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## **AIMS AND SCOPE**

The Journal of Defence and Security is a publication of the Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security, MiDAS. The journal publishes original papers and reviews covering all aspects of defence and security. It is a platform to promote awareness on the capabilities and requirements of modern defence & security technologies and policies, covering topics in the areas of, but not limited to, Evolution of Military Information & Communication Systems, Smart Weapons, Modern Vehicle & Aerospace Engineering Challenges, Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance, Biological & Chemical Terrorism Countermeasures, Personnel Protection & Performance, Military Medicine, Emergent Naval Technology, and Defence & Security Strategic Management.

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## **NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY STRATEGY IN COMBATING THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA: THE BEST DEFENCE IS GOOD OFFENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The adversity of dealing with security and maintaining a peaceful environment is indeed a challenge for our country during this pandemic crisis. We are now being enmeshed in a tangle of circumstances that need decisive measures and drastic approaches taken to restore public confidence in the incumbent government. Rest assured that the country has experienced an undulating situation that succumbs to political, economic and societal perspectives. The paper entitled National Defence and Security Strategy in Combating the Post-Pandemic Era: The Best Defence is Good Defence aim is to discuss some of the major issues pertaining to the reality we are facing today. It is indeed timely pursued as we are now confronting the paradox of this never ending pandemic situation and how we should manage the situation appropriately. The paper is intended to cover the overall defence and security outlook that encompasses a wider spectrum of national structural mechanisms, the approaches undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) as well as the continuous effort to behold the current situations.*

**Keywords:** *Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Defence White Paper (DWP), Non-Traditional Security Threats, Self-Reliance, National Task Force (NTF)*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*“How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world”*  
- William Shakespeare

Malaysia's security stability is tied to an uncertain and ever-changing security environment in this region. As a result of the uncertainties at the regional and global levels, the international strategic landscape is becoming more complex and unpredictable. This development has the potential to undermine regional stability and global peace in the long run. Cognisant of this reality, Malaysia has published its first inaugural Defence White Paper (DWP) in December 2019 that represents the Government's firm commitment to Malaysia's defence, security and resilience to protect national interests, particularly to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### **DEFENCE WHITE PAPER (DWP) AND CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION (CIMIC)**

The DWP is a document that reflects the manifestation of the whole-government and whole-society commitment towards realising Malaysia's future destiny. It is developed based on the National Security Policy, Malaysia's main national security document. The DWP recognise the important roles played by the MINDEF and the MAF in leading the nation's defence as well as the participation of other stakeholders and the Malaysian people, in the national defence ecosystem.

Additionally, the Government is increasingly including the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities to support the Comprehensive Defence pillar. CIMIC activities represent the MAF's primary mechanism for synergy effort with civil agencies and the Malaysian citizen.

It is important that continuous participation are conducted by the Malaysian citizen together with MAF personnel in activities to raise the public's awareness of the importance of security and defence agenda. This includes grassroots programmes organised by civil society organisations, social groups, NGOs and individuals, to facilitate events with common values and serve the national interest. There are numerous CIMIC activities organised, which include engaging in coordinated events of vaccination activities for local citizens. Recently, an event organised by Joint Forces Headquarters with civil authorities in Sg Panching, Kuantan, Pahang received great responses and participation from the residents. The event involved 68 military personnel comprised of over 1836 civilians (1st dose) and 1794 civilians (2nd dose) which commenced for 6 days from 3rd August until 5th August and 24th until 26th August 2021.



**Figure 1: Malaysian Defence White Paper**

## **FORMULATION OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY INDUSTRY POLICY (NDSIP)**

In tandem with the DWP, the subsequent action plan that needs to be formulated is the implementation of the National Defence and Security Industry Policy (NDSIP). The first draft of the Policy is expected to be completed by end of 2021. The Policy encompasses a wide range of national strategic plans for defence and security purposes in the country.

The Defence and Security Industry (DSI) is the nation's strategic sector due to its nature of contribution to the country's well-being. The industry offers a significant spillover outcome in terms of employment opportunities and contributes to the regional economic development; and its influence on other industries through innovation perspectives. The National Defence and Security Industry as a strategic sector covers a wide range of activities ranging from research & technology, training & education, design & engineering, manufacturing, integration and servicing of military, security and enforcement materials, equipment and facilities across the automotive, aerospace, maritime, ICT, weaponry and other defence and security shared sectors. The effective and efficient use of technology underpins modern defence capabilities and enables operational advantages such as controlling airspace, providing real-time situational awareness and intelligence gathering.

