of "the Malays only" and warned the Chinese that they "didn't have it so good anywhere else."<sup>23</sup> As noted above the explosiveness of the communal situation following the riots was recognized by both sides, and in informal two year moratorium on bringing such sensitive issues into public politics was agreed upon.

Lee's public relations activities abroad, however, would continue to aggravate the Alliance government. During the

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<sup>21</sup> Sunday Telegraph, September 13, 1964. Quoted by Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 66.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. As additional examples Leifer cites the February 5 and March 6, 1965 editions of the Washington Post.

<sup>23</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), September 21, 1964. Cited by Leifer, ibid., p. 67.



Singapore Prime Minister's<sup>24</sup> three week trip to Australia and New Zealand (March-April, 1965), Kuala Lumpur had cause to be concerned not only with Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" propaganda but also with his rising image as a Malaysian--and Southeast Asian--leader. For example, one paper editorialized: "In Mr. Lee Kuan Yew Australia welcomes a man who can be fairly ranked as the most able political figure in all Southeast Asia."<sup>25</sup> Another rated him "an outstanding Commonwealth personality."<sup>26</sup> The most informed and perceptive assessment of Lee's tour and its impact, both at home and abroad, was made by The Australian Bulletin:

Whatever the real purpose of his visit, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew proved himself a good ambassador for Malaysia. He goes back to Singapore, his reputation as a brilliant, tough Asian politician untarnished. Whether his Australian venture will lead to an improvement in the present strained relationship between Mr. Lee's Government

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<sup>24</sup>Fletcher notes perceptively that the fact that both Lee and Rahman held the title of Prime Minister "created confusion and symbolized a deeper and more fundamental difficulty in the governing of Malaysia" and quotes an American diplomat's comment, "How can you have two Prime Ministers in one country and expect it to act as a unit?" Nancy McHenry Fletcher, "The Separation of Singapore from Malaysia" (unpublished Masters Thesis, Cornell University, 1967), p. 90. That this symbolized a factor in the separation decision is evidenced by a remark in the Tunku's separation speech: "There can be only one Prime Minister for the nation, and so the best course we can take is to allow Lee Kuan Yew to be Prime Minister of Independent Singapore in the full sense of the word which otherwise he was not." Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>25</sup>Sidney Morning Herald, March 18, 1965 as quoted in Lee, Malaysia--Age of Revolution, p. 69.

<sup>26</sup>The West Australian, April 2, 1965 as quoted in Lee, ibid., p. 70.

and the Tunku's Government in Kuala Lumpur, is Mr. Lee's affair.<sup>27</sup>

That Lee's "real purpose" was suspect in the mind of the Alliance leaders is indicated by the fact that Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Lim Swee Aun, was quickly dispatched to Australia. Apparently serving a "truth squad" type of mission,<sup>28</sup> Aun claimed that Lee had accused the Central Government of working only for the Malays and had ridiculed Rahman for making a naive mistake in thinking the indigenous people of Borneo were Malays.<sup>29</sup>

In the flare-ups surrounding the Parliamentary sessions during the spring of 1965, Dr. Ismail, one of the more moderate Malay leaders in the Alliance Government, denounced Lee's image-making abroad:

This is the image that cunningly tells the foreign correspondents and countries abroad of a fairy-tale story of how the gentle, economically backward, law-abiding Malay giants [In the June 1, 1965 Straits Times account of this speech Ismail was quoted as saying ". . . of how generally backward people are planning . . ." instead of the seemingly out of place phrase used in this Department of Information "full text" of the speech.] are planning to dominate the robust, economically advanced Chinese in Malaysia and that if Malaysia breaks up it is because the communal Alliance Party is treating the new states as inferior to the Malay States and therefore pressure must be put on the

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<sup>28</sup> An Australian scholar noted that there was a "distinct impression" in Canberra that one of the primary objectives of the mission was to correct the propaganda impact of Lee. Peter Boyce, "Policy Without Authority: Singapore's External Affairs Power," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. VI, No. 2 (September, 1965), p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), April 6 and 7, 1965 as quoted by Fletcher, p. 91.

Alliance Government that they must be more accommodating, that they must form a coalition government.<sup>30</sup>

And moderate Chinese leader Tan Siew Sin charged:

It is clear from the utterances . . . Mr. Lee made when he was in Australia and New Zealand, for example, that his purpose in going overseas was not so much to propagate the image of Malaysia . . . [as it was] to attract support for Singapore, particularly for himself, against the Central Government. I suggest that that was an act of disloyalty. (Honourable Members: Hear! Hear!) (Several Honourable Members: Traitor!)<sup>31</sup>

The cries of the "Honourable Members" of the House plus the fact that the Malaysian Department of Information included them in its special publication of the speech are indicative of the highly charged atmosphere in which the "Malaysian Malaysia" battle was waged.

That Lee's public relations activities abroad played a role in the decision to "evict" Singapore is indicated in Rahman's speech announcing Singapore's separation in which the Prime Minister complained:

Foreign correspondents . . . were under the wrong impression that the Malay-dominated Central Government has not been fair to others, that there has been discrimination against the Chinese in all fields and in all matters.

It was suggested that our quarrel with the PAP was due to the fact that we were afraid of the far more advanced and enlightened socialist Government of Singapore.

There appeared also in the foreign Press . . . articles and reports which gave an entirely wrong picture of this country to the people abroad.

<sup>30</sup>Malaysia, Department of Information, Inter-Racial Harmony, full text of Speech by the Hon'ble the Minister of Home Affairs, Dato' Dr. Ismail bin Dato' Abdul Rahman, in the House of Representatives on 31st May, 1965, n.d., pp. 4-5.

<sup>31</sup>Malaysia, ". . . Speech by . . . Tan . . . ." p. 8.

In short while they are trying to build up the image of Lee Kuan Yew they at the same time are belittling us.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly then, Lee's self-serving image building abroad both annoyed and concerned the Alliance leaders. It is especially noteworthy that Lee's propaganda line damaged the position and image of the moderate Alliance leaders rather than the "Malay ultras." This point is significant in an assessment of the factors motivating the separation decision because this decision appears to have been made, discussed, and approved only by a few Alliance moderates. All other Malaysian politicians, including the Malay ultras, were not even aware that such a move was being seriously considered until just a few minutes before it was announced.

Now that the nature of Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" concept, the Alliance's general reaction to it, and the nature and effects of Lee's public relations activities abroad have been discussed, a chronologically organized, blow-by-blow account of the "Malaysian Malaysia" battle will be presented. This account will begin with the failure of the truce that was declared shortly after the frightening communal riots in Singapore during the summer of 1964. From this point on the battle steadily escalated until it reached an anti-climax in the unruly May-June, 1965 session of the Malaysian Parliament.

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<sup>32</sup>Malaysia, Department of Information, Singapore Break-away, full text of Speech by the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in the House of Representatives on 9th August, 1965, pp. 3-4.

### The Short-Lived Truce

The PAP-Alliance truce did not prove to be very effective. Scarcely one month after it was proclaimed in public dispute broke out between Malaysian Minister of Agriculture and Chairman of the Singapore Alliance, Mohammed Khir Johari, and PAP Chairman Toh Chin Chye. Khir Johari bragged that the Singapore Alliance could win enough votes to oust the PAP from the next Singapore government. This provoked Toh to retort that the PAP would be reorganized "so that we can get at Malaya."<sup>33</sup>

Soon after this exchange, the budget session of the Dewan Ra'ayat provided the arena for another party skirmish. The Tan-Lee, MCA-PAP feud was rekindled over the issue of Malaysian Finance Minister's controversial proposals for new taxes. The PAP attacked these new taxes in such a manner that Tan complained: "It is apparently their ["their" meaning the Communists and their fellow-travellers: i.e., the Singapore Government, the PAP, and the PAP-dominated Singapore National Trade Union Congress] intention to incite the populace there to action, perhaps even violent action, in order to bring the Central Government to its knees."<sup>34</sup>

Disturbed by this political uproar over the budget, Rahman took pains to explain the need for new taxes in light of

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., November 2, 1964 as cited by Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia . . .," p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), December 31, 1964.

the mounting costs of defense against Indonesian confrontation. That he was extremely concerned and troubled by the underlying cause of this latest flare-up was indicated by the second theme he developed in a speech he delivered at the University of Singapore. After stating his "hope and ambition" that Singapore would become the "New York of Malaysia" (a key Singapore goal in merger), the Tunku said that "those in control" of Singapore must concentrate on "making Singapore . . . the business centre of Malaysia, and not a hotbed of political quarrels and squabbles." Pointedly, he noted that in Singapore there was "less harmony" (the riots had been only a few months ago) than elsewhere in Malaysia and concluded that "too much politics stirs up unnecessary excitement, sometimes not a healthy type." That was why he was not very anxious to merge with Singapore, he revealed, but he finally decided to take the risk because of the interests of Malaysia.<sup>35</sup>

Should Singapore choose to make politics its main springboard, Rahman continued, it would invite trouble and all Malaysia would suffer. In words that have great significance in retrospect, the Tunku warned: "If the politicians . . . in Singapore disagree with me, the only solution would be a breakaway, but what a calamity that would be for Singapore and Malaysia!" (Emphasis added.)<sup>36</sup> Here then is a clear statement of the Tunku's great concern with the political activities of Singapore and a warning that Rahman would prefer to pay the price of

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., December 10, 1964.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

separation from Singapore rather than risk the provocation of more communal violence.<sup>37</sup> Even if having Singapore within Malaysia were still viewed by Rahman as a core interest, this statement indicates that any core interest dilemma that might arise because of a conflict with another core interest (such as the prevention of major communal violence) would be resolved at the expense of Singapore's place within Malaysia.

#### Lee Takes Up the Gauntlet

Lee did not respond favorably to either the Tunku's suggestion that Singapore's leaders should concentrate on economic matters or his warning that they should cease their public airing and debate of sensitive communal political issues. In a speech at Kuala Lumpur he replied to Rahman's suggestion that Singapore's leaders should concentrate all their energies on making the city the biggest port in Asia: "What was left unsaid was that the People's Action Party should get out of Malaya and stop offering democratic socialism as an alternative to Alliamism [sic], i.e. the policies of conservative Malay traditionalist leaders corroborating with Chinese compradores and capitalists for mutual benefit."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> That this budget dispute was still burning in the Tunku's mind at the time of his decision to expel Singapore from Malaysia is indicated by his separation speech comment: "Criticism leveled at the Central Government by the Singapore representatives at the last Budget meeting are still fresh in members' memories." Malaysia, Department of Information, Singapore Breakaway, pp. 5-6.

<sup>38</sup> Lee Kuan Yew, Towards a Malaysian Malaysia, Speeches by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew delivered in Kuala Lumpur, Seremban and Malacca in February/March, 1965 (Singapore: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 2.

Instead of taking Rahman's hints to heart, Lee responded to them as a political challenge, replying that the PAP sought to appeal to both Malay and non-Malay have-nots by offering a more effective way of raising their educational and living standards. Provocatively--and characteristically--Lee neatly turned the tables in the political debate:

If it is the Malays they are worried about, not just their position as leaders, surely there was no harm having competition between traditionalism working in cooperation with Chinese compradores and capitalists [Alliancism] on the one hand and democratic socialism interpreted by Malaysian nationalists designed to distribute wealth and opportunity more equally. But we are being told to stay out of Malaya and confine our socialism to Singapore.<sup>39</sup>

The "ultras" (short for those Lee designates as "ultra-nationalists") in the Alliance are now in a grave dilemma, Lee continued, for they have failed in their efforts to maintain "their type of segregated inter-racial party cooperation" and are left with only two alternatives: to change their attitudes to the changed circumstances of Malaysia<sup>40</sup> or to change the circumstances of Malaysia to suit their old policies and tactics.

That Lee recognized the possibility of the latter is indicated by his public notice of comments reported in the Utusan Melayu. A former Alliance Minister was quoted as saying that if Singapore politicians don't confine themselves to Singapore, the Central Government should "reconsider Singapore's

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> See the section on "Lee's Math" supra, pp. 214-15 for Lee's assessment of this change.



position in Malaysia."<sup>41</sup> And the Malay newspaper editorialized:

We would like to give a warning that if anything were to happen in the country, it is the People's Action Party who would be responsible. The incidents that occurred in Singapore [i.e., the 1964 riots] . . . had never happened before the People's Action Party came to power and had never happened in the past history of this country.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly, however, Lee felt this latter alternative (i.e., a reconsideration of Singapore's position within Malaysia) could be avoided. "We have watched the development of these events" he said, and have "calculated and re-calculated the options open to them and to us in Malaysia. We know that we cannot afford to be intimidated," Lee proclaimed, for if "we wilt under pressure, waiting in the wings is the Malayan Communist Party waiting to take over the ground and emerge as the leaders of the oppressed communities."<sup>43</sup> The first alternative (i.e., a change of attitude by the UMNO "ultras") would be their probable choice, Lee figured, for if they changed their attitudes and adopted policies with a Malaysian appeal, "Malaysia is bound to succeed and they are bound to retain the leadership of the country for a long time."<sup>44</sup>

Time was to prove Lee wrong. In retrospect he appears to have underestimated the nature and intensity of the threat the

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<sup>41</sup>Utusan Melayu, February 20, 1965 as quoted in Lee, Towards a Malaysian Malaysia, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., February 19, 1965 as quoted in Lee, ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Lee, ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

Malay leaders perceived in his challenges to their position. Given their differing political values, it appears that the Alliance Malays did not consider the same factors--or at least did not weight them the same way--as did the PAP Chinese.

Harvey Stockwin, an experienced political observer of Malaysia, contrasted these differing political styles and approaches in a perceptive article published only one week after Lee's comments. In the Alliance Malays he detected preferences for "quiet compromise and accommodation" and for the "avoidance of frank and honest public discussion of divergent opinions"--especially on communal matters, because the Alliance Malays viewed such clarification of the issues as a "likely prelude to discord." The PAP, in contrast, viewed such clarification as "the necessary prelude to the solutions of problems."<sup>45</sup>

Stockwin observed that for the PAP the main enemy was the extreme left, whose appeal had to be undermined by accelerated economic and social progress in Malaysia. To achieve this progress various communal obstacles first had to be overcome. For UMNO, in contrast, the main enemy (however unjustified it might seem to others) was any party (e.g., the PMIP or the PAP) which threatened UMNO hegemony, for UMNO viewed itself as the guardian of Malay rights, which were based on "the unspoken premise that Chinese economic power must be balanced by Malay political power." And in contrast to the PAP's priorities,

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<sup>45</sup>Harvey Stockwin, "A House Divided," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 9 (March 4, 1965), p. 372.