As the industry evolves, the Government investment in defence technology ranges from buying "off-the-shelf" through providing manufacturing dimensions to building fundamental research and technology for indigenous capacity and capability. Dual-use products and services become more dominant in the market as it provides better supply chain management and increases industry sustainability. In the recent strategy workshop of formulating NDSIP, the emphasis of DSI examined 4 key areas which are:

- a. Human Capital Development - The policymakers are placing high importance to nurture and develop skills and talent to ensure sustainability incompetency and capability. It is also vital to absorb knowledge related to IR4.0. Hence, the smart collaboration concept is meant to produce a relevant and highly skilled workforce for the local industry. Preparing the future talent with the latest technology know-how will ensure the industry's readiness and sustainability.
- b. Industry Development – Industry development is very well covered by a majority of the policies and initiatives. This underlines the efforts by policymakers to build better current industry productivity, capacity and capability. Strong emphasis on empowering the SMEs to evolve into technological competent companies, with the emergence of Industry 4.0 and cross-sectoral activities complement the existing industries for greater conducive industry prospect.
- c. Technology Development – Partnership and cooperation between government, industry and research institutions are the basis for the development of research and technology to enhance local industrial capabilities and capacities. IR4.0 has become a future potential and value creation. In emerging industries, with pervasive applications such as the Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI), the dual-use application can be utilized widely.
- d. Self-Reliance and Global Market Penetration – Self Reliance and global market penetration are less approached in this context. Hence, these two driving forces can only be achieved when human capital, technology and industry are optimally developed. MITI and MINDEF are the two ministries supporting the initiatives to penetrate the global market in the commercial and defence sectors. The expansion of these capabilities involved the integration of 4 sectors namely: aerospace, maritime, automotive and, information and communication technology.



**Figure 2: Announcement of Prime Minister about the NDSIP to be launched soon during visit in Indonesia.**

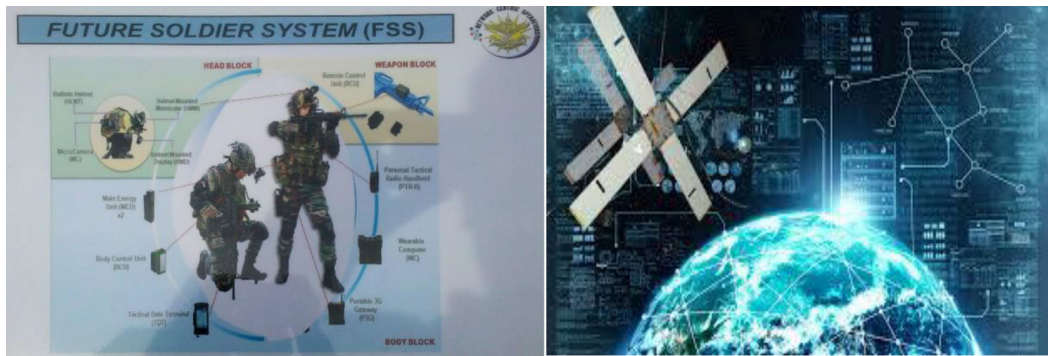
## **EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN DEFENCE AND SECURITY**

Amidst this COVID-19 period witnessed how information and communication technologies (ICTs) become increasingly entangled into the fabric of our daily work and lives. The increase in personal, business and government data transactions through the internet and between devices have inadvertently exposed users to the risk of cyber threats. Ever since the pandemic outbreak, the world has undergone more accelerated and dynamic digital transformation, pushing people, businesses, and governments to adopt digitalisation in adapting to the new norms.

The emerging and disruptive technologies such as IoT, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Deep Learning, 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have exposed military operations to cyber threats. They may disrupt system functions, as well as modify and steal data. The country's cyber governance, led by the National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA), requires more investment, coordination, enforcement and an active response strategy across the board at the national, state, corporate and community levels.

In facing the uncertainties in the rapidly evolving digital era, the Government is determined to take effective measures to protect the country's Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) from cyberattacks. Malaysian defence planners are developing a coherent cyber doctrine in line with the Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy (MCSS) to enhance defence resilience and cyber security that requires among other things, putting in place the right management and operational governance mechanisms with cyber-savvy manpower and the right technology.

This implies the need to create a plan at the intersection between emerging technologies such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and harsh environmental conditions. In this new way of thinking, the environment, cybersecurity and critical infrastructure interact with social and human intelligence determinants. Cybersecurity needs to be reconceptualised from the green perspectives that link it to environmental considerations to ensuring sustainability regarding both environmental and human security issues as well as a healthy, stable global ecosystem.



**Figure 3: Future of Malaysian Armed Forces in Cyber Warfare**

The cyber domain is similarly becoming an increasingly more important space. The use of cyber capabilities enables both enemy nation-states and non-state actors to influence the hearts and minds of the people and the international community, to target physically hardened areas, and to hide their activities from the public eye. It enables hybrid warfare, further blurring the line between traditional and non-traditional security threats. Meanwhile, the development of artificial intelligence combined with the cyber domain will make the current inventory of weapons even more lethal, as exponentially increasing computing power will also lead to faster target acquisition and processing, thereby shortening the kill chain. As for the MINDEF and MAF standpoint, it is vital to keep abreast with the development of advanced technologies equipment. As mentioned by the MAF Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), General Tan Sri Affendi Buang, the cyber security and defence aspects of the MAF are monitored at all times to counter any threat that could disrupt the MAF defence communication network.

Appropriate actions and measures needed to be implemented by cyber system administrators as a measure to address any possible cyber-attacks by foreign elements that could disrupt the operation of the MAF and Defence Ministry's cyber system. In a recent statement by the MAF CDF, he stated that MAF always monitors and steps up its cyber security through its Defence Cyber and Electromagnetic Division (DCED) and the Cyber Defence Operations Centre (CDOC). DCED and CDOC not only strengthen the MAF's monitoring and defence communications network but also protect the country's strategic defence communications network.

Evidently, the accelerated growth in the use of digital technologies posts COVID-19, including the sudden shift from the conventional office environment to working from home has increased security risk and exposed us to various modus operandi of cyber-attacks, including through email, social media and mobile application platforms.

## NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS

Non-Traditional Security (NTS) issues involve non-state actors and trans-border crime with an asymmetric character, which have direct as well as indirect impacts on social, political, economic and environmental sectors. Terrorism is among the main NTS threats to Malaysia. Apart from terrorism, threats such as extremism, radicalism, hijacking, and cyber-attack as well as disease outbreak might disrupt internal stability. The enduring NTS threats that continuously affect Malaysia's interests are terrorism and extremism, cyber threats, maritime security threats, a proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNe) threats and natural disasters.

We are now in midst of the virus COVID-19 pandemic which is also clustered under non-traditional security threats. The nature of the crisis is unprecedented and beyond the short-term repeated health and economic shocks. Thus, the long-term effects on human capital, productivity and behaviour may be long-lasting. The COVID-19 crisis has massively accelerated some pre-existing trends, in particular digitalisation. Efforts to contain and reduce this pandemic outbreak from spreading are relentlessly undertaken by the government thus enforcing massive vaccines intakes to all citizens. The ultimate aim is to attain herd immunity by achieving 80% of the population to be vaccinated which is achievable.

Substantial efforts and policy responses need to be implemented to help mitigate the impact of the crisis domestically and in the region. Pertinent agencies, government sectors, private sectors, NGO's and all citizens are responsible for critical aspects of containment measures, health care, social services, economic development, political issues and public investment, putting them at the frontline of this crisis management. As such responsibilities are shared among all levels of government, and strategic coordinated effort is critical to ensure success in combating this threat.

In recent event, an international joint exercise between the Malaysian Army, Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department and other pertinent agencies collaborate in the final Operation Mantis 8/2022 that involved CBRNe exercises in Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Station, Cheras on 19 March 2022 to evaluate the emergency plan action undertaken if we are struck by unforeseen circumstances such as bio-terrorism threats.



**Figure 4: Joint Exercises between MAF and other agencies in Op Mantis**

Adversely, the threat of terrorism remains an unprecedented issue. The threat of terrorism and violent extremism may also be diverse in this tough period of pandemic crisis. The Counterterrorism Branch in Bukit Aman recently, mentioned that COVID-19 has significantly reduced the terrorism threat particularly the ISIS threat in Malaysia, but nevertheless, we should not repudiate the dynamic threat of the terrorists' network from various techniques. The threat of terrorism and any related virus threat mechanism may indulge different and changing methods of the terrorist network modus operandi operation. It gives a pathway for encroaching potentials risks and vulnerable targets in exploiting divisions.

From recent study shows that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the spread of violent extremism and terrorism has increased. Due to physical restrictions, there has been a shift in tactics used by violent extremists to spread their ideologies and conduct their activities. For

instance, violent extremist organisations are now more reliant on technology, using digitalization propaganda and social media to spread their ideologies. While using technology and increasing access to knowledge, may also promote radicalization and indoctrination through digital media. Its low cost, dynamic, globally connected, and decentralised networks facilitate online radicalization. Additionally, the emergence of technology has created pathways for diverse ideologies to take root. Social media, for example, serves as a tool for jihadi recruitment. From our interviews with local law enforcement agencies, Malaysia is also experiencing similar trends.