UMNO considered the maintenance of Malay political control to be a requisite for social and economic progress. Because of these differences in approaches and priorities, Stockwin pointed out, UMNO and the PAP viewed "the Malaysian problem in a different light and calculate their self-interest differently . . ." And at that particular time (March, 1965), he concluded, the PAP felt it must either "get down to brass tacks on the communal issues whose solution it was always calling for" or "retreat into the 'conspiracy of silence' it condemns"--but, Stockwin added, does not fully appreciate.<sup>46</sup>

It soon became evident from their public statements that the PAP leaders in Singapore and the Alliance leaders in Kuala Lumpur came to realize that they had different--and conflicting--political conceptions of the new state of Malaysia. Lee expressed his delayed realization of this fact in February of 1965: "After the elections [of 1964], we discovered over the months to our amazement, incredulity and subsequent horror, that . . . they believed they could force Malaysia into the Malayan pattern."<sup>47</sup> Lee went on to express his opinion that this Malayan pattern of politics was no longer feasible. "They are quite oblivious or refuse to accept the fact" that with the addition of Singapore and the Borneo territories the country became "qualitatively a different country altogether." Thus, Lee concluded, the Alliance ruling technique of "the

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>47</sup> Lee, Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia?, p. 7.

communally-segregated party which ensured their perpetual dominance" was no longer operational.<sup>48</sup>

To Lee this was all a matter of simple and obvious racial arithmetic, and he appeared genuinely surprised to discover that anyone could have believed otherwise. Characteristically he had done his homework carefully; calculations and recalculations regarding the future impact on voting the proposed Malaysian Constitution would have been made. The PAP's repeated conclusion: "We were quite confident that given 10, 15, 20 years, a Malaysian nation must emerge provided one-citizen-one-vote [is] obtained."<sup>49</sup>

That the Alliance had anticipated a very different Malaysia is exemplified by Rahman's April, 1965 comment: "Little did we realize that what the leader of the PAP had in mind was a share in running Malaysia. This was considered as unacceptable since the Alliance is strong enough to run the country on its own."<sup>50</sup> Rahman continued: "Unfortunately . . . the indications are that Mr. Lee Kuan Yew took our refusal to let him have a share in the running of the Central Government as a challenge."<sup>51</sup>

In short, both sides had apparently misread each other in regard to the political nature of the new federation ever

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), April 18, 1965 as quoted in Jean Grossholtz, "An Exploration of Malaysian Meanings," Asian Survey, Vol. VI, No. 4 (April, 1966), p. 229.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

since the beginning of the merger negotiations. The PAP had assumed that a new "Malaysian Malaysia" had been created while the Alliance had assumed that the basic pattern of Malay political control embodied in the "terms of '57" would continue. But now both sides realized that they had misread each other, and both reacted by moving to create new Malaysia-wide political organizations.

#### The PAP-Alliance "Cold War" Intensifies

Stockwin characterizes the situation that had developed between the leaders of Singapore and Malaysia after merger as being a "'cold war' political climate of communal claims and injured innocence, statement and counterstatement, mud-slinging and word twisting, pointed innuendo amidst unspecified or unclarified issues."<sup>52</sup> With the drawing of Malaysia-wide political battle lines in the Spring of 1965 this "cold war" soon reached a frightening pitch of emotional fervor.

The Alliance was the first to establish a wider organizational structure. In April of 1965 it established a new Malaysian Alliance Party through the merger of the four previously independent Alliance parties of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah. The functions of the new national Executive Council included such important powers as the selection of candidates, the maintenance of party discipline, and the handling of party disputes.

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<sup>52</sup>Stockwin, "A House Divided," p. 371.

Shortly afterward the PAP and four other opposition parties of various parts of Malaysia (all but Sabah) met to establish what was called the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC). On May 9, 1965 a Declaration of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention was signed. This stirring statement is reproduced in full as Appendix B because of its importance as an expression of the challenge that the Malay Alliance leaders interpreted to be a core interest magnitude (because it threatened the existence of the state, as they conceived of this existence). In a nutshell, the MSC declared a determination to defend Malaysia against perceived threats to its guiding principles of "democracy" and a "Malaysian Malaysia." The latter concept has already been described and its implications analyzed. The former now merits attention.

By "democracy" the MSC meant "the provisions for the fundamental rights of all our citizens" and "the system of parliamentary democracy enshrined in our present constitution." The latter element was particularly important to Lee for it was the fundamental assumption on which all his calculations regarding the nature of Malaysia (i.e., what has been referred to as "Lee's Math" with all its implications) had been based. The continuance of the "present system of parliamentary democracy" was not ensured in Malaysia because of the Federal Government's emergency power to suspend the Constitution, and because the Alliance had the two-thirds parliamentary majority necessary to amend the Constitution.

Hence the future development of Malaysia as Lee and the PAP had perceived it was viewed as being in jeopardy. This threat was likely to be perceived as one of core interest magnitude by Lee because it threatened the existence of Malaysia as he had conceived it. Thus it appears likely that what has been defined as a conflict of core interests was developing between the state government of Singapore and the federal government of Malaysia over the political nature of the newly created Federation of Malaysia. Consequently the public rhetoric of the next few months will be examined in some detail.

It soon became apparent that the MSC leaders had correctly perceived mounting threats to their conception of a "Democratic" and a "Malaysian" Malaysia. Public expressions of this threat emanating from Malay extreme nationalist sources rapidly increased in both number and intensity. For example, a group of Malays reportedly picketed an UMNO General Assembly meeting shouting "Crush Lee Kuan Yew" and displaying such posters as:

"SUSPEND SINGAPORE'S CONSTITUTION"

"DETAIN LEE KUAN YEW"

"MAKE SINGAPORE A SECOND KERALA"<sup>53, 54</sup>

<sup>53</sup>In Kerala, India a Communist state government had been elected in 1956 but was dismissed in 1959 (on the grounds that it was unable to govern peacefully) and Kerala was brought under the direct control of the federal government of India. Thus the implications of this analogy for Singapore were ominous.

<sup>54</sup>Utusan Zaman (the Sunday edition of Utusan Melayu), May 16, 1965 as quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 15.

And in these UMNO General Assembly meetings a resolution demanding that the government act to prevent PAP leaders from making statements "which might cause bloodshed" was passed unanimously, and several speakers demanded the arrest and detention of Lee.<sup>55</sup> All this occurred despite Rahman's appeal that these party delegates keep calm and play down "Lee's childish statements of recent weeks".<sup>56</sup> This was a clear warning, Grossholtz concluded, that Rahman's position was "not inviolate."<sup>57</sup>

It is noteworthy that at these same meetings Rahman had made a very strong statement reaffirming the importance of Malay rights:

It must be remembered that all the business, the wealth, and the trade in this country are in the hands of non-Malays. Hardly 1% of the Malays are in business and hardly 15% of those in Universities abroad or at home are Malays. If these rights are taken away what hope is there for the Malay to survive in his own country? (Emphasis added.)<sup>58</sup>

The emphasized portion of this quotation is suggestive of the core interest importance the special Malay rights and privileges had in the minds of most Malays, including the Tunku--who was the personification of Malay political moderation.

Lee's provocative and unyielding responses to the situation are evidence that he felt very important interests were at stake. He stated: "If we must have trouble, let us have it now instead of waiting for another 5 or 10 years. If we find

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Grossholtz, p. 231.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 231.



that Malaysia cannot work now then we can make other arrangements,"<sup>59</sup> and "If it is necessary to have a Malaysian Malaysia through such a group of parties [i.e., the MSC parties] making an effort to win the majority of seats in Malaysia to form the Government, well so be it. It has to be done."<sup>60</sup> That Lee would publicly threaten to wrest political control of Malaysia away from the Alliance scarcely a year after the 1964 Malayan election trauma and state that he would prefer to make other political arrangements for Singapore if provisions for the eventual establishment of a Malaysian Malaysia were not going to be maintained are indicative of the probable core interest importance he attached to the attainment of a Malaysian Malaysia.

During this same period Malay newspapers were reporting the following statements, which are all the more alarming because they were attributed to various high-ranking UMNO political leaders. The Chief Minister of Selangor charged that Lee was an "enemy of the people of Malaysia" and "was endangering the peace of the country."<sup>61</sup> The Chief Minister of Perak said that Lee "is now not only your enemy but he is also the most dangerous threat to the security of this country."<sup>62</sup> And UMNO

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<sup>59</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), May 22, 1965. Cited in ibid., p. 232 and in Fletcher, p. 68.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., May 25, 1965. Cited by Fletcher, p. 65.

<sup>61</sup> Utusan Melayu, May 25, 1965. Quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> Berita Harian, May 24, 1965. Quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, ibid.

Secretary-General Ja'afar Albar warned (obviously in reference to Lee's public calculation that an opposition party could come to power in the new Malaysia by winning over the Malay "have not" vote): "If the Malays were split, the Malays would perish from this earth."<sup>63</sup> The stage was now set for the Malaysian Parliamentary Sessions during which Singapore-Kuala Lumpur, Lee-Tan, and PAP-UMNO relationships and rivalries would plunge to a new and dismal low point.

#### The 1965 Parliamentary Sessions Nadir

At the Parliamentary Sessions in May and June of 1965 a definite nadir in Singapore-Malaysia relations was reached. Though characterizing these sessions as "perhaps the most crucial to the eventual dissolution of Malaysia" the author of the most detailed analysis of the separation of Singapore presently available dismisses all but one sentence of the emotion-packed exchanges that took place with the descriptive comment: "Verbal garbage of every variety was hurled across the aisles. The extremist Malays reserved the juiciest bits for their own use, but respected Alliance and PAP officers heaved their share."<sup>64</sup>

On the assumption that one can discern a lot about people from their garbage, verbal and otherwise, these statements will receive careful attention in this study. It is held that they

<sup>63</sup>Utusan Melayu, May 25, 1965. Quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup>Fletcher, p. 70.

help to convey the strong emotional attractions and antipathies attached to various concepts and personalities in the Malaysian political environment. Only in this manner can the core interest magnitude of the threats the key decision-makers of the state government of Singapore and the federal government of Malaysia perceived in the situation that developed be indicated. Thus these statements will be quoted and assessed in some detail in this analysis of the separation of Singapore.

The spark which kindled the conflagration that roared throughout the Second Session of the Malaysian Parliament in May and June of 1965 was contained in the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's<sup>65</sup> opening Speech from the throne. In this speech (though the King delivers it, it is actually prepared by the ruling political party, i.e., the Alliance in this case) note was made, as expected, of the foreign threat to Malaysia's security posed by Indonesia. But then an additional source of threats to Malaysia was cited. "We are also facing threats from within the country." (Emphasis added.)<sup>66</sup> The King continued: "Both these threats are designed to create trouble. If those concerned achieve their objective, it will mean chaos for us and [an] end to democracy."<sup>67</sup>

The source and nature of this internal threat was unspecified, but Lee interpreted it to refer to the activities of

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<sup>65</sup>A Malay title meaning "King."

<sup>66</sup>As quoted in Lee Kuan Yew, The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia, Vol. I (Singapore: Koon Wah Lithographers, n.d.), p. 5.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

himself as the key leader of Singapore, the PAP, and the MSC. "No useful purpose is served for us to pretend that we do not know what was intended,"<sup>68</sup> Lee stated. He then went on to defend his position and to challenge the Alliance more strongly and thoroughly than he ever had before in public.

Lee's response to the "threats from within" statement was two pronged. First he expressed his hope that the Prime Minister would take full responsibility for the text and added that he was confident that Rahman, in the course of his Prime Minister's speech to the Session, would be able to offer an explanatory note regarding the sentence about the internal threat. Secondly he moved to tack the following amendment on to the customary motion of thanks to the King for his speech: "but regrets the Address by His Majesty . . . did not reassure the nation that Malaysia will continue to progress in accordance with its democratic Constitution towards a Malaysian Malaysia but that on the contrary the address has added to the doubts over the intentions of the present Alliance Government and to the measures it will adopt when faced with a loss of majority popular support."<sup>69</sup> Though this amendment was heavily defeated (108-14) Lee succeeded in attracting widespread publicity for his cause and deftly turned the tables to put the Alliance on the defensive.

As might be expected, Lee used this opportunity to draw attention to extremist statements in the Malay press and to

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

repeat the case for a "Malaysian Malaysia" that the newly formed MSC was propagating as an alternative to "Allianceism." An important new item was added to this argument, and some elaborations on previous themes portray the threat of the "Malaysian Malaysia" concept to the Alliance Government with increased clarity and forcefulness.

While being careful not to imply that he or the MSC sought to replace the Tunku or the Alliance ("We would like him to continue to command.") Lee stated:

We are posing to the Alliance the fundamental challenge [emphasis added]: . . . how to bring about a more equal society. Is it by taxing the poor to pay for the defence of the country? [a clear reference to Tan's 1964 Budget tax proposals] Instead of special rights, why not tax the haves in order to uplift the have-nots? . . . Sooner or later the Alliance will have to meet us on this issue--development in the economical, social and educational sectors. If the Alliance does not have the answers to this problem, let them admit it. Instead of stifling us, let us put forward an alternative programme--we have an alternative which can work and which has worked in Singapore and which will continue to bear fruit.<sup>70</sup>

After explaining that he had not raised this issue publicly before<sup>71</sup> (because "We thought we would like to help [the Alliance] with ideas and so on privately. But it is now

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>71</sup> This, it should be stressed, is a very sensitive issue in Malaysia, involving as it does the issues of special Malay rights and privileges, rural versus urban development priorities, and such policy choices as whether to provide amenities to make rural life more attractive to the Malays or to train and otherwise prepare them to move to urban areas and become part of the modern economic sector. It should be noted that this latter strategy would put the Malays in the position of competing with non-Malays for the limited number of jobs in the modern sector.

necessary, because they will not listen to us privately."<sup>72</sup>), Lee launched a hard-hitting attack on the whole Alliance approach to development, pointing out the waste and inefficiency involved and the folly of thinking that special rights and privileges will help more than a mere handful (.3% to be exact) of the Malays.<sup>73</sup>

In regard to the prospects for achieving a "Malaysian Malaysia," Lee stressed that the nature of the Constitution (which would eventually produce a one-man-one-vote situation) put time "on our side," thus the MSC opposition had a "vested interest" in constitutional and democratic methods.<sup>74</sup> Threats to take away Singapore's local autonomy were not credible, Lee concluded. It was not possible legally because the Constitution (Paragraph 161H) prohibited any amendment affecting Singapore without the consent of its State Government, and it was not possible militarily because "the Alliance Government does not have enough guns."<sup>75</sup> We carefully and methodically calculated the issue and there is no other way. It may be possible to impose the Alliance pattern of dominance on Malaya but "certainly not on the whole of Malaysia."<sup>76</sup> Lee concluded:

We are for a Malaysian Malaysia or nothing. We cannot agree to anything but a Malaysian Malaysia. We are prepared to play . . . in accordance with the rules, perhaps wait five years of fifteen years, but the ideas we represent must come through. (Emphasis added.)<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Lee, The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia, p. 41.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 39, 46.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 13, 49.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

The emphasized sentence (if Lee really meant it<sup>78</sup>) indicates that an assurance that "Malay Malaysia" would be allowed eventually to develop into a "Malaysian Malaysia" was a Singapore interest of core interest magnitude in the mind of its chief decision-maker.

#### The Hostile Reactions to Lee

The reaction to Lee's speech was instantaneous; he was frequently interrupted by calls of "Sit down!" and "Get out!" These were mild reproaches, however, compared to what was to come from the parade of Alliance speakers that would address the Parliament in the next few days. Many of these remarks will be quoted to indicate the emotion and bitterness which characterized the reaction of Alliance "ultras" and moderates alike to Lee Kuan Yew and what he represented. Some of Lee's retorts will be cited as evidence of his continued willingness to push his case, despite the bitter nature of the response he was provoking, apparently because of his calculations that the Alliance threat of repressive action against Singapore was "not credible"<sup>79</sup> and that the Tunku would eventually step in and exercise his powers for moderation.

Lee added additional fuel to the developing conflagration with some remarks he made in Singapore on the evening of

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<sup>78</sup>That is, if it were not an unintentional core interest statement or a core interest feint.

<sup>79</sup>Lee, The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia, p. 45. Cited above.

May 31. According to the Straits Times report of his speech, Lee declared that Singapore had never agreed to Malay rule when it joined Malaysia and warned, "Someone is making a grave error if he thinks the people agreed to Malay rule in joining Malaysia."<sup>80</sup> Lee elaborated:

The agreement in the constitution must lead to a Malaysian Malaysia, and if they want to stop it they must use unconstitutional methods to stop it.