Another concern is that COVID-19 may also lead to a resurgence in interest among terrorists for using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. Historically, a range of terrorist movements has been interested in bioterrorism though there have been very few successful attacks by terrorists using biological weapons. While serious obstacles certainly remain, the huge impact of COVID-19 may re-ignite some interest in biological weapons. In less than a year, the COVID-19 crisis has fundamentally altered the global geopolitical, socio-economic and conflict landscape. Accordingly, the pandemic has had a profound impact on trends in international terrorism, whose long-term effects are only slowly becoming evident.

### NATIONAL TASK FORCE (NTF)

NTF was established on May 6, 2020, aiming to strengthen the country's border control from the entry of illegal immigrants to curb COVID-19. This operation is implemented by mobilising integrated forces to control the land, maritime and air, through the 6D method, namely Deter, Detect, Deny, Detour, Detain and Deportation. MAF was appointed as the lead agency in the NTF along with the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and 15 other enforcement agencies including the Health Ministry (MOH).



Figure 5: National Task Force Composition

Eventually, the NTF has made a significant breakthrough with the involvement of the security forces together with other 19 enforcement agencies and MOH through the implementation of Operation Benteng. This major operation is deemed to be an extraordinary mission entrusted by the national leadership. Interestingly, these 19 agencies are a mixture of uniformed forces, non-uniformed government agencies and pertinent departments.

With all the collaboration effort in this operation, NTF succeeded in tightening land and sea border controls and facilitated the work process of each agency. This relates that most aggression activities are interconnected with other cross-border crimes. Besides that, NTF also coordinates the sharing of intelligence information between the agencies involved through the Combined Intelligence Working Group and coordinates the logistics procurement of the agencies.

Currently, Operation Benteng has recorded 12,662 multiple cases of offences committed until 16 March 2022. The statistic breakdown of the crimes are as follows:

a.	Detainment	:	6,714 cases
b.	Seizure	:	2,462 cases
c.	Deportation	:	718 cases
d.	Observation	:	2,724 cases
e.	Sea Crime	:	4 cases

The integration of the land, sea and air components under the NTF also succeeded in enhancing cooperation in terms of information sharing from the tracking system and strengthening the communication system network. This synergy operation and the relevancy of NTF certainly reflects three main messages in the DWP: avoid taking national security and defence lightly, emphasize the mobilisation of the entire government and society (the whole of government and whole of society), and also the credible partnerships for national security both from internal and external of the country. Thus, NTF success can be used as a cornerstone and benchmark for further cooperation to be explored and implemented by the government, private sectors, NGO's and other agencies across other fields to benefit the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

The consequences of the reality we are facing are certainly apparent and requires strategic coordination and cooperation as clearly stated in the DWP. Amid the pandemic situation nowadays, we need to gear up, anticipate and make necessary amendments to our present planning procedures based on the current circumstances. The need to maximise and synergize our effort from all agencies requires firm dedication and commitment from all walks of life. Ultimately, the DWP represent the aspiration and way forward for the government to shape the nation for the next 10 years. It is a culmination of our determination, perseverance and willpower to ensure the survivability and sustainability of the country. We must also reaffirm our pride, dignity, and resilience to nurture the country and prevail in years to come. The sensible outcomes of the DWP are to ensure the government of Malaysia's commitment to pursue the three pillars of strategy, namely concentric deterrence, comprehensive defence and credible partnerships in line with the vision of Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation. As mentioned by the Prime Minister, that pledge to serve the best for the nation will uphold three principles namely to be sensitive to people's needs, responsible and honest to restore the confidence of the people.

*"No matter how much falls on us, we keep ploughing ahead, That's the only way to keep the roads clear"*

- Greg Kincaid

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### **ABSTRACT**

*As per today, China's economic and political relations are experiencing active growth with countries all over the world. This relation is to support China's vast economic growth and to sustain its established relationship with the Southeast Asia (SEA) countries. It is begun with an opening up of the Chinese economy in 1978 which was a watershed event in recent Chinese history, from the iron curtain policy, rejecting any western influence and trade. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had decided to open up certain sectors of the economy in order to pursue economic growth. The most significant outcome of this action has been the changed in Chinese society. The most prominent change has been in the sphere of economics. The traditional economics in Chinese culture that was determined by its authoritarian rulers underwent basic structural changes. This effect sped up China's quest for trade to support the resulting dynamic growth. The importance of the relationship is that it contributes to the harmony and stability in the Southeast Asia region. China managed its disputes over the South China Sea with other Southeast Asia countries diplomatically, rather than by show of force. After the Cold War ended, China became an economic and military giant particularly in the Asian region. China was able to extend her trade relations with Southeast Asia to Central Asia and as far as Africa. Such a development was not well accepted especially by United States of America (USA) and her allies. Therefore, this thesis also focusses on China's economic and military rise and Southeast Asia countries views as one of its trading partners. China is also the main exporter and importer of finished and unfinished good from the Asia Pacific region.*