So I say if they want to do that, do it now. It will be easier for us to make alternative arrangements.<sup>81</sup>

The alternative contemplated apparently was a separate union of states that wanted a "Malaysian Malaysia." Lee could think of three, Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak, the Straits Times article reported, and Malacca and Penang (two states in Malaya with large Chinese populations) were possibilities.<sup>82</sup>

In parliament, Lee drew an immediate blast from the Alliance's Dr. Mahathir, who characterized Lee and his PAP as "pro-Chinese, Communist-oriented, and positively anti-Malay."<sup>83</sup> Ja'afar Albar, the UMNO Secretary-General who personified the "ultra" position, said Lee would "go down in history as the man who started the Singapore riots."<sup>84</sup>

Dr. Ismail, whom Lee classified as an UMNO moderate along with the Tunku, said Lee and his PAP were "like Dr. Jekyll and

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<sup>80</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), June 1, 1965.

<sup>81</sup>ibid.

<sup>82</sup>ibid.

<sup>83</sup>As quoted by Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 20.

<sup>84</sup>ibid. As has been indicated, history will probably give Ja'afar a large share of this blame.



Mr. Hyde: "abroad and to the foreign press, Mr. Lee spread 'fairy tales' about PAP reasonableness and co-operativeness; at home, he engaged in 'ruthless,' 'unscrupulous,' 'communal' tactics."<sup>85</sup> In short, Ismail concluded, "The PAP is a party that shouts 'fire, fire' but commits arson."<sup>86</sup>

Claiming that he was speaking in sorrow rather than anger, Tan Siew Sin nevertheless evidenced a great deal of anger toward Lee and his actions. His sorrow appears to have been more related to the tragic and frightening consequences (evidence of the "eggshell syndrome") he feared might result from Lee's actions. Several of Tan's statements to the House are thus relevant to the development of the core interest threat Lee, his cause, and his state were coming to pose in the eyes of the Malaysian Alliance Government.

Tan attributed power hungry motives to Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign and his reported consideration of partition as an "alternative arrangement" should "unconstitutional methods" be used to prevent a Malaysian Malaysia from developing. "Lee is frustrated simply because he finds his avenues to power too effectively blocked for his liking . . . hence, as . . . the Minister of Education said only a few days ago, 'What Mr. Lee wants is not so much a "Malaysian Malaysia" or a "Chinese Malaysia" [but] a "Lee Kuan Yew Malaysia."' (Applause.)"<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup>Malaysia, Department of Information, Inter-Racial Harmony, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), June 1, 1965.

<sup>87</sup>Malaysia, Department of Information, ". . . Speech by . . . Tan . . . ," p. 7.

In regard to the threat the Alliance perceived to be embodied in Lee, Tan's following comments are illuminating:

We do not worry when Mr. Lee Kuan Yew says either by implication or explicitly that he wants to become the Prime Minister of Malaysia. . . . We do not even worry if [he] is over-ambitious . . .

I think the greatest danger about the PAP and, particularly, its leader, that is the Secretary-General [of the PAP] and the Prime Minister of Singapore, is that it is the greatest disruptive force in the entire history of Malaya and Malaysia.<sup>88</sup>

Tan went on to cite Lee's reported partition alternative as proving this charge "beyond all shadow of doubt" and concluded with an elaboration on the nature of the danger he perceived in this threat:

I say it is only a warped mind which is frustrated in its search for power that can conceive this idea. It is not only a warped mind, it is clearly a warped mind which is prepared to sacrifice, if necessary, thousands of lives. It is prepared to shed blood in order to assure that the owner of the mind achieves supreme power. I think that is the measure of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.<sup>89</sup>

From these statements it can be inferred that Tan feared that Lee, in effect, was prepared to deviate from the cautious approach to sensitive communal issues dictated by the "eggshell syndrome." And what worried him (and the Alliance), Tan claimed, was not so much the long term political threat Lee's talent and ambitions posed but rather the short term communal conflict threat he perceived Lee's activities to be engendering. Little more than a month later the Tunku would emphasize this

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>89</sup> Lee, Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia, pp. 16-17.

same point in explaining his separation decision to expel Singapore from the Federation.

The nature of the threat Lee had come to pose in the minds of many Alliance politicians and an indication of their emotional hostility toward him is indicated by these additional remarks of various Members of Parliament and the Honorable Members' responses. Alliance Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Inche Senu, charged that Lee wanted "to destroy this nation and build a new one" and that Lee had accused the Tunku of making a "stupid, naive mistake" regarding the allocation of Parliamentary seats for the Borneo territories. When Lee tried to interrupt Senu to make a clarification he was shouted down by the House with yells of "Sit down," "Traitor," and "Get out."<sup>90</sup> Alliance Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications, V. T. Sambanthan, rose and made a remark that seemed to confirm Lee's suspicions regarding the phrase in the King's speech he had found offensive: "Now externally we are being threatened by Indonesia and internally by Mr. Lee and his brand of politics." (Emphasis added.)<sup>91</sup> And Alliance Member Haji Megat Khas expressed his great concern that Lee's statements would cause communal violence by urging that Lee not "allow his tongue too free a rein" otherwise there would be trouble among the races and charging that Lee was "breaking his word [by not acting as a loyal opposition] and breaking

<sup>90</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), June 2, 1965.

<sup>91</sup> ibid.

the country." Megat's vituperous conclusion: "He can be accused of treason."<sup>92</sup>

On the final day of the big debate over the King's speech, Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak spoke for the Alliance Government. After stressing that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet took "full and undivided responsibility for every word" contained in the King's speech, Razak denied that Rahman had ever thought of Lee or his party as the enemy from within. He went on and accused Lee of being deceitful by implying that the Alliance meant the PAP and himself in the "enemy from within" phrase. Lee, he charged, knew "full well" that what was meant was the Communist threat within Malaysia.<sup>93</sup>

Razak then repeated the Alliance line regarding Lee's attempts to have the PAP replace the MCA within the Alliance, the sinister purpose of Lee's trips abroad, and Lee's Malaysian Malaysia rabble rousing in the domestic press. Clearly Lee was "out to make trouble," Razak charged, and "the only Government which will be acceptable to him is the one in which he can have a big say and a big share and ultimately" one that he can run himself. Rebuked in his attempt to displace the MCA, Razak continued, Lee switched to "this new insidious plan" of a Malaysian Malaysia.<sup>94</sup>

Razak characterized Lee's reported partition comments as evidence that Lee planned to break up Malaysia into a Malay

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., June 4, 1965.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Malaysia and a "Lee Kuan Yew's Malaysia." When Lee rose to question Razak he was shouted down again with cries of "Sit down, traitor," "Sit down," "Get out!" and "Traitor." Lee's opportunistic and expedient methods of getting political support, Razak warned, "must lead to racial strife and tension and ultimately, to trouble and chaos." In conclusion, the Deputy Prime Minister stated that a "wide and clear" gulf divided the PAP and the Alliance. In short, PAP means "Partition and Perish" while MAP (Malaysian Alliance Party) means "Malaysia, Abundance, Progress."<sup>95</sup>

Most of this had been said by other Alliance ministers before. What was so significant about it being said again was that Razak was speaking for Rahman.

In retrospect, the reactions to Lee's supposed suggestion of a partition alternative are of great interest. Peter Lo, Chief Minister of Sabah, was reported to have said that it was highly dangerous for the peace and security of the nation for Lee to talk of partition. "We wonder if it has occurred to Mr. Lee that he is playing with political dynamite."<sup>96</sup> The Chief Minister of Penang, Dato Wong Pow Nee, said of Lee: "His mischievous utterances can destroy Malaysia's existing racial harmony and national solidarity."<sup>97</sup> And in the debate in the Malaysian Senate (Dewan Negara) Alliance whip Dato T. H. Tan said that Lee's "anti-Malay" and "unpatriotic" actions so

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

to attack Lee Kuan Yew and Singapore policies and he did not want to attack. Indicating his conception of his role, the Prime Minister explained:

I wanted to be the elder statesman and help resolve issues worrying one party or another. I have to play that part instead of being the aggressive leader of the Alliance. I had to fight against myself not to speak.

I spent hours and days listening to Mr. Lee's proposals and reasons and what-not for joining Malaysia. I am prepared to listen again to what he has to say about what is giving him all these worries and anxieties.

I am prepared to spend hours listening to him.

I wish I had not listened to all that persuasive talk before [i.e., Lee's arguments for merger] . . . then Malaya would still be a very happy Malaya--no confrontation, no nothing.<sup>99</sup>

These appear to be very sincere and heartfelt expressions of Rahman's feelings on these matters. One sympathizes with the agonies and soul searching the Tunku's self-imposed role apparently inflicted upon him. That Rahman was still intent upon maintaining this conciliatory role is indicated by one of his final comments at this press conference. Looking forward to his return from London, the Tunku remarked: "If there is something that is worrying Mr. Lee in Singapore, I will be glad to look into it and see how best we can settle things."<sup>100</sup> During Rahman's absence, however, the dispute developed further and became even more exacerbated.

#### The Continued Build-up of Tensions

After Rahman's departure for London new points of conflict in Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations appeared and kept tensions high. The key point of conflict in this final month-long

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., June 12, 1965.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

period before the surprise announcement of separation was another Singapore by-election involving Ong Eng Guan and the Hon Lim district. As in the important May, 1961 by-election, the contest was forced by Ong's resignation. This time, however, Ong was not a candidate; instead he gave his support to the Barisan Sosialis candidate.

Unfortunately for the Barisan its leader, Dr. Lee Siew Choh, did not return from the abortive Algerian conference in time to register for the contest. Thus the party had to settle for a "last minute substitute."<sup>101</sup>

The significance of this election for the purposes of this analysis is that the PAP did not focus its campaign on the Barisan Sosialis per se. Instead, the PAP fought the campaign against the Central Government using the Barisan as a tool with which to make its case.<sup>102</sup> Grossholtz noted the following significant points about the PAP campaign:

1. The PAP's campaign posters and propaganda largely ignored the Barisan and concentrated on portraying the Central Government as being unable to withstand the pressures of Malay extremists; thus it was trying to reduce Singapore to a colony.
2. The PAP cited the vehement Malay attacks on Lee as evidence that only Lee and his PAP government could protect Singapore.
3. In the course of the campaign it was Lee's aggressive challenges to the Alliance in general and to the UMNO "ultras" in particular that brought forth the loudest applause.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup>Grossholtz, p. 233.

<sup>102</sup>In this regard it is noteworthy that the PAP candidate, Lee Khoon Choy, was the Chairman of the MSC and Lee Kuan Yew's political secretary.

<sup>103</sup>Grossholtz, p. 234.

Gamer reports that the PAP's campaign flyers featured "We Want a Proprietary Interest in Malaysia" as a slogan and urged: "Vote for the PAP. It is to protect our own interests. Only PAP can procure for the people of Singapore equal and just rights."<sup>104</sup> The PAP wound up its campaign with the dramatic accusation that the Central Government had drawn up plans to arrest and detain Lee.

Razak denounced this charge as being "wild and mischievous,"<sup>105</sup> but the Central Government's expulsion of British journalist Alex Josey<sup>106</sup> plus inflammatory statements in the Utusan Melayu were used very effectively to add credibility to the PAP case.<sup>107</sup> For example, the PAP charged that Josey's expulsion was merely an "appetizer" to what the appetites of the UMNO ultras for the "main dish," the arrest and detention of Lee Kuan Yew.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Robert E. Gamer, "Urgent Singapore, Patient Malaysia," International Journal, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (Winter, 1965-66), p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), July 10, 1965.

<sup>106</sup> Josey had written articles favorable to Lee and his PAP government and had served as Lee's public relations man on several trips abroad. In the recent Parliamentary debates an Alliance "ultra" had asked the Central Government to declare Josey and another British journalist persona non grata. (Straits Times, June 2, 1965.) Josey was charged with interfering with Malaysia's internal affairs and indulging in activities which were "disrupting racial harmony." (Bradley, p. 102.) Further evidence of Josey's role as a public relations man for Lee is his recent (1969) editorship of what can be described as a "campaign biography" of Lee Kuan Yew.

<sup>107</sup> According to Grossholtz, loc. cit.

<sup>108</sup> Bradley, loc. cit.



It is noteworthy that the PAP scored a very substantial victory in this by-election, winning about 60% of the vote in a district in which it had previously had a great deal of trouble. Satisfying as it might have been at the time, however, the PAP later viewed this victory as being Pyrrhic in nature. In its official statement analyzing "Separation," the PAP concluded in retrospect (and in a characteristically haughty manner) that this by-election victory

marked perhaps a turning point in the mechanics of power in Kuala Lumpur. Unable to undermine the political base of the People's Action Party and fearful of the grave consequences of repressive actions contemplated against Singapore leaders, Kuala Lumpur in its dilemma increasingly toyed with the idea of expelling the Island State from Malaysia.<sup>109</sup>

Several other issues that were raised during the last month of Malaysia's existence in its original form were continuations of familiar themes in the score of Singapore-Kuala Lumpur disharmony. In another Alliance political appeal to the Malays in Singapore, Razak toured Singapore's predominantly Malay-populated Southern Islands promising attractive development projects--if only the Singapore government would cooperate with Kuala Lumpur in planning them!<sup>110</sup> And in another round of Singapore-Kuala Lumpur financial sparring, Minister of Finance Tan Siew Sin announced that he expected Singapore to start living up to its promise of a M\$500 million (three Malaysian dollars equal one U.S. dollar) loan for the development of the

<sup>109</sup> Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 24.

<sup>110</sup> Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 21.

Borneo territories and to start turning over a larger portion of its tax revenues (60% rather than 40%) to alleviate the unexpectedly high federal defense burden made necessary by Indonesian confrontation.<sup>111</sup>

In another of Kuala Lumpur's actions against the Chinese Communist subversion threat in Singapore, the closure of the Singapore branch of the Bank of China (the branch in Kuala Lumpur had been forced to close in 1959) was ordered. Since more than 50% of its capital came from Communist China this move was legal under the Malaysian banking ordinance.<sup>112</sup> The PAP defended the Bank as being vital to Singapore business (it extended credit at low interest rates to finance imports from the People's Republic of China) and protested that Kuala Lumpur did not substantiate its charges of political conspiracy. Fletcher notes that this issue became "so irritating" to Rahman that he interrupted his convalescence in London to issue a statement emphasizing that the bank posed a security threat. The Malaysian Government took over the Bank just five days before the separation decision was announced and was planning to close it on August 14.<sup>113</sup>

Finally, another indication of Kuala Lumpur's concern over Singapore's exploitation of the mass media to further its

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Stockwin presents a helpful account of this complicated legal issue. Harvey Stockwin, "The Bank of China Affair," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 14 (September 30, 1965), p. 595.

<sup>113</sup> Fletcher, pp. 33-34.

own interests within Malaysia was the Central Government's move toward establishing a Singapore office of the Federal Ministry of Information. Singapore interpreted this move as a step toward federal assumption of control over Singapore's radio and T.V. operations.<sup>114</sup>

Despite all this continued build-up of a Singapore-Kuala Lumpur "cold war," there appeared to be a general belief that the Tunku, by exercising his soothing charismatic role as a political peacemaker, would move swiftly and surely to reduce these tensions upon his return from London. What could be described as "a widespread, euphoric confidence . . . that the Tengku would come to the rescue"<sup>115</sup> seemed to be prevalent. This time, however, such confident hopes would prove to be illusory. Instead, the Tunku would return to announce the separation of Singapore from Malaysia.

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<sup>114</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . . ," p. 21.

<sup>115</sup>Though Hanna uses this phrase to describe the situation at the time of the Parliamentary "big debate," the Tunku's press conference statement on his departure appears to have fostered the revival of this confident hope upon his return. Indeed, Hanna reported much the same feeling on the eve of Rahman's return, noting that "everybody was awaiting the return of the Tengku to set matters right." Ibid.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EXPULSION OF SINGAPORE

Only four days after Rahman returned from London, where he had been delayed by a case of the shingles<sup>1</sup> that hospitalized him, the fateful decision that Singapore and Malaysia would separate--effective immediately--was announced. Although the word "separation" has been widely used to describe what happened, it is clear that the words "evicted,"<sup>2</sup> "ejected,"<sup>3</sup> "booted,"<sup>4</sup> and "expelled" more accurately describe what happened to Singapore.

The decision was arrived at under conditions of great secrecy. Other than the five Alliance and ten PAP signatories representing the two governments, it appears that very few (including several Malaysian cabinet Ministers!) were informed about it until the last minute.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it appears that

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<sup>1</sup>Rahman's affliction was widely diagnosed, "by himself among others," as "an allergy to Lee Kuan Yew." Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . . ," p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>By Devan Nair, the only successful PAP candidate in the 1964 Malayan election, as quoted in the Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>4</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . . ," p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Han, p. 352. At his special press conference Rahman confirmed that only he and a "few" of his cabinet colleagues were aware of the separation decision before the day it was announced. Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

less than half of the total of fifteen signatories "actually knew what was going on" and participated in consultations. These were the Tunku, Razak, and Ismail (all top level Alliance moderates) of Malaysia and Lee, Toh, Goh, and Rajaratnam of Singapore.<sup>6</sup> The Alliance M.P.'s, it was reported, were informed of the decision only five minutes before the bill was presented to Parliament!<sup>7</sup> The British also learned of the decision "only within minutes" of the public announcements, and thus had time for "no more vigorous action than a mild expostulation"<sup>8</sup> in the face of this fait accompli.

The initial general response to this unexpected proclamation has been described as one of "stunned incredulity"<sup>9</sup> despite the fact that, as the previous chapter indicates, there had been a great deal of serious internal political debate and even separation had been mentioned. It seems likely that much of the element of shock and surprise over the announcement was due to the widespread public confidence that the Tunku would calm everything down upon returning from his illness-extended, fifty-five day stay abroad. Another factor might have been a general feeling that whatever the difficulties caused by stresses and strains within Malaysia, partition would merely bring about new variations of the old problems, issues, and

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<sup>6</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Alex Josey, "Why Malaysia Failed," New Statesman (August 13, 1965), p. 207.

<sup>8</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . .," p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

rivalries that had plagued Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations. This, we shall see, was basically what resulted. First, however, the separation decision and the terms of separation will be described and analyzed.

#### The Decision to Evict Singapore

Singapore, according to the introduction in a Singapore Ministry of Culture pamphlet, was "evicted" from the Federation of Malaysia.<sup>10</sup> This assessment is corroborated by the account Rahman himself gave on that fateful day which the official Separation Agreement designated euphemistically as "Singapore Day." The following description of how the separation decision evolved is based largely on the accounts given by Rahman and Lee on the day the decision was announced, August 9, 1965.

At a special press conference on the evening of his Parliamentary announcement of separation, the Tunku stated that it was his idea and decision that Singapore should withdraw from Malaysia and become a separate state. Otherwise, Rahman felt, there would be "no hope for peace."<sup>11</sup>

Elaborating on the origin of his decision, Rahman explained that when he was hospitalized in London he had "plenty of time to think from 'A' to 'Z' and backwards from 'Z' to 'A' of our problems with Singapore." His pessimistic conclusion was that "there would be no end to the bickerings

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<sup>10</sup>Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

with Singapore except perhaps if Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is made Prime Minister in the real sense of the word."<sup>12</sup>

From London Rahman informed Razak of how he felt and instructed the Deputy Prime Minister to talk things over with Lee.<sup>13</sup> At this point in the press conference Razak broke in to say of his June 29 meeting with Lee: "Our minds did not meet on most points . . ."<sup>14</sup> Almost a year later Razak elaborated, saying of this meeting: "Strangely . . . Lee had no intention to find a way out of the impasse, but strongly insisted that the Tengku and I should cast off the 'extremists' in the UMNO if the Central Government wanted his cooperation." (Emphasis added.)<sup>15</sup>

The Singapore Ministry of Culture's description of the general tone of this meeting corroborates that of Razak; it noted that "there were frank discussions on the issues involved, but it soon became clear that no conference could resolve the fundamental differences between the two governments."<sup>16</sup> And the day after Razak's July, 1966 account was published, Lee

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Josey contended at the time (July, 1965) that Malay "extremists," meeting at the home of Alliance Minister for Information Senu, urged Razak not to talk with Lee to try to find a way to ease tensions, as the Tunku had instructed. Alex Josey, "Expelled from Malaysia," New Statesman (July 16, 1965), p. 74.

<sup>14</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>15</sup>The UMNO 20th Anniversary Souvenir as quoted in the Straits Times (Singapore), July 28, 1966.

<sup>16</sup>Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 22.

reacted by releasing excerpts from a report on his meeting with Razak that he had written for the information of his cabinet and had not been intended for publication. It is a very revealing account and thus merits quotation at great length.

I listed up my complaints about the dual-faced policy of UMNO.

A. The top leaders reaching reasonable agreement and political truce with us whilst the secondary leaders kept up a shriek of hate in Utusan Melayu and Malayan Merdeka<sup>17</sup> which circulate in the kampongs.

I told him that any future agreement must be in writing and made known to all, including the secondary leaders, and this shriek in the Malay press must stop.

Otherwise any political accommodation is meaningless. He told me that it was very difficult and they would have to think it over.

B. I listed an example of his speech not published by Utusan Zaman. He said it was and buzzed his secretary to produce a copy of Utusan Zaman.

I took up my diary and showed him that he was in Singapore on June 19 and that Utusan Zaman did not carry it on the following day.

But it appeared on June 27 after I had said three of four times publicly pointing out that Razak's speech had not been published. . . .

The most significant remark he made was "we must decide whether you are going to work with us or fight us."

I said that he knew the attitude of the PAP, that we have always wanted to work with UMNO, but that UMNO, in particular the ultra group, was determined that we should be crushed.

And having seen how they broke up multi-racial parties in Sabah and attempted to do so in Sarawak, we had no doubts that once they had settled with Sabah and Sarawak they would turn their heart on Singapore and break us up completely or reduce us into a pure Chinese party in which case we shall be isolated internationally.

He feebly said that UMNO had nothing to do with the troubles in Sabah and Sarawak.

I told him that it was the Tengku, at the Residency in K.L., that laid down the conditions when Donald Stephens was allowed to remain as Chief Minister.

Thenceforth, the Chinese in Sabah will join SNAP, the Kadazans the UPKO and the Malays the USNO.

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<sup>17</sup> Malayan Merdeka is an official UMNO journal.



He feebly said that it was the wish of the Alliance leaders of Sabah. I told him that I did not think so because at the time I had discussed the problem with Donald Stephens and he was very unhappy at the break-up of multi-racial parties in Sabah.<sup>18</sup>

This report of Lee's further confirms the general tenor of Razak's account of this important meeting. It is also reflective of Lee's political style and his great debating skill, both of which probably annoyed Razak considerably.

That this unencouraging meeting might have played an important part in Rahman's ultimate decision is indicated by the fact that the Tunku, while still unaware of what had transpired, had continued to issue optimistic statements regarding Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations.<sup>19</sup> But when Rahman finally returned to Malaysia on August 5, Razak gave him a full report on this unpromising meeting with Lee. And after studying this report, Rahman said, he himself met with Lee the following day (August 6) and "made things clear to him."

Alex Josey, a reporter who has a close relationship with Lee, described this meeting as being "a frank discussion" and noted (in a journalistic style that belied the fact that he most likely had access to some inside information) that Lee "must have made demands that the communal attacks [by the UMNO "ultras"] be called off" and that "most likely the Tunku brought up the

<sup>18</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), July 29, 1966.

<sup>19</sup>For example, he announced that he would be having talks with Lee on his return from London in order to "smooth things over once and for all. We cannot afford to have differences within Malaysia at this time [of Indonesian confrontation.]" Straits Times (Singapore) article cited by Josey, "Expelled . . . , " p. 74. No date cited.

question of more financial help from Singapore [to meet the soaring defense costs necessitated by Indonesia's confrontation activities] and probably spoke of plans to take over Radio Singapore."<sup>20</sup>, 21

This meeting probably reinforced Rahman's "A" to "Z" list of reasons for separation from Singapore; he called an emergency Cabinet meeting for that evening at which he ordered the drafting of a bill that would amend the Constitution and provide for Singapore's withdrawal from Malaysia. Apparently Rahman had made his decision. And, as Lee later indicated, the Tunku stuck steadfastly to this decision. Lee reported that on the afternoon of August 7 (the day after Rahman's nocturnal separation bill order) he was not convinced that there was no alternative to separation despite what his PAP Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee (who had just returned from discussions in Kuala Lumpur with the bad news) reported to him. Apparently Lee's confidence in his own persuasive abilities with Rahman and/or his cause was great, for he said later: "I believed then that I could still convince the Tengku that there were a number of other ways to reduce communal tensions, such as a looser Federation."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Earlier the Alliance Minister of Information and Broadcasting had been quoted as warning that "if the Singapore Government, in its propaganda campaign over Radio Singapore and Television Malaysia [the Singapore branch] continues to attack and discredit the Central Government, the Central Government may have to take over these two services." Tamil Murasu, May 17, 1965 as quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Josey, "Why Malaysia Failed," p. 207.

<sup>22</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

In a private meeting with Lee on that day, however, Rahman soon convinced Lee otherwise. Hanna reports that Rahman delivered a "virtual ultimatum"<sup>23</sup> and Topping contends that Rahman told Lee "that he could not control the situation in his own party, and that Singapore must secede."<sup>24</sup> Han Suyin, the famous novelist, came to a similar conclusion regarding the nature of this meeting: "It seems evident that Singapore was presented with a fait accompli--and an awful choice between violence and repression on one hand and secession on the other."<sup>25</sup> Lee's separation statements tend to confirm these accounts of the meeting. "After what he told me when we were alone," Lee reported, "I realized there was no other way." Lee continued revealingly: "I knew from what he said--and he has an intuition about these things--that we would all be in for big communal trouble if Singapore or if I and my colleagues insisted on going on with Malaysia as it is." (Emphasis added.)<sup>26</sup>

Lee nevertheless made one more last ditch effort to preserve the Federation by meeting with Rahman again on the following day (Sunday, August 8, the last day before the announcement of separation). Lee did this, he said, because "a number of my

<sup>23</sup>Hanna, "The Separation of Singapore . . . ," p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Topping, p. 72. Topping adds that "sorrowfully, the Tunku handed Lee, his old golfing companion, a favorite rusty putter as a memento . . ." Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Han, p. 350.

<sup>26</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

colleagues felt very strongly against this [i.e., separation.]<sup>27</sup> PAP Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye and Minister for Culture S. Rajaratnam (both Malayan-born) were known to be especially reluctant. Rajaratnam later made this revealing statement about why he eventually went along and signed the separation agreement: "When I learned that the 'or else' [i.e., the alternative to separation] was my deportation and Lee's arrest, I realized that there was nothing else we could do."<sup>28</sup> Toh, apparently, was finally persuaded to go along with separation by the explanation he received in a frank personal note from Rahman, which merits quotation in full:

My dear Chin Chye,

I am writing to tell you that I have given the matter of our break with Singapore my utmost consideration and I find that in the interest of friendship and the security and peace of Malaysia as a whole there is no other way out.

If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation, I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.<sup>29</sup> I request you most earnestly to agree. (Emphasis added.)

In his reply to Rahman, Toh noted reluctantly: "If this [i.e., separation] is the price for peace in Malaya and Singapore then we must accept it however agonizing our inner feelings may be."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Rajaratnam as reported by Denis Warner, "The Second Fall of Singapore," The Reporter, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4 (September 9, 1965), p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> Facsimile reproduced in Han, p. 351.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 351-52. Rahman was reported to be "annoyed" that Singapore released copies of his personal note to Toh and "angrily denied" that he had admitted that he was not strong enough to control the situation (apparently meaning because of

Thus convinced, Rajaratnam and Toh signed the Separation Agreement.

That separation was also a very bitter personal blow to Lee was reflected in his statement: "For me it is a moment of anguish. All my life, my whole adult life, I have believed in merger and unity of the two territories . . ." <sup>31</sup> Lee's sincerity is indicated in the Straits Times' touching account of the end of this explanation:

His voice faltering, Mr. Lee added: "We are connected by geography, economics and ties of kinship. . . . It broke everything we stood for."

Mr. Lee broke down. Tears rolled down his cheeks. For a moment he buried his face in his hands. He started to speak then broke down again.

Apologetically, he said he was far too angry to go on with the subject. <sup>32</sup>

One wonders about Lee's use of the word "angry" rather than "unhappy" or "upset" to describe his emotion. Could it be that he was angry with himself for miscalculating the situation and pushing his Malaysian Malaysia campaign too hard, thus provoking Singapore expulsion from Malaysia? Or was he angry at the Malay ultras for putting on the pressure that forced the moderate Alliance leaders to opt for separation? As early as February of 1965 Lee had publicly noted the threat the ultras had posed to the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia:

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"ultra" pressures). The Tunku explained that he had been pressed for time in writing the letter and thus couldn't explain fully what he meant. Han, ibid., pp. 350-51.

<sup>31</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

They [the Ultras in the Alliance] are left with two alternatives. First, to change their attitudes to the changed circumstances of Malaysia. Second, if they will not do this, to change circumstances of Malaysia to suit their old policies and tactics.<sup>33</sup>

Earlier in his separation press conference Lee defended his decision to pursue relentlessly his drive for a Malaysian Malaysia by explaining that because of all the outpourings in the jawi press he felt that unless a stand was made all would be lost.<sup>34</sup> Thus it appears likely that Lee was not angry with himself but rather was angry about the actions of the Malay ultras whom the Tunku felt he could no longer control well enough to keep the threat of communal violence down at a tolerable level.

An interesting summary of the factors that influenced the separation decision can be fashioned from excerpts from the Tunku's separation speech to the Malaysian House of Representatives:

What I am about to announce to this House will no doubt cause a big surprise and shock to Hon'ble Members. . . . The announcement which I am making concerns the separation of Singapore from the rest of the Federation.

The reasons for this have been many. Since the formation of Malaysia, and this year in particular, there have been so many differences with the Singapore Government and these differences take many forms; so much so that it had now come to a breaking point. I can't find any way out except the course of action which I am forced to take.

I have given myself plenty of thoughts while I was lying in bed in London and also when I was convalescing before my return to this country. I had conveyed my

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

thoughts to my friend and colleague, Tun Abdul Razak, who had sought to find an understanding with the leaders of Singapore, but I am afraid to no avail. It appeared that as soon as one issue was resolved, another cropped up. Where a patch was made here, a tear appeared elsewhere, and where one hole was plugged, other leaks appeared. So, it does seem completely impossible to arrive at a solution whereby we can hope to pull along together and to work together in the interest and for the common good of Malaysia. We have tried everything possible to avoid separation of Singapore from the rest of Malaysia. In the end we find that there are only two courses of action open to us.

Number one is to take repressive measures against the Singapore Government for the behaviour of some of their leaders and number two to sever all connections with the State Government that has ceased to give even a measure of loyalty to the Central Government. The position of the Central Government not only at Home but worse still abroad has been mocked on many instances.