**Keywords:** *Emergence, Engagement, Superpower, Long-Term Policy, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Trade Triangles, Conflict,*

### **INTRODUCTION**

China's economic rise is transforming its political and economic relationships with the rest of the world, especially Southeast Asia. The relationship between Southeast Asian countries and China is changing dramatically. Does China's contradictory in territorial dispute over South China Sea (SCS), just like its previous support for communist insurgencies, being a threat to Southeast Asian countries? China has shifted its focus away from territorial disputes and toward trade connections with Southeast Asia, which are seen as a springboard for stronger security and political ties. In November 2004, ASEAN and also China did agree for gradually lower tariffs and build a Free Trade Zone by year 2010. The ASEAN is including Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, and Singapore. Do the Southeast Asia countries especially Malaysia become prosperity by these trade relations?

Many observers believe the relationship has evolved from one of fear and dread, fuelled by ideology and mostly focused on continual territorial struggles, to one of rising collaboration and cooperation especially in area of trade. What are the motivations behind China's adoption of market-led economic development, which has led to more multilateral and collaborative practises in the region in the past? China's rising diplomacy with Southeast Asian countries could be viewed

as a positive outcome of the country's efforts to stimulate economic growth for the benefit of its citizens, or as part of a more aggressive foreign policy. Is Southeast Asia worried about how China would use its growing economic and military power as a result of country's rise? China is Asia's dominating regional power and one of the world's developing big powers militarily. Is it likely that the rise of a new major power on world stage would disturb the existing power balance, potentially leading to conflict? Some recent evidence suggests that China is attempting to broaden its political and economic dominance in Southeast Asia to include security.

## **SOUTHEAST ASIA-CHINA RELATIONS: TRENDS, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

Kensuke (2010) highlighted that China's resurgence came unusually swiftly attributable to a great part to prompt macroeconomic policy measures towards the financial crisis around Asia began in 2007. The relationship which were built between Southeast Asia nations and China through that time, caused most of Southeast Asian countries had begun the shift from recession to recovery. Some export-dependent Southeast Asian nations moved their export location to China to profit from its early recovery. Benjamin (2013) argued that one probable reason concerning Asia's different geography of democracy would be that a country's location notably its proximity to China. In contrast to China's more minimal effect over the remote and inaccessible island domains of the Philippines and Indonesian archipelagos, the deep historical significance of China's tributary interconnection with the nations along its southern border may provide a pathway to understanding Southeast Asia's trend of maritime democratic countries and mainland autocracies.

According to Stromseth (2019), Southeast Asian countries demonstrate that they are sovereign states with the ability to hinder or exploit China's actions. He stressed that China has had an impact on Southeast Asian countries' geopolitical concerns as well as possible economic gains. Threat perceptions, geographic proximity, economic stability, cultural history and other factors will all influence how they react to China's rise. Shen (2012) stated that in handling difficult bilateral cooperation with every each member, China has prioritised for the growth of its relations with the ASEAN and the growing tensions out over South China Sea have harmed China's ties with ASEAN. Glaser (2012) explained that China's relations with its neighbouring countries are been complicated by the close engagement with extra-regional countries such as United States. The China and its neighbours obviously share a desire for good neighbourly relations and collaboration in order to establish a peaceful and friendly relationship but if all these relationships are mismanaged, everyone will get loses.

## **CHANGING DIMENSIONS**

This research will look at how the geo-economics situation in Southeast Asia is changing. It's specifically about high visibility and China's ascent, as well as the ramifications for the US, security interests and economics in Southeast Asia. Due to the China's influence that rises in the region, Japan and the United States remain vital economic partners and security partners for Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN has also built hub and spoke systems for many ASEAN links, in which both the US and China play major roles in a regional power allocation that can benefit the US, China and Southeast Asian countries. The ASEAN-US Enhanced Partnership will function as a counterbalance to China's rise. To be successful, the partnership will require a shift away from economic linkages and toward the creation of functional links that will foster larger multilateral political interdependencies in the region.

## ASEAN-CHINA TRADE INTERDEPENDENCE

Southeast Asia has long been a critical component of China's security environment. It holds some ASEAN member states in great respect for their potential contribution to China's multipolar policy. Southeast Asian countries seem to recognise China's legitimate influence in the region however they are afraid that China's aspirations for becoming an Asia Pacific military superpower may come at the expense of its weaker and smaller neighbours. In order to established regional cooperation and bilateral organisations, ASEAN-China relations have strengthened significantly since 1993. It was crucial that in 1995, a significant political security consulting forum was established. As part of regular state relations, tensions over bilateral issues such as disputed territories and Chinese descent treatment are likely to develop on a regular basis (Aileen 1999).