It was clear some action must be taken. It is odious for us to take repressive measures against the Singapore Government, for such action is repulsive to our concept of Parliamentary Democracy. Even then it would not solve the problem before us, because as I said just now, there is not one problem but many, and one that gives us the most concern is communal issues. This is the matter which concerns me most, because the peace and happiness of the people in this country depend on goodwill and understanding of the various races for one another. Without it this nation will break up, with consequential disaster which we have seen and read about happening elsewhere. We feel that this repressive action against a few would not therefore solve the problem because the seed of this contempt, fear and hatred has been sown in Singapore, and even if we try to prevent its growth, I feel that after a time it will sprout up with a more virulent force. The thousands of students abroad have been fed with all kinds of propaganda against the Central Government.

Malaysian Malaysia, in particular, suggests that the Malaysia we have now is bad for it gives all the advantages to one race while depriving others of their rightful place in our society.

Foreign correspondents who approached me on this subject while I was in England and France were under the wrong impression that the Malay-dominated Central Government has not been fair to others, that there has been discrimination against the Chinese in all fields and in all matters. One even went so far as to suggest that the closing of the Bank of China is a move against the Chinese. Poor stall holders have to close down their stalls because they are unable to get the food they need from China.

It was suggested that our quarrel with the PAP was due to the fact that we are afraid of the far more advanced and enlightened socialist Government of Singapore. They appeared incredulous when I informed them that there are Socialist Parties on the mainland and other parties who are opposed to our party and the PAP contested our election without success and that the only party that we ban is the Communist Party. I also informed them that most of these parties are made up mainly of Chinese whose number well exceeds that of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's and to suggest, therefore, that Mr. Lee Kuan Yew represents the Chinese and at the same time represents the only left-wing party in the country is wrong.

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 These<sup>35</sup> are among other troubles we had with Singapore which as time goes on the political trouble which is simmering today might blow up into something extremely serious.  
 .....

Considering the peace of Malaysia as a whole we are convinced that there is no other way out but to do what we think is best. Things are getting worse every day. Irresponsible utterances are made by both sides, which reading between the lines, is tantamount to challenges, and if trouble were to break out the innocent people will be sacrificed at the altar of belligerent, heartless and irresponsible trouble makers of this country.

So, I believe the second course of action which we are taking, that is the breakaway, is the best and the right one, sad as it may be. We had pledged to form Malaysia with Singapore but having given it a trial we found that if we persist in going on with it, in the long run there will be more trouble to Malaysia than what Singapore is worth to us. The separation will be made on the understanding that we shall co-operate closely on matters of defence, trade and commerce. (Emphasis added.)<sup>36</sup>

As shall be shown next, continuing cooperation in the areas of external defense and economic affairs was officially provided

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<sup>35</sup> Rahman had also mentioned such other "troubles" as the resettlement of the Chinese in Sarawak issue (a "new village" or "strategic hamlet" type of forced resettlement project designed to meet the Indonesian/Chinese Communist guerrilla threat there) and several financial problems: Tan's controversial 1964 Budget Session tax proposals, the increased defense expenditures necessitated by Indonesia's confrontation, and the Singapore loan to the Central Government for economic development in Sabah and Sarawak.

<sup>36</sup> Malaysia, Department of Information, Singapore Breakaway, pp. 1-3, 6, 8-9.



for in the Separation Agreement signed by the two governments.

### The Terms of Separation

The Separation Agreement<sup>37</sup> dealt with the future military security and economic postures the two interdependent states would adopt. These two important areas of concern for a separated Singapore and Malaysia, however, were not treated in a very detailed or complete way in the hastily drafted document.

In light of Indonesia's ongoing confrontation activities, continuing cooperation in external defense was imperative. The Agreement called for the establishment of a "treaty on external defence and mutual assistance" which provided for:

1. A joint defense council
2. Malaysian external defense assistance for Singapore
3. Singapore's allowing of Malaysia to continue to utilize those facilities then being used by its military forces in Singapore as Malaysia "may consider necessary" for its external defense.
4. Provision that neither state would make "any treaty or agreement" with a foreign state that might be detrimental to the independence and defense of the territory of the other"

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<sup>37</sup>The official title of this document is "An Agreement Relating to the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia as an Independent and Sovereign State." Reproduced in Malaysia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol. I, No. 1 and No. 2 (Kuala Lumpur: Life Printers, n.d.), pp. 24-27.

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In addition, this agreement dealt with the question of the defense agreement with the United Kingdom. It provided that Singapore would continue to allow the U.K. to maintain its military bases and related facilities necessary for the defense of Singapore and Malaysia, Commonwealth defense, and the "preservation of peace in South-East Asia." It should be noted that these provisions guaranteed continued British access to the Singapore bases with less restrictions than were in force when Singapore was part of Malaysia.<sup>38</sup>

The provision on economic affairs was much less specific. It merely stated that the two states would cooperate in economic matters "for their mutual benefit and interest." Clearly, this did nothing to protect Singapore's economic interests in Malaysia. And to make things worse for Singapore, the common market provision in the 1963 Malaysia Agreement (Annex J) was rescinded. In this regard it is not surprising that Lee stated he was "greatly relieved" when Rahman assured him the day before separation that he realized that economic cooperation between Singapore and Malaysia was "most necessary if either of us is to survive the pressures from common enemies."<sup>39</sup>

It is also noteworthy that the Malaysian parliamentary act that officially amended the Malaysian Constitution and the 1963 Malaysia Act specifically provided that the Malaysian State of Johore would abide by the terms and conditions of its

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<sup>38</sup>Han, p. 353.

<sup>39</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

1961 and 1962 water agreements with Singapore.<sup>40</sup> This was of great importance to Singapore because it was dependent upon this source for most of its fresh water.

The general nature of these provisions on the important matters of external defense and economic relations left many details to be worked out later. Obviously, then, the successful implementation of these agreements would require a large degree of goodwill and understanding on the part of both states. This, unfortunately, was not forthcoming.

#### The Aftermath

While the amputation of Singapore from Malaysia was performed without bloodshed, this cure for the problems afflicting Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations was by no means very complete or lasting. A silver lining some observers perceived through the gloom of separation<sup>41</sup> was the possibility that now that Lee's "itchy fingers were . . . barred from the tempting honey-pot of federal politics"<sup>42</sup> Singapore-Kuala Lumpur antagonisms would be mitigated and an atmosphere of rational, pragmatic cooperation would prevail over the emotional, suspicious, and hostile political atmosphere that had precipitated the expulsion decision. This, unfortunately, was not to be the case.

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<sup>40</sup>Malaysia, Constitution and Malaysia (Singapore Amendment) Act, 1965, No. 53 of 1965, August 9, 1965.

<sup>41</sup>For example Josey, "Why Malaysia Failed," p. 208.

<sup>42</sup>Hilary Glazier, "Malaysia-Singapore Futile Vendetta," Venture, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (January, 1967), p. 17.

### Economic Relations

As has been indicated, economic relations between Singapore and Malaysia were of particular importance to Singapore. Closer economic relations with Malaya in general and a Malaysian common market in particular has been shown to be a core interest objective motivating Singapore's decision to merge with Malaya. Economic prosperity and development continued to be regarded as vital to the existence of Singapore, but after separation its general strategy changed from one of increased production for a Malaysian market (as epitomized by the quest for a Malaysian common market) to one of increased industrial production for the world export market.

Shortly after separation it was calculated that Singapore needed 12,000 new jobs and an export market of M\$40 million, both annually, as a "minimum condition" for the political survival of the PAP government.<sup>43</sup> And an experienced observer was of the opinion that the fear of a Communist takeover of Singapore was still valid because Lee simply could not hold his mass support if there were "mass unemployment."<sup>44</sup> Consequently a healthy economy, which has been shown to be a core interest goal which motivated Singapore's interest in merger, continued to be perceived as being vital to Singapore.

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<sup>43</sup>Speech by Lim Kim San, Singapore Minister of Finance, November 19, 1965 as quoted by Harvey Stockwin, "Golden Mountain," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. L, No. 9 (December 2, 1965), p. 399.

<sup>44</sup>Warner, "The Second Fall of Singapore," p. 29.

That Lee was extremely concerned about the trading relations of an independent Singapore was indicated by a statement during his special press conference on the day of separation: "We are prepared to trade with anybody, including Russia, China and even Indonesia if they want to trade with us."<sup>45</sup> Consequently the Singapore government embarked on a flurry of trade mission activity seeking new markets in Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union to supplement its existing markets.

Although the new trade emphasis focused on developing new overseas markets, Singapore could not afford to neglect trade relations with its natural hinterland, Malaya. Thus it is not surprising that Lee stated that he was greatly relieved when the Tunku assured him that he realized that continued economic cooperation between the two states was "most necessary."<sup>46</sup> Having failed to attain a Malaysian common market by means of persuasion within Malaysia, the PAP government turned increasingly to demonstrations of its economic and military independence to pressure Malaysia for trade concessions. This new approach was best illustrated by Singapore's efforts to resume trade with Indonesia (traditionally its second most important trading partner) and to its imposition of protective quotas and duties on some items of its trade with Malaysia.

In regard to the restoration of trade with Indonesia (which was still actively pursuing its confrontation policy),

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<sup>45</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>46</sup>Cited above p. 271.

Lee warned that if Malaysian economic cooperation was not forthcoming Singapore "must seek a living for its people by trading with the devil [i.e., Indonesia]."<sup>47</sup> This evoked a strong response from Kuala Lumpur: Rahman warned that he would not allow Singapore to trade with Indonesia.<sup>48</sup> And, as Milne has pointed out, Malaysia had powerful sanctions to back this warning: it could invoke one of the defense provisions of the Separation Agreement (Article V, Section 4) by claiming that Singapore-Indonesian trade would provide an opening for the infiltration of Indonesian saboteurs into Malaysia via Singapore and/or it could threaten to decrease its own trade with Singapore, for this trade was much more important to Singapore than Indonesian trade would be.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, Malaysia threatened to apply both of these sanctions. When Singapore proposed turning an island twelve miles off its coast into a barter center with strict precautions to prevent Indonesian traders from having access to Singapore proper (the Indonesian barterers would be confined to a narrow channel which would be policed, would be allowed to land only on specially designated and carefully supervised areas on the island, and would be allowed to remain only as long as it took to make their business transactions before being ushered away) the Tunku did not react favorably. Despite these strict

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<sup>47</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., August 15, 1965. Quoted by Milne, p. 225.

<sup>49</sup>Milne, ibid.

precautions, Rahman declared the barter plan to be a hostile act and a breach of the Separation Agreement and warned that Malaysia was prepared "to use peaceful methods" to prevent such a move. He added pointedly: "Singapore must realize the prosperity of Singapore very much depends on goods which come from here."<sup>50</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Malaysian Finance Minister Tan Siew Sin announced one conclusion of a high level committee studying the effects of separation. It was determined that the export of Malaysia's rubber could be diverted from Singapore to Malaysian ports. Tan told one interviewer: "If it came to a push I think we could stop every pound of rubber from going to Singapore."<sup>51</sup> As the interviewer noted, "Such a diversion would indeed be a certain way of destroying the island's economic hopes," and might even cause the economic collapse of Singapore.<sup>52</sup>

As usual, Rahman's statement reflected the moderate viewpoint within the UMNO party and the Alliance government. This is indicated in Warner's report of a later interview (spring, 1966) with a Malaysian Cabinet Minister (unnamed) who outlined the economic measures by which Kuala Lumpur could bring Singapore to its knees. To Warner's comment that such action would cause the economic collapse of Singapore and bring about a

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<sup>50</sup> In a January, 1966 speech quoted by Denis Warner, "Singapore and Malaysia: A Divorce of Inconvenience," The Reporter, Vol. XXXIV, No. 7 (April, 1966), p. 44.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



Communist take-over, the Minister replied: "I'd rather have the Communists than Lee Kuan Yew. We've dealt with the Communists once and can do it again. Lee Kuan Yew is worse than the Communists."<sup>53</sup> Such a statement made over a year and a half after separation indicates the great depth of the hostility of some Alliance politicians for Lee and the seriousness of the threat they perceived him to pose.

Singapore not only made the first threat (i.e., to resume trade with Indonesia) in the economic sparring that followed the breakup of Malaysia, but it also took the first economic action. It imposed both import duties and quotas on Malaysian manufactured goods competing with Singapore's own manufacturers. Though the quantitative restrictions were soon removed, the duties were not. Indeed, Kuala Lumpur raised its import duties on October 9. Singapore kept this trade war escalating by responding with its own list of new protective duties. To help prevent even greater unemployment from developing in Singapore, the PAP government passed a National Registration Act. Though difficult to implement, this act achieved its primary purpose of excluding Malaysians from the Singapore labor market so they would not compete with Singaporeans for the scarce number of jobs that were available.

Any hopes that an independent Singapore and Malaysia would pragmatically cast aside their antagonisms and reap the mutual economic rewards a common market could yield were also

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

quickly dashed. While both sides jockeyed for economic bargaining power, neither appeared to be willing to make the necessary compromises and concessions to break the stalemate in which the common market talks had been mired throughout the short history of the merger. Singapore, especially, must be blamed for the lack of progress, for it failed to make any new concessions even though the advent of Indonesian confrontation had necessitated a large increase in Malaysian defense expenditures. But both states should bear a measure of the blame. As Stockwin puts it, mutual trust, appreciation of the other's problems, and a willingness to compromise were lacking, and hence nothing much was done to prevent "the common market baby from going out with the separation bathwater."<sup>54</sup>

Two months after separation, Stockwin neatly summarized the economic situation that had developed:

Both countries continue to make pronouncements on the need for economic co-operation. Both countries continue, as before, to make euphoric statements about economic progress, present and future. Both governments are obviously busy calculating how much they can do without each other economically, rather than the reverse.<sup>55</sup>

One year after separation the economic relationship between Singapore and Malaysia took a major turn for the worse, as the neglect of common economic interests led to the demise of the Malayan dollar as the common currency of the two sovereignty-conscious states. This August 17, 1966 action was

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<sup>54</sup>Harvey Stockwin, "Lee De Gaulle?" Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. L, No. 8 (November 25, 1965), p. 368.

<sup>55</sup>Harvey Stockwin, "Divided Stand," Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. L, No. 4 (October 28, 1965), p. 162.

characterized as amounting to the economic separation of Singapore and was assessed by one well-informed economic observer as being of "greater moment" than the announcement of political separation made the previous August.<sup>56</sup> Thus, while before separation there had been disagreement within the framework of economic unity, afterwards the disagreements remained and there was not even a framework of economic unity.

#### Political Relations

Unfortunately the increasing economic distance that developed after separation quickly became entwined with the ideological, political, and personal antagonisms that had plagued and poisoned Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations before separation. In an October 17, 1965 speech, Lee publicly vented some of the bitterness that had probably been pent up inside him ever since the Alliance Government's separation ultimatum:

They [the Alliance leaders] fear us--what an effective, efficient administration which is not bogged down by corruption can do and which, by its results, will convince millions around us that [they, the Alliance leaders, should] do like wise.

This is what really goes deep into their bones. Basically this was the reason they refused to cooperate even after merger, . . . and that they said in the end, "Get out!"<sup>57</sup>

Here we see the resurfacing of the "winds of change" theme of Lee's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign and the charge that it was

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<sup>56</sup>Stockwin, "The Reason Why Not," p. 447.

<sup>57</sup>Straits Budget, October 27, 1965.

the threat of the PAP being voted into power in Malaysia because of its political and economic merits (rather than the threat of communal violence) that led to the Alliance's separation ultimatum. As one observer remarked, Lee was still behaving as if he were "a Malaysian politician denied rights in his proper arena of activity."<sup>58</sup>

Lee capped this hostile and aggressive attack with the conclusion: "So we have been sacrificed. Logic, history, geography, economics, all have been sacrificed to preserve the orchid from within."<sup>59</sup> The orchid, it should be noted, is the symbol of the Malay Sultans. Thus "preserving the orchid" refers to the preservation of what the PAP might describe as the feudal Malay aristocratic order and tradition. It is hard to imagine a statement more calculated to antagonize the Malays!

Rahman characterized this speech of Lee's as an "unwarranted" and "mischievous" attack,<sup>60</sup> and followed up with a formal diplomatic protest. The protest charged that Lee had made "irresponsible criticisms" that constituted "wanton" interference in Malaysia's domestic affairs, and warned that the continuation of such attacks would lead to a "serious deterioration" of Malaysia's relations with Singapore.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Glazier, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup>Straits Budget, loc. cit.

<sup>60</sup>Bradley, p. 104.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

### Defense Relations

In the area of defense also, quarrelsome incidents arose between the Singapore and Malaysian governments. Once again an important factor in the disputes appeared to be different interpretations of agreements between the two governments.

Early in 1966 a disagreement arose over that provision of the Separation Agreement regarding the stationing of Malaysian troops in Singapore. Singapore had asked Malaysia to move its troops out of Camp Temasek in Singapore in order to make room for the Singapore battalion of troops returning from confrontation duty in Borneo. In response, the Tunku complained that Singapore's request was "a bolt from the blue."<sup>62</sup> The Malaysian government issued a statement citing Article 5 (3) of the Separation Agreement and claiming that Singapore was obligated to allow the Malaysian troops to stay in their present bases or, if these bases are required for their own troops, to provide suitable alternative accommodations.<sup>63</sup> Singapore promptly rejected the Malaysian government's interpretation that the provision provided for the continued presence of Malaysian troops in the sovereign state of Singapore, and said that it was willing to submit the dispute to any independent Commonwealth or international tribunal.<sup>64</sup>

In a development that possibly was related to Singapore's apparent strategy of using defense questions as leverage for

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<sup>62</sup>Straits Times (Singapore), February 18, 1966.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

obtaining economic concessions, Singapore announced on March 31, 1966 that it was withdrawing from the Joint Defence Council and the Combined Operations Committee. Rahman indicated renewed annoyance with Lee's political style, stating:

There are so many things we can discuss quietly. . . . Let us start to sort things out quietly and not publicise things on which we differ. I am interested in peace. . . . Before Malaysia was established, Mr. Lee . . . used to come around whenever he liked. Why can't he come now as before? I say it again that, after the early bitterness has worn out, we must talk and talk quietly.<sup>65</sup>

A more immediate and obvious Singapore motive for this withdrawal was the fact that it had unfavorable representation in these defense bodies. They were mere continuations of pre-separation organizations, and thus Singapore's representation was based on its status as a constituent state of Malaysia rather than as a sovereign and independent state. In a clarifying statement issued the following day, the Singapore government complained that "Singapore affairs were being decided in a body in which representation was lopsided and in which Singapore interests were not given their due weight."<sup>66</sup> Thus negotiations for a new joint defense council as well as for a new defense treaty followed. To this date, four years later, neither of these negotiations has been successfully completed.

A prime indicator of the fact that the hoped-for cooperation between the two governments after separation did not

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., March 31, 1966.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., April 1, 1966.

materialize is the lack of action in establishing the treaty on external defense and mutual assistance called for by Article V of the Separation Agreement. By August, 1966 no defense treaty had been agreed upon, however, and Milne reported that Malaysian officials believed that Singapore was reluctant to sign until Malaysia took steps to bring about a common market.<sup>67</sup> Another factor delaying the defense cooperation agreement was the dismal fact that one of the most likely military threats to each of these two states was the other state. This has been even more of a factor since the communal rioting which followed the West Malaysia election of May, 1969.

The summaries of the post-separation problems and disputes that have been presented in this section indicate that those who had feared that separation would not solve many of the problems that had plagued relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur within Malaysia were substantially correct. The terms of separation did, however, safeguard and maintain Malaysia's geopolitical core interest in Singapore. And separation also alleviated the immediate threat that communal racial violence posed for both states. How these core interests were preserved is the subject of the next two sections of this study.

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<sup>67</sup>Milne, p. 223.

Assessment of the Terms of Separation

The defense provisions of the separation agreement are indicative of Kuala Lumpur's continuing geopolitical defense and security core interest in Singapore which, as has been indicated, was the raison d'être of Malaysia. Singapore gave Malaysia the right to continue its military presence in Singapore for external defense, and Singapore was forbidden to enter into any treaty or agreement with a foreign country which might be detrimental to the "independence and defence" of Malaysia. And from Malaysia's reaction to Singapore's trade renewal with Indonesia trial balloon, it became clear that Malaysia intended to reserve for itself the right to decide whether various Singapore actions might be detrimental to Malaysia's independence or defense. In short, Malaysia had an effective veto power not only over Singapore's defense policy but also over certain aspects of its trade policy.

It should be noted that Malaysia also had the military power to back up the legal rights provided for in the Separation Agreement. Malaysia's troops remained stationed in Singapore; its military power was clearly greater than Singapore's; and it could easily cut off Singapore's supply of water if it so desired.

Thus, though Singapore was legally a separate and sovereign state, the degree of actual political independence of action it enjoyed was significantly circumscribed. Hence Kuala Lumpur's geopolitical defense and security core interest in



Singapore appeared to be provided for satisfactorily, at least for the time being.

Though several irritating moves relevant to military defense and security were made by Singapore in the months--and years--following separation, it must be pointed out that Malaysia and Britain together maintained a strong military presence within Singapore. Also, it should be noted, the external threat of Indonesia's confrontation policy rapidly diminished after the August, 1965 separation. In September and October, the Indonesian coup and its suppression occurred, and by June, 1966 the new Indonesian government had finally agreed officially to end confrontation.

In regard to the possibility of the internal Communist movement in Singapore coming to pose a threat to Malaysia's geopolitical core interest in that state, Kuala Lumpur has also maintained adequate security. Whatever his faults in Malaysia's eyes, Lee Kuan Yew certainly has been very successful in achieving and maintaining (albeit for very good reasons of his own) Kuala Lumpur's core interest objective in merging with Singapore in the first place: the prevention of Singapore becoming a Communist base for the infiltration and subversion of Malaya.

After separation the PAP continued to consolidate its position vis-à-vis the left-wing threat posed by the Barisan Sosialis. The PAP continued to weaken its only threatening political opponent "by repressive measures and the adroit use

of the Barisan's mistakes"<sup>68</sup> to the point where the Barisan ceased to pose a credible electoral threat to the PAP's position. Indeed, by February of 1967 a political correspondent was able to state that there was "no effective, organised political opposition in Singapore":

Seldom has a democratically-elected political party anywhere in the world succeeded in controlling a state legislature as effectively as Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party controls the Singapore Parliament. Seldom has a post-colonial government achieved such striking administrative successes in the social field, or done so much to play down racial and communal issues within its own nation. Seldom has a non-Communist Asian government established such a record of financial integrity as--by general consent--the PAP administration has done.<sup>69</sup>

Since then, this situation has remained essentially unchanged. Thus the Communist threat to Malaysia in the form of a Barisan electoral victory in Singapore (which has been shown to have been the most important factor motivating Malaya's decision to form Malaysia) was well under control at the time of separation and has remained so to this date, five years later.<sup>70</sup>

It has been indicated that there were fears at the time of separation and afterwards that Singapore could easily suffer a serious economic decline (because Indonesia's confrontation continued and Malaysia showed signs of embarking on a nationalistic trade policy which would greatly reduce the volume of its

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>69</sup>Bonavia, p. 168.

<sup>70</sup>Indeed, the Barisan did not even contest the 1968 Singapore elections, and the PAP won all fifty-eight seats.

exports to and through Singapore) that might well lead to a Barisan election victory. Singapore, however, has managed to do quite well economically despite decelerated trade with Malaysia and the incomplete recovery of its trade with Indonesia. The government's vigorous trade promotion and industrial development activities, the economic activities generated by an intensified war in Vietnam, and the effective promotion of tourism have helped Singapore to weather the decline in its traditional trade patterns and maintain its level of economic prosperity. Thus the Communist threat to Malaysia via an election victory in Singapore has remained under control since separation and has been decreasing rather than increasing as the years have passed.

#### Assessment of the Motives for Separation

The following assessment of the factors causing the separation of Singapore from Malaysia is based on the assumption that the basic decision was made by the Tunku, as was "authoritatively claimed."<sup>71</sup> It is the conclusion of this writer that the inclusion of Singapore within Malaysia came to be viewed as a core interest threat to that state. This core interest threat was dual in nature, and contained both an immediate and a long term threat to the existence of Malaysia, at least as the Tunku and other Alliance moderates conceived of it.

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<sup>71</sup>The Times (London), August 16, 1965 and Rahman's separation speech in the Straits Times (Singapore), August 10, 1965 as cited by Michael Leifer, "Singapore Leaves Malaysia," The World Today, Vol. XXI (September, 1965), p. 361.

This two-pronged threat to Malaysia emanated from the Malay "ultras" on the right and the predominantly Chinese movement led by Lee Kuan Yew on the left. The intensity of the former threat, it should be noted, was based to a significant degree on the potential of the latter.

This dual threat was of core interest magnitude because it was believed that either element of it would lead to widespread communal violence. On one hand, a more vigorous policy of promoting Malay special privileges, the Malay language, and Malay culture in general to the detriment of the languages, cultures, and opportunities (both academic and economic) of the other races would produce non-Malay hostility and antagonism that sooner or later would erupt into communal violence. And if Lee Kuan Yew were to be arrested and other PAP leaders expelled, rioting would almost certainly break out in several areas of Malaysia. On the other hand, the establishment of equal opportunities and privileges under the law for all regardless of race (i.e., a "Malaysian Malaysia") would also probably lead eventually to communal violence. This is because many Malays would not tolerate being relegated to a less favorable economic and political position within what they viewed to be their "own" nation-state.

This two-pronged core interest threat to Malaysia posed both immediate and long run dangers. The immediate danger at the time of the separation decision was that if Singapore remained within Malaysia, the Malay ultras could not be controlled much longer and would force the Central Government to

take repressive measures against Singapore, which would be likely to provoke racial violence.

The long term aspect of the core interest threat which a Singapore within Malaysia appears to have posed to Malaysia was the challenge to the "terms of '57" which Lee Kuan Yew, as the leader of the PAP, the spokesman for a "Malaysian Malaysia," and the driving force within the MSC, personified. In the 1964 Malayan elections Lee had challenged the position of the MCA in the Alliance government. And only a year later Lee was challenging the position of the Alliance as a whole via the formation of the MSC opposition coalition. Thus most UMNO leaders as well as those of the MCA now viewed the political challenge that Lee represented as a threat to their political position.

In short, Lee's movement challenged the "terms of '57" rules of the game upon which the Alliance system of government was based, for this largely Chinese movement was not content to continue to accept Malay political hegemony in order to protect the position of economic dominance enjoyed by the non-Malay "haves" from discriminatory and repressive governmental actions. And since a MSC controlled government of Malaysia would take actions to implement its Malaysian Malaysia campaign promises, this outcome would also be likely to produce the communal violence that could be disastrous for the state.

The Tunku's separation explanation that he saw only two courses open to him (to take "repressive action" against Singapore or to "sever all connections" with it) might seem to be a

very narrow definition of the alternatives Rahman had, Grossholtz noted, "but it clearly reflected the Tunku's belief that the Alliance system of governance was the only valid one for Malaysia . . ." <sup>72</sup> These two alternatives merit closer examination.

From the statements in his separation speech, it is clear that Rahman viewed the first alternative (that of repressive action against Singapore) as being an unacceptable course of action. Not only would it be "repulsive to our concept of Parliamentary Democracy," he felt, but, more importantly, "it would not solve the problem." The Tunku's next statements implied that the reason it would not solve the problem is that such repressive action would sow more seeds of contempt, fear, and hatred that would exacerbate communal relations and greatly increase the likelihood of communal violence.

In contrast, the second alternative of taking repressive action against Singapore was viewed as promising an acceptable, if not a very happy, outcome. The benefits for Malaysia (as the Tunku and other Alliance moderates conceived of the state) that Singapore's separation hopefully would produce have been described well by Fitzgerald:

The amputation of Singapore, it was hoped, would alleviate this [Malay ultra] pressure and deprive the extremists of their principal weapon--the constant denunciation of the Prime Minister of Singapore, and their dangerous clamor for acts of physical coercion against him and his supporters. <sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Grossholtz, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup>C. P. Fitzgerald, "The Expulsion of Singapore, The Nation, Vol. CCI (October, 1965), p. 208.

The prevention of the communal violence that could escalate to a general race war within Malaysia, it appears certain, was viewed by the Tunku as being a core interest goal of Malaysia, as he conceived of the state. Since the Tunku viewed the first of the two alternatives he felt he had as being quite likely to result eventually in communal violence, it was rejected as being unacceptable. The second alternative (the withdrawal of Singapore) while not very attractive, was not viewed as being likely to produce unacceptable results. Hence, if these were truly believed to be "the only two courses of action open to us" and the first was viewed as being likely to produce unacceptable results, then the second would clearly be what has been defined as a core interest objective, because only it could counter the threat to the core interest goal of avoiding communal violence.

The Lee-MSM-Malaysian Malaysia long range threat to Alliance control of Malaysia was played down in the public utterances of Rahman and other Alliance leaders. They must have been concerned about the fact that Lee drew very large crowds during his 1964 election campaigning in Malaya. But the PAP's dismal showing in that election probably alleviated this concern to some degree. This relief should have been short-lived, however, because analyses of the election indicated that Indonesia's confrontation was an important factor in bringing about the surprising success of the MCA in weathering the PAP challenge.

This writer was quite surprised by Rajaratnam's reply to a question regarding the wisdom of the PAP's decision to enter the 1964 Malayan election. Rajaratnam, who was deeply involved in the management of the PAP's election campaign, said he thought the PAP was basically correct in its decision to enter, in the sense that the MCA was vulnerable to such a challenge. He admitted, however, that there were serious organizational problems that hampered the PAP's 1964 campaign and contributed to its failure.<sup>74</sup> His answer was puzzling because it was a private interview in which Rajaratnam was quite open and frank and because, to this writer at least, this PAP decision seemed to have been a very poor one.

The May, 1969 elections in West Malaysia (as Malaya is now officially known) confirmed the basic validity of Rajaratnam's perception of the Malayan political environment (i.e., his psychological environment). For the first time in its history, the Alliance received less than half of the vote (49.1%, a decline of 9% from the 1964 election) and lost 15 seats, thereby declining from a two-thirds majority which enabled it to amend the Constitution to a simple majority party. The UMNO and MIC Alliance partners suffered only minor losses compared with the MCA, which lost 20 of the 33 seats it contested. It is also noteworthy that the Alliance attracted less than one third of the urban vote.<sup>75</sup> As Gagliano put it, "The

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<sup>74</sup>Personal interview with S. Rajaratnam, Singapore Minister of Foreign Affairs, June, 1967.

<sup>75</sup>Gagliano, p. 12.



MCA was roundly defeated, clearly forfeiting the support of the majority of the Chinese."<sup>76</sup> This, he concluded, "signaled the apparent demise of the MCA, and perhaps the death of the Alliance Formula."<sup>77</sup>

The reactions to the election results were intense, and are described well in the following contemporary account:

Exultant supporters of the Democratic Action Party [The Malayan branch of the PAP had been required to change its name and consequently became the DAP. Though it is not officially connected with the PAP it campaigned with the "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan.] and the Gerakan [This was a newly created party which won seats only in the predominately Chinese island state of Penang.] filled the capital's streets on Sunday and Monday night with their flag-waving cavalcades of vehicles. Their delight in breaking the Alliance's myth of invincibility inevitably irritated Malay supporters of the Government. Malays were also alarmed by boasts that the Chinese had now achieved some measure of political power.