Economic ties involving China and Southeast Asian countries remain crucial at the moment, although they are not critical from either side's perspective. Overall, trade and economic ties between China and Southeast Asia countries have greatly improved. China and ASEAN were not too dependent on one other in terms of overall trade and investment, but merely in terms of fraction of total business and finance, according to the records. Rather than focusing solely on economic gain, China's economic cooperation with ASEAN is built on mutually beneficial economic interrelations as well as similar political and geopolitical aims. Excellent regional economic ties can help establish a solid framework for political interactions, while good political ties have been shown to greatly boost economic exchanges. Southeast Asian countries and China must strive more to create mutual trust in view of East Asia's growing convergence in economic goals and political security. Most importantly, it must begin establishing the idea that will guide its political and economic stability as in twenty-first century, when China strives to be the total power it desires (Aileen 1999).

China has made neighbourhood diplomacy a priority, resulting in the formation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Despite China's proximity to other nations, Southeast Asia is an important part of the BRI. Although both planned routes pass through, this is China's favoured zone for the building of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The China-Indochina Corridor for International Economic Cooperation is one of the six key Silk Road Economic Belt lines to be built at the same time. Each Southeast Asian country's policy must be designed uniquely by China. Southeast Asia and China already have close links, with Southeast Asia being China's third-largest trading partner. Because of the enhanced ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, ASEAN may soon overtake the EU as China's most important trading partner (Xue Li 2017).

All ASEAN countries have different perspectives on China and have different approaches to it. Thailand does not see China as a danger to its security. Despite the fact that China's damming of the Mekong has harmed Thailand's agriculture and that Thailand has a negative annual trade deficit with China, Thailand's military and royalist elites regard China as a friend of Thai dictatorship. Thailand is eager to enlist China's help in getting 5G technology and AI support to improve its surveillance capabilities. To be sure, through to the Lower Mekong Initiative, the US also backs Thailand's leadership with in Mekong region. Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), which would be a collaboration of the five lower Mekong countries for coordinating infrastructure development, counts the United States as a development partner. These are aspects of a long-term relationship that neither party wants to end. The United States' relationship with the Philippines, which has historically been a loyal ally of the United States, is in flux. While government ministers and the general public in the Philippines are concerned about China's expansionist actions in the SCS at the cost of the Philippines' territorial

claims, President Rodrigo Duterte is keen to move the country closer to China. He terminated a crucial military engagement with the US, which is Visiting Forces Agreement in early 2020, which was as a backbone of the both countries' relationship. Even though that termination been postponed, the termination has showed that Duterte's determination to strengthen not only economic but also the security ties between both countries. Indonesia, which has strategic alliances with both the United States and China, has grown closer to China. This was particularly true within the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when China contributed financial and health-related assistance to Indonesia. At the same time, commerce between the United States and Indonesia has been stable in recent years, hovering around the USD 30-billion mark. China is Indonesia's second-largest source of FDI. However, tensions as in South China Sea persist. Chinese vessels have been discovered trespassing in Indonesian waters, as have Chinese coast guard ships and fishing boats. Despite these instances, Indonesia is getting closer to China and, in the name of autonomous foreign policy, has refused the US facilities for landing maritime surveillance aircraft onto Indonesian soil. As previously stated, Indonesia is concerned about the potential impact of the US-China rivalry on regional stability and ASEAN unity. Indonesia's chosen strategy may be to balance the US and China with in ASEAN area in the sake of dynamic equilibrium (Chatterji 2021).