[On Tuesday] the MCA . . . announced that it would withdraw from the Cabinet while remaining within the Alliance. Tun Razak pronounced sentence on the Chinese voters who had been warned before the elections that unless they voted MCA, they would forfeit all Chinese representation in the Government. At UMNO . . . headquarters . . . the feeling was that democracy had gone too far--in other words, that the hegemony of the Malays, papered over in the Alliance by the multi-racial front of MCA and MIC . . . was in real danger.<sup>78</sup>

Later this same day communal riots broke out and continued sporadically for over a month. Official statistics for the May 13-July 31 period listed 196 people killed, 439 injured, 1,019 missing, and 9,143 arrested.<sup>79</sup> Estimates by unofficial

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> Bob Reece, "Requiem for Democracy?", Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 21 (May 22, 1969), p. 437.

<sup>79</sup> National Operations Council Report on the May 13 Riots (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, October, 1969), as reprinted in the Straits Times (Singapore), October 9, 1969 and quoted by Gagliano, p. 1.

observers were much higher.<sup>80</sup>

On May 15 the Yang di-Pertuan Agong declared a state of emergency which, by suspending Parliament and curtailing certain civil liberties, was roughly the equivalent of martial law. Complete political authority was transferred to a National Operations Council (NOC) under a Director of Operations who was granted the power to rule by decree. Instead of naming himself to this key position, the Tunku appointed Deputy Prime Minister Razak. This move disturbed many non-Malays but met with the approval of UMNO ultras. Gagliano notes that this latter reaction was an early sign that the election (especially UMNO's net loss of three seats to the right-wing Malay party, the PMIP) had "triggered the longstanding UMNO power struggle between inter-racial 'moderates' and the 'ultras' who wanted to oust the moderate leadership and assert Malay political supremacy."<sup>81</sup>

It is especially noteworthy for the purposes of this analysis that after the riots Rahman stated: "Isn't it clearer now why we had to separate from Singapore when Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was going on with his Malaysian Malaysia campaign?"<sup>82</sup>

Unfortunately the core interest threat involved in the second prong (i.e., that of non-Malay pressures for a Malaysian Malaysia) had now been demonstrated. The largely non-Malay

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<sup>80</sup>Gagliano, ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>82</sup>Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), July 4, 1969 as quoted by Gagliano, ibid., p. 37.

parties opposing the Alliance had not even come close to winning a majority in the Malaysian House, winning only twenty-five of the 104 West Malaysian seats in the Malaysian Dewan Rayat of 144 seats. Yet their victory celebrations and the threat they posed in the future were all that was needed to provoke an outbreak of communal violence of frightening proportions that caused an Alliance moderate, Dr. Ismail, to lament: "Democracy is dead in this country."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Reece, loc. cit.

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding section the three general goals of this study will be re-examined and the degree of their attainment assessed. These goals, as enumerated in the Preface, are to make a contribution to the core interest approach, to demonstrate the utility of this approach in general and the contributions to and modifications of it made in this work in particular, and to contribute to the understanding of the two important events studied.

#### The Core Interest Approach as the Conceptual Framework for this Analysis

The first general objective of this work is to contribute to the development of the core interest approach as a tool for analyzing intranational as well as international political relations. Two objections might be raised in regard to the use of the core interest approach in the analysis of the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore. The first is that the threat Singapore presented to Malaya which motivated the latter to propose merger talks was not a threat from the outside of the ordinary traditional type. The writer, however, contends that it was not significantly different.

### The Formation of Malaysia

Malaya had been a sovereign state for nearly four years before the Tunku's merger speech in 1961. Malaya's decision-makers perceived a threat emanating from the "internally self-governing" Crown Colony of Singapore, which occupied a strategic area (due to both economic and military security factors) bordering Malaya. Although Singapore was not a sovereign state, there were indications that it soon would have become one. If it did not achieve independence under the People's Action Party administration during the constitutional revision talks scheduled for 1963, it would certainly have moved much closer to such status. At the least, some sort of timetable for the gradual attainment of independence probably would have been worked out.

The possibility that worried Kuala Lumpur, however, was not that Singapore would achieve independence under the Lee Kuan Yew government, but rather that the Barisan Sosialis party (which they considered to be a Communist front organization<sup>1</sup>) would come to power (perhaps in the next Singapore elections, due in 1963 at the latest) and unilaterally demand or declare Singapore's independence and align the state with the Communist world in general and China in particular. Given Malaya's large Chinese population (36.9%) and the difficult and costly twelve year war against the predominantly Chinese

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<sup>1</sup>Prominently displayed in the Barisan's central headquarters in Singapore is a large picture of Mao flanked by much smaller pictures of Marx and Engels on one side and Lenin and Stalin on the other.

Communist guerrilla movement which had not officially ended until the previous year (1960), the threat a Communist-controlled and Chinese-dominated sovereign state of Singapore would pose for Malayan security was substantial. Though the threat such a Singapore would pose may not have been a threat from the outside in the ordinary and traditional way because Singapore was not a sovereign state, the threat it would have presented was roughly equivalent to one. Indeed, the threat Malayan decision-makers perceived to be developing in Singapore and decided to forestall by merging with Singapore would not have been significantly different had Singapore been a sovereign state during the period prior to merger. Thus it is concluded that the threat Singapore presented to Malaya did not differ in any important way from the traditional type of external core interest threat.

#### The Separation of Singapore

A more serious theoretical objection can be raised in regard to the contention that the expulsion of Singapore became a core interest of the Alliance government decision-makers. This is clearly a radical departure from previous usage of the core interest approach, for it involves the use of a conceptual framework which has heretofore been limited to the analysis of international political conflict in an analysis of an intranational political conflict.

Mention has already been made of the writer's conviction that the differences between the fields of national and international politics are differences in degree rather than

of kind. Also it has been argued, and a great deal of supporting evidence has subsequently been presented, that Malaysia is not an integrated political community in the sense and to the degree that most of the older Western states are. Indeed, communalism is clearly the primordial political force within the Malaysian political system.<sup>2</sup>

Two additional points are advanced in support of this use of the core interest approach. The first is that decision-makers tend to view the interests and security of their own ruling group as important national interests of the state they govern. This is not to say that the decision-maker's conception of the national interest consists solely of the interests of the ruling group, but that these interests of the ruling group are usually very important factors influencing the decision-makers' definition and ranking of national interests. Secondly, in the case of the Malay decision-makers, it was not just the interests of their ruling group that were threatened by Singapore's activities within Malaysia. Rather, it was a threat to the whole Malay national identity, culture, and national existence that was perceived to be inherent in Singapore's continued presence within the Federation.

Thus the situation within Malaysia was not analogous to one of the U. S. political parties believing that it could remain in power only by separating the South from the Union. At issue in Malaysia was not just which political party

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, K. J. Ratnam's Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya.



(tweedledum or tweedledee) would rule. Instead, the national identity of the Malay communal group was at stake. Was the state to be a Malay nation or a Malaysian nation controlled by non-Malay groups--that was the question. In short, the very existence of the Malay state was threatened.

A more accurate U. S. analogy to the situation within Malaysia would be something like the following rather far-fetched scenario. The Republican party is completely dominated by the blacks, who are 46% of the population, hold nearly all of the political policy-making positions, and constitute over 95% of all the police and military forces. The Democratic party is dominated by the whites, who are 42% of the population, control the economy, and predominate in all of the professions. In addition, all the blacks are devout Moslems, Islam is the official state religion, and Swahili is the official national language.

If most of the whites were allowed to register in the South (which would be 75% white) and if the Democrats had an extremely intelligent, skilled, ruthless, and ambitious political leader who threatened to unite almost all of the whites (42%) with most of the other non-blacks (12%) in an effective political opposition coalition which could end black political domination of the country, might not the Republican ruling party (of black Moslems) be likely to decide to expel the South in order to preserve their black-dominated state? Or, to cite a less far-fetched example, would not the white South Africans be likely to force one of their predominantly

black constituent parts to withdraw from the Union of South Africa if such a move were perceived to be the only feasible way that the whites could maintain their political control of that state?

Only analogies such as these can convey the high political stakes and intense emotional identifications that were involved in Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations within Malaysia. The decision-makers of Malaysia perceived a threat to the existence of their state that was dual in nature. The immediate danger was a racial civil war between the Malays (43%) and the Chinese (44%) of Malaya and Singapore.<sup>3</sup> The longer term threat was non-Malay political control of the state.

The writer contends that these two dangers constituted a core interest threat to the existence of Malaysia (as the Alliance decision-makers conceived of it) in a similar manner as would an invasion by China. Consequently, it is argued, the use of the core interest approach in an analysis of the situation was both justifiable and appropriate.

#### The Utility of the Modified Core Interest Approach

The second general objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate the utility of the core interest approach in general and the contributions made to it in this work in particular, through the two case studies presented. This objective is closely related to the third one, that of

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<sup>3</sup>Calculated from Appendix A.

contributing to the understanding of the related decisions to form the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 and then, after less than two years, to have Singapore withdraw from Malaysia. The degree to which these two objectives have been fulfilled plus some of the problems involved in the attempt will now be assessed.

#### Contributions to the Core Interest Approach

In Chapter II a number of additions to and modifications of the core interest approach were presented. The concepts of the psychological and the operational environment, the distinction between national interest goals and objectives, and the concept of the credibility of interests were integrated into the conceptual framework. A distinction between the words "overlapping" and "conflicting" to describe the juxtaposition of interests was drawn, and a classification of core interests according to their mode of expression (including provision for core interest feints and unintentional core interest statements) was advanced. Provisions for criticizing the decision-makers' definition of national interests (because of disagreement with their perceptions of the environment or with their values in formulating and ranking national interests) were made, and the concepts of subjective and objective core interests were discarded. The concepts of positive-influence and negative-influence interests were created to make thinking about what is necessary to satisfy interests more precise and to allow for the situation where rival powers may have

interests in the same geographic area but still not have these interests conflict, because they may merely overlap. Finally, the concept of a core interest dilemma was added in order to label the increased number of policy-making dilemmas created by the greatly expanded number of core interests and core interest threats engendered by the advent of the Cold War and the development of thermonuclear weapons and missile delivery systems.

These modifications of and additions to the core interest approach were made for general purposes. Thus not all of them were utilized in the two case studies, and some of those that were utilized did not prove to be of any great value or significance in the analysis of the specific events examined. Consequently several of these contributions cannot yet be evaluated. Those that were utilized to a significant extent, however, are assessed in the following sections.

#### The Core Interest Dilemma

Malaya was confronted with a core interest dilemma regarding merger with Singapore. On one hand the Malayan decision-makers feared that Singapore would go Communist and in turn threaten Malaya with subversion. As Lee succinctly put it, Malaya had to merge with Singapore "because without it . . . their own security would be imperiled."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Lee Kuan Yew, Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia? p. 1.

On the other hand merger with Singapore would fundamentally alter the racial composition of the political unit and consequently--given the strength and prevalence of communal identifications--the very nature of the state. This dilemma was resolved primarily because a third area, predominantly non-Chinese, was available for inclusion within the new federation. In this manner union with Singapore was made tolerable to the politically dominant Malays of Malaya. Again, one of Lee's comments is particularly revealing:

To be honest, we would have been quite happy to have gone without Sabah, Sarawak or Brunei. For a diversity of reasons . . . merger was not possible unless these territories came in. So we went out of our way to persuade them to come in.<sup>5</sup>

With the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak (Brunei was not numerically necessary) in the merger, the resulting federation would not have a plurality of Chinese and the political representation of the various constituent units could be manipulated to preserve Malay political dominance within the new state. Thus this particular core interest dilemma was neatly and expeditiously resolved.

#### Positive-Influence and Negative-Influence Core Interests

A clear example of a positive-influence core interest was Malaya's interest in including the Borneo territories in the new federation in order to offset Chinese-dominated Singapore. Certainly nothing short of the political annexation of

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

the area would resolve Malaya's core interest dilemma. And political annexation is obviously at the positive endpoint of the continuum of possible influence situations that might be required to satisfy the interests of a state in a certain geographic area.

Although this distinction between positive-influence and negative-influence interests did not prove to be of crucial importance in the study of Singapore and Malayan interests in the formation of Malaysia, it would probably be of great importance in an analysis of Malaysia's conflict with Indonesia over the formation of Malaysia in general and the inclusion of the Borneo territories (which are part of one island with Indonesian Kalimantan<sup>6</sup> in particular. What was Indonesia's interest in the Borneo territories? Was it of a positive-influence nature requiring some favored position of influence in or perhaps even annexation of the area? Or was it of a negative-influence nature requiring only the absence of Malayan political control in the form of Malaysia, which Indonesian leaders labeled as a "neo-colonialist plot?" The answers to these questions would be crucial in an analysis of Indonesian-Malaysian relations during the period of confrontation, for they would go far in determining whether the interests of the two states in the geographic area of the Borneo territories actually were in conflict or whether they merely overlapped. And whether they were conflicting or just

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<sup>6</sup>See map, Appendix C.

overlapping interests would have great significance in regard to the possibilities for settling the dispute peacefully.

#### The Psychological Environment

The key problem in applying the core interest approach is that of ascertaining how the decision-makers actually perceive the situations with which they are confronted and the policy alternatives they have. It would be nice to be able to spend weeks with each decision-maker utilizing the aid of a psychoanalyst, truth serums, and a battery of questionnaires. Unfortunately it is difficult to get even a short interview with almost any important decision-maker, and, it seems, the more important a decision-maker is the less he is willing to talk freely and/or for the record. The researcher, consequently, is often left only with records of press interviews, public speeches, and official policy statements and documents (which are almost always designed primarily to win friends and influence people rather than to inform them about what the leaders are actually thinking) plus a variety of secondary source commentary, opinion, and analysis. This, indeed, was basically the situation in the two case studies of this work.

The writer feels fortunate, however, that the two key decision-makers involved in this study were quite open and revealing in their public comments. Lee Kuan Yew was especially good in this regard; as one newspaper put it, he has an "unlawyerlike habit of plain speech."<sup>7</sup> Lee's preferred

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<sup>7</sup>Sydney Morning Herald, March 18, 1965 as quoted in Lee Kuan Yew, Malaysia--Age of Revolution, p. 69.

public style is not the reading of carefully prepared and edited texts but rather a disarmingly frank and hard-hitting ad lib technique. Under harsh questioning, however, he often assumes an aggressive debating posture through which, more often than not, he turns the tables on the questioner. While this technique produces lively exchanges, it is of little help to the scholar.

Lee's habit of thinking and talking in terms of national interests and his tendency to project problems into the future and calculate what should be done now to mitigate them are a delight to the political analyst. In short, Lee's diligence in doing his homework on the issues combined with his rational, logical, realistic, and analytical approach to problems make his comments valuable resource materials for any analysis of Singapore's internal or external political policies.

While, as Stockwin notes, "No Alliance leader has chosen to publicly analyze Malaysian self-interest in the same way as Lee does for Singapore . . .,"<sup>8</sup> some of Tunku Abdul Rahman's statements were also quite revealing and helpful. His general sincerity and occasional frankness produce occasional boons for the student of Malaysian national and international politics. While the Tunku generally does not talk in terms of national interests, is not a cool and calculating power politician, and does not like to talk about sensitive political issues, he was sometimes very open and

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<sup>8</sup>Harvey Stockwin, "Lee De Gaulle?" p. 368.



frank, particularly when he was obviously quite emotionally involved in events. His separation day press conference (Appendix B) is a case in point.