Despite of ideology and regime similarities, Vietnam and China have a long and tangled history marked by antagonism and fundamental contrasts. It fought the war against China in 1979 and continues to have maritime issues with them. Disputes over the Spratly as well as Paracel islands had also proven tough, and both countries have a strong stake in the South China Sea. To handle its relations with the large neighbour, Vietnam must use diplomatic skill and, to the extent that it can, rely on the brotherly and comradely relationships between the Chinese and Vietnamese communist parties. It has attempted to compartmentalise the maritime conflict in order to establish cooperative relationships on other fronts, such as the economy and infrastructure. To keep China at bay, Vietnam has increased its ties with the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. In Vietnam, US under Trump was more popular than other countries in the region. While Vietnam is dedicated to defending its territorial integrity rights, this is still looking for diplomatic solutions to control China's great might and assertiveness. Cambodia has been one of the ASEAN countries with the closest ties to China, and it is frequently accused of pandering to Beijing. It has strong economic, military, educational, and cultural ties with China. It is well-versed in BRI initiatives. It regards its debt to China as manageable, and the South China Sea matter is downplayed in ASEAN meetings. Despite the fact that it claims to be a neutral and non-aligned country, China's influence is so overwhelming that it not only causes tensions with the US, but also animosity of the Chinese in Cambodia. Cambodia, in many respects, embodies the challenges of a small, insecure country with an authoritarian leadership that requires the support of a major power to live. During the China-Vietnam war towards the end of the 1970s, Laos, which has a long history of strong friendship with Vietnam, found itself in a tough situation. Laos began restoring its relations with China in the early 1990s, and those efforts have now paid off in terms of economic and infrastructure development. In Laos, BRI projects are rapidly advancing, and the two countries are dedicated to forming a community with a shared destiny. Laos is one of the countries in the region that has received the most Chinese loans. Laos also downplays the ASEAN-wide disagreement over the South China Sea (Chatterji 2021).

In trade relations, assistance and investment, and infrastructure, China has a substantial presence in Myanmar, with the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor as a BRI project. Ports, railways, and hydropower projects all have a strong Chinese presence. Beside of a succession of Myanmar's rulers, Myanmar did maintain a profound fear of China. At the same time, it also has a tense relationship with the United States due to human rights violations by its military leadership. Following the partial restoration of democracy in the 2010s, some sanctions were eased, but

they are now being re-examined in light of ongoing human rights violations in Myanmar's low-grade civil war with ethnic armed groups in various parts of the country, as well as 'war crimes' committed by its security forces against Rohingya minorities. Myanmar's ability to approach the US as a counter-balance to China is severely limited as a result of this. Brunei's relationship with China is less tense than that of the other ASEAN nations. Brunei receives Chinese investment in oil refineries, infrastructure, aquaculture and telecommunications, among other areas. Brunei also a participant of the AIIB. Most significantly, Brunei seems to be an only ASEAN nation to have built an agreement with China about how to resolve the SCS disputes between the two countries. Singapore, more than any other Southeast Asian country, seeks to bridge the gap between the US and China. The US is a permanent power with significant interests in the region for Singapore, whereas China is a certainty on the horizon. Singapore does not wish to choose positions between the US and China, according to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. He is enraged by the United States' exit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and he wishes for bipartisan agreement in the United States on China policy. Singapore, as a BRI participant and a country with significant interests in China, needs stability in US-China ties above all. While it is concerned about its security as a small country, it also wants to maintain its reputation as a regional independent voice, even counselling Beijing as to how to gain greater legitimacy through producing additional public goods abroad (Chatterji 2021).

In terms of trade, China and ASEAN countries should work to diversify trade markets, improve trade product structure, and minimise strong competition among low-level comparable items. Because China's trade share with Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Brunei is currently low, the potential for trade between the two nations should be explored. China should endeavour to establish trade balance and adequately boost the amount of imports from Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar while increasing trade with major ASEAN members. On bilateral economic and commercial exchanges, the amount of exports to Malaysia and Thailand is forming a virtuous circle. China should also strengthen the form of its ASEAN exports, increase the share of high-value-added products exported, and boost export product competitiveness with in ASEAN market. While China's investment in ASEAN countries seems to have a lot of space for growth, the structure is unbalanced, with most investments in the secondary sector and relatively few in the primary and tertiary sectors. As a result, Chinese companies can increase their investment in ASEAN countries and actively adjust their investment structure, gradually shifting away from the traditional model of solely exporting "Made in China" in the past and implementing the dual export model of "capital + production capacity," as well as actively leveraging the leading role of railways, power, and other beneficial industries to restructure the East Asia regional value chain (Shi Hong 2021).

China's global value chain (GVC) linkages with ASEAN are less dominant and more advantageous than they appear at first glance, although ASEAN faces significant obstacles. ASEAN's ties with China are extremely beneficial, and ASEAN's GVC ties with other countries have been strengthened rather than damaged. The most important counterpoint to a pessimistic view of ASEAN GVC ties with China is that backward relations with China promote ASEAN growth. However, ASEAN's backward links are not evenly distributed. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam are working to establish a manufacturing base with strong backward ties. Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, and Myanmar are still reliant on natural resource operations, and their backward links are weak. As a result, policy settings will have to vary by country. Nonetheless, all ASEAN states will face three shared GVC challenges: an increase in the importance of inwards investment compared to trade, a greater focus on domestic consumption in dynamic partner economies, and the continued vulnerability of GVC to disruption. All of these problems will be centred on China. Between 2010 and 2018, China's FDI in Southeast Asia increased fourfold.