Difficult as it may be to ascertain what the psychological environment of a decision-maker is, and as skimpy as the solid evidence may be, this is something that must be attempted because it is so crucial in understanding and anticipating the actions of decision-makers. It is the right question to ask, this writer believes, and thus as difficult as it may be to answer, the effort should be made and is well worth making. Shall one limit his research to those questions that can be felicitously studied with the methods, resources and opportunities available, or should one research interesting and important problems even though it will be difficult if not impossible to do so definitively? This writer has taken the latter approach in this work. It is hoped that the great effort required to produce only tentative and qualified conclusions will constitute a significant contribution toward the understanding of the two events analyzed.

#### This Study as a Foundation for Future Research

In the two case study analyses herein, the writer has tried to present the evidence from which his conclusions are drawn. To convey the attitudes and emotions of the times a variety of statements have been quoted in some detail. Other students will want to analyze and interpret this evidence for themselves, and it is expected that many will interpret parts of it differently and that some will come to different

conclusions. This is especially to be expected as time passes and new sources of evidence and information become available.

It is hoped that the core interest approach in general and this analysis in particular will be of value to future researchers. If they determine exactly where and why they agree and disagree with this analysis, a greater understanding of these two events will surely emerge, and questions for further research and debate will be delineated.

#### Core Interest Goals and Objectives

The distinction between core interest goals and objectives was utilized in the analysis of both Singapore's and Malaya's interests in merger. In both cases this distinction proved to be of great value in understanding subsequent events.

Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP sought the core interest goal of an economically viable Singapore in which they would have the resources to finance the social and economic development programs they felt would be required if they were to survive the challenge the Barisan Sosialis presented to their political position in particular and to Singapore's future in general. The preferred means to this core interest end was the creation of a common market with Malaya within Malaysia. For this and other reasons merger with Malaya became a core interest objective for Singapore.

Since merger is considered to have been a core interest objective of Singapore in the early 1960's, the question

arises as to whether the virtual expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 constituted a core interest threat to Singapore. It appears that it did not, and the distinction between national interest goals and objectives helps to explain why.

Merger in the early 1960's was a means to an end, not an end in itself. By 1965 Singapore's internal situation had changed fundamentally. The position of the PAP government was no longer precarious because of the success of its ongoing social and economic development programs and the virtual elimination of the Barisan Sosialis as a credible electoral threat. Although the economic problems separation created for Singapore were a matter of major concern, an alternative means to the end of economic viability was perceived. Singapore could survive by shifting its industrial development emphasis from production for the Malaysian domestic market (the Malaysian common market had not materialized anyway) to production for the world export market. Fortunately for Singapore this reorientation (aided by business generated by the Vietnam war) has been successful and thus constitutes an acceptable means to the core interest goal of economic viability.

Malaya's interest in merger with Singapore is also an example of a core interest objective rather than a goal. And, as in the case of Singapore, this distinction helps to explain the Alliance decision-makers' later interests pertaining to the separation of Singapore. It is clear that the perception of an imminent threat of a Communist take-over of Singapore

is what convinced Malaya's decision-makers to agree to merger talks with Singapore. Merger was obviously a means to Malaya's end of security against a threat of Communist subversion from Singapore. Thus its geopolitical security was Malaya's core interest goal, and merger with Singapore became an objective of core interest status because no other satisfactory and effective means of attaining this end was perceived.

This distinction between core interest goals and objectives is important in explaining how, less than two years after merger finally took place, Malaya's decision-makers could have come to view Singapore's continued inclusion within Malaysia to be a core interest threat to the state, as they conceived of it. This abrupt about-face in policy was the result of two important and fundamental changes. The first was that the threat of a Communist take-over in Singapore had been all but eliminated by Lee's skillful political maneuvering and productive governing policies. The second was that a Lee-led Singapore, instead of being content with becoming the "New York of Malaysia," seemed to the Alliance decision-makers to be intent upon leading a drive to create a "Malaysian Malaysia" in the not so distant future. Consequently a Singapore outside of Malaysia was no longer viewed as a core interest threat whereas a Singapore within Malaysia came to be viewed as a threat to the existence of Malaysia, at least as the politically-dominant Malays conceived of the state.

In short, the expulsion of Singapore came to be viewed as a core interest requirement by Malaysia. Singapore's separation from Malaysia became a core interest objective of the Alliance decision-makers because it was viewed as the only acceptable means of preserving the Malaysian state in the face of the dual threat of racial civil war and potentially controlling non-Malay political power.

#### Linkages

Two examples of the convergence of national and international politics in the present case studies merit comment. One involved the effect of an internal political situation on external policy; the other involved the effect of an international political situation on a domestic political issue.

A good example of the effect a domestic political and economic situation can have on the external policy of a political unit is the predicament Singapore's political leaders found themselves in by the summer of 1961. As Lee himself later put it, Singapore needed merger "because the alternative was a state of constant instability. . . . If Singapore were left isolated . . . economically confined and conscribed, then there was only one way out for it . . . and that was to play a Cuban role."<sup>9</sup>

As an Asian Cuba, Singapore would be dependent upon a major power such as the U.S.S.R., China, the U. S., or Britain.

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<sup>9</sup>Lee Kuan Yew, Are There Enough Malaysian to Save Malaysia? p. 1.

The leader of the Barisan Sosialis opposition was also thinking about Singapore becoming a "Cuba of the East."<sup>10</sup> Clearly, the Barisan would soon have come to power in a Singapore dependent upon Russia or China. And a Singapore under U. S. or British tutelage would have faced extremely severe internal political problems with its left-wing Chinese element and thus would also have put Lee and the PAP in an untenable political position. In both cases Singapore would have had little political independence.

To avoid such undesirable situations, Lee and his ruling party opted for what they labeled "independence through merger" with Malaysia and formulated their external policy efforts toward Malaya, the United Kingdom, and the Borneo territories accordingly. These efforts dominated Singapore's relations with these political units for over two years.

The example of the effect an international political situation can have on a domestic political event is the influence of Indonesia's confrontation policy against Malaysia on the outcome of the 1964 Malayan elections. Lee's hopes of demonstrating a "winds of change" movement within Malayan politics to the UMNO party decision-makers were dashed by the fact that Indonesia's challenge overrode all the other election issues and resulted in an overwhelming vote of confidence for the Alliance candidates.

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<sup>10</sup> According to one well-informed observer, Lim Chin Siang actually used this analogy. Personal interview with Alex Josey, July 18, 1970.

In both of the case studies, consequently, factors within the category of "linkage politics" proved to be of considerable importance. The student of national or international politics ignores such factors at his own peril.

#### Concluding Remark

As McClelland observes, the historian postpones serious study of a subject until an adequate amount of documentary evidence becomes available; meanwhile the international relations specialist may work with "near-contemporary events and the fragmentary public record to create, at best, journalistic descriptions of high quality."<sup>11</sup> It is contended that this work has merits in addition to that of being "high level journalism": the core interest approach was modified and expanded upon, and it was applied to the analysis of an international political conflict, thus constituting an attempt to apply an approach from the field of international politics to the analysis of an intranational political problem. It is hoped that this example will encourage others to make similar efforts.

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<sup>11</sup>Charles A. McClelland, "The Social Sciences, History and International Relations," in James N. Rosenau (ed.), International Politics and Foreign Policy (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 24.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
POPULATION STATISTICS BY RACE OF THE POLITICAL UNITS IN THE  
PROPOSED FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA IN 1960<sup>a</sup>

	Malays	Borneo Indigenous	Chinese	Indians, Pakistanis	Others	Total
Malaya <sup>b</sup>	3,461,000 50.1%	X	2,552,000 36.9%	773,000 11.2%	123,000 1.8%	6,909,000
Singapore <sup>b</sup>	227,000 13.9%	X	1,231,000 75.3%	138,000 8.4%	38,000 2.3%	1,634,000
Sarawak <sup>c</sup>	129,000 17.3%	378,000 50.8%	229,000 30.8%	2,000 .3%	6,000 .8%	744,000
North Borneo <sup>c</sup> (Sabah)	25,000 5.5%	283,000 62.2%	105,000 23.1%	3,000 .7%	39,000 <sup>d</sup> 8.6%	455,000
Brunei <sup>c</sup>	59,000 <sup>e</sup> 70.2%	see note d	22,000 26.2%	X	3,000 <sup>f</sup> 3.6%	84,000

<sup>a</sup>Computed from figures cited in Smith, p. 3 and (for Brunei) Means, p. 140.

<sup>b</sup>Mid-1960 estimate (last census in 1957).

<sup>c</sup>1960 census.

<sup>d</sup>Includes 25,000 Indonesians.

<sup>e</sup>In the case of Brunei only the figure in this column includes "Borneo Indigenous."

<sup>f</sup>The Brunei census classifies Indians as "others."

## APPENDIX B

### DECLARATION OF THE MALAYSIAN SOLIDARITY CONVENTION<sup>1</sup>

We, the undersigned, conscious of the threat to Malaysia from without and deeply concerned over mounting signs of disruption through internal dissension are calling a Malaysia Solidarity Convention to rally our people to meet these twin threats.

Malaysia's survival and consolidation are imperative to ensure the right of 10 million Malaysians to seek happiness, freedom and prosperity as a democratic and independent nation. We believe we can do this if we adhere sincerely to the spirit and intent of the basic principles enunciated during the various meetings of representatives of the territories--Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore and Malaya and embodied in the agreement signed in London. It is transgression of these basic principles rather than Indonesian confrontation and pro-Communist subversion which presents the greater threat to Malaysia. The peoples of Malaysia have so far stood up to Indonesian confrontation and Communist subversion simply because they feel that the principles and objectives of a Malaysian Malaysia are worth fighting for and dying for.

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Singapore, Ministry of Culture, Separation, pp. 16-21.

It is with grave concern that we find that since the start of confrontation there have been utterances and manifestations by highly placed political leaders which are contrary to the spirit and purpose of Malaysia as conceived and agreed to by the vast majority of people.

The basic principle on which Malaysia was founded can be summed up in three simple words: A Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia.

By democracy, we mean the provisions for the fundamental rights of all our citizens, and the system of parliamentary democracy enshrined in our present constitution. It not only permits divergence of views but also protects the right of any Malaysian to compete for popular influence and support through processes sanctioned by the constitution and for ends embodied in it.

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. A Malaysian Malaysia is the antithesis of a Malay Malaysia, a Chinese Malaysia, a Dyak Malaysia, an Indian Malaysia or Kadazan Malaysia and so on. The special and legitimate interests of different communities must be secured and promoted within the framework of the collective rights, interests and responsibilities 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 and religion but on the basis of

common political ideologies and common social and economic aspirations, which is the real basis of ensuring the emergence of a truly free prosperous and equitable national community.

The people of Malaysia did not vote for a non-democratic Malaysia. They did not vote for a Malaysia assuring hegemony to one community. Still less would they be prepared to fight for the preservation of so meaningless a Malaysia. It is because the concept of a Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia has been challenged by certain leaders that doubts and fears have arisen as to the future of Malaysia.

Certain political leaders have allowed their resentment of criticism and opposition to some of their policies to degenerate into threats that if such criticism are [sic] persisted in then parliamentary democracy might be brought to an end. Others have gone so far as to enunciate the doctrine that the existence of democracy and Malaysia is conditional only on their unchallenged right to be the rulers of Malaysia and that therefore other groups should desist from trying to win following and support by constitutional and legitimate means. If they do not then dire consequences are predicted. These range from the ending of democracy to warnings about communal disturbances.

The growing tendency among some leaders to make open appeals to communal chauvinism to win and hold their following has gradually led them also to what has been tantamount to a repudiation of the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. This is not to deny the fact that communal fears and prejudices still influence popular political thinking and that the emergence of

a Malaysian outlook may take time to develop. We are realistic enough to recognise that until such time as a Malaysian outlook takes strong roots, substantial sections of our population will be inclined to express themselves through communally organised political parties.

But what occasions dismay and portends danger is the viciousness with which attacks are launched against those who, of whatever race, abandon communal forms of politics for non-communal politics. One would have thought that the more the people affiliated themselves to non-communal ideologies and organisations the nearer we are moving to our goal of a Malaysian Malaysia. If people are discouraged and denounced for abandoning communal loyalties because they have found common ground for political action with Malaysians of other races then the professed concern for a Malaysian Malaysia is open to serious doubts.

We ourselves believe that the number of people who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia is large and that their influence is rapidly growing.

The Convention is being called to disabuse those who believe that Malaysians are few, weak and unorganised and that they are neither prepared to rally to defend and sustain the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia, nor are they determined to unite and work for its realisation, no matter how arduous or protracted the struggle may be.

We believe that a Malaysian Malaysia has the support of the vast majority of the peoples. We also believe that silence

and passivity on the part of Malaysians will only encourage the forces of communalism to become more virulent but that it will also set in train a sequence of events which must inevitably lead to turmoil and the eventual collapse of Malaysia. Assertion by one group of chauvinists must lead to counter-assertion by other chauvinistic groups and in no time a multi-racial Malaysia must be rent asunder by communal conflicts.

The purpose of this convention is to get political leaders and interested individuals to come together to discuss and reexamine our many problems in the context of a truly Malaysian situation. For more than a decade political and other leaders in the constituent states of Malaysia have developed organisations, attitudes and philosophies which may have stood them in good stead before Malaysia. But what may have been practical and logical two years ago, before Malaysia Day, may be destructive of Malaysia at the present time. The Malaysian view cannot be a simple projection and extension of views that have been used to run the States of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah or Sarawak as separate entities. A great deal of our present internal difficulties spring from the failure of certain political leaders to realise that the Malaysian view and a Malaysian approach must be qualitatively different from our accustomed approach to things.

It takes time and courage to accept the fact that each of us must change our ideas and political styles to fit with the new needs of a Malaysian nation. The economic, social and political problems that beset us are now Malaysian in scope

and therefore require new concepts and new approaches for their solution.

Unfortunately certain political leaders have persistently refused to consider objectively and calmly what adjustments must be made to accustomed modes of thinking in regard to Malaysian policies, Malaysian administration, Malaysian economics and, most important of all, how to subordinate racial, religious and state loyalties to a Malaysian loyalty.

A convention like this is the first organised attempt to search for a Malaysian view through free and frank debate and how to put it into practice. Some of the problems that require urgent examination are how democratic competition between communally organised parties and non-communally organised parties can be conducted without intensification of communal animosities; how best to meet quickly and effectively the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the under-privileged majority of all races without destroying economic stability--in other words to define with as much precision as we can what we mean by a Democratic Malaysian Malaysia and how best we can move towards this goal.

The Convention calls upon all Malaysians who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia to come forward to pool their ideas, energies and resources in order to help our advance towards realising it. The slogan that should rally us and guide us towards victory is: Malaysians Unite. We are convinced that if Malaysians unite they have sufficient strength to safeguard Malaysia against external threat and corrosion from within.

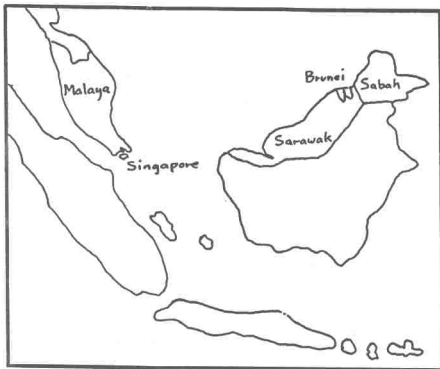
A Malaysian Malaysia is worth fighting for because only in such a Malaysia is there a decent and dignified future for all Malaysians.

It is in this spirit and expectation that we, the undersigned, appeal to all Malaysians to support this Convention.



APPENDIX C

The Proposed Federation of Malaysia



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