Given the concerns about sovereignty raised by inbound FDI, this move will necessitate a shift in China's predisposition to minimise the autonomous capacity of expanding neighbours (Heydon 2021).

China's rapid economic expansion has posed a significant challenge to other countries, particularly its East Asian neighbours, whose export arrangements are comparable to those of the mainland. The success of economies in the face of new competition will be determined in great part by how well governments manage the internal adjustment process. This will entail spending on improving local skills and infrastructure, as well as governance frameworks and institutional performance. Southeast Asian economies play a bigger role in the new trade triangles that have arisen because of China's growing industrialisation. Although exports of finished goods to extra-regional markets have decreased, Southeast Asian countries are profiting from China's emerging role as a global assembly plant and its demand for components. Rather than a reduction in Southeast Asian countries' exports of manufactured goods to China, exports of mostly components have surged significantly since China's WTO entry. Southeast Asian countries' exports to China are far more diverse than they were a decade ago, forming a new division of labour (Ravenhill 2006).

China is Southeast Asia's most important export market; its share is roughly equal to that of other top three destinations, the United States, the European Union, and Japan. China, on the other hand, is SEA's most important import partner. Imports from China to the Southeast Asian area comprise not only consumer items, but also, to a greater extent, intermediary commodities for the regional manufacturing network. Vietnam is China's biggest trading partner in Southeast Asia, accounting for 24% of total regional trade. Given that Singapore, China's second-largest trading partner, serves as a regional transshipment and re-export hub, Vietnam will be much more important to China's SEA trade than what it appears. Despite the fact that China is SEA's most significant export market, China's percentage of overall trade varies greatly from nation to country. It's also worth noting that China's percentage of overall commerce has been relatively consistent in recent years for most of the region's countries. Because it fails to take into account for the significance of export industries to the country's economy, a simple method of China's share of total exports may be misleading. As a result, an additional indicator of export publicity can be calculated by formalising export reliance on a specific country by its export-to-GDP proportion. With the exception of Singapore, this significantly reduces China's share in most countries. Further tendencies emerge from a more extensive assessment of SEA's trade between China by stage of production. More than half of SEA's exports and imports to China are made up of intermediate goods. Semi-finished goods have increased in both SEA export markets to and imported goods from China among intermediate goods (Yoon 2017).

Agriculture is a significant sector for bilateral economic ties, notably in the context of Southeast Asian agricultural exports to China, despite its tiny percentage of total trade. Agriculture is a crucial industry for the most Southeast Asian countries, accounting for a big portion of employment and having significant political clout. With increased food demand, China's food imports from Southeast Asia and investments in the region's agricultural industry are projected to rise. For the nations in the area, this presents both commercial possibilities and problems from unknown external sources. Vietnam and Thailand are indeed the top agricultural and food exporters to China, accounted for more than half of all exports from the area. Malaysia and Indonesia are the next two countries on the list, however their biggest exports are palm oil as well as associated items. Manufacturing, retail, and finance are key industries, according to the sectoral distribution of Chinese FDI in Southeast Asia. This information, however, should be scrutinised with caution. Commercial services related to offshore financial centres like Singapore, where second-stage investments are widespread, tend to be the largest industry. It should also be mentioned that the

sectoral distribution computed using data as from Chinese Ministry of Commerce differs from that derived using ASEAN Database data. China's industrial investment is small in comparison to other SEA investor nations, but it still accounts for a significantly bigger proportion of its regional investment than China's investment in Africa and Latin America, which is mostly focused on natural resources and construction. Chinese manufacturing enterprises are shifting to or growing in Southeast Asia as labour prices rise and competition in local markets heats up. These SEZs are well-represented by Chinese private enterprises, particularly in the textile and footwear sectors, and might pave the way for the next phase of China's economic involvement with Southeast Asia, with China-led regional production networks (Yoon 2017).

In Southeast Asia, China's mergers and acquisitions are largely focused in three countries: Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. The most apparent aspect of China's growing economic impact in Southeast Asia is infrastructure development. Poor infrastructure is the main impediment to the region's quick and sustained economic growth. China's infrastructure development project gives the fight against this problem a fresh and unparalleled impetus. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China is pursuing large-scale development projects in transportation and energy infrastructure, as well as building special economic zones around the area. However, China's infrastructure expenditures in Southeast Asia are fraught with dangers. It's worth remembering that the region's infrastructure gaps are still wide due to the region's bad business climate, which has forced private investors, both local and foreign, wary of hazardous investments. China's challenge is to see if it can overcome these challenges. It's worth noting that Myanmar is the only nation in the region wherein China's building activity have dropped dramatically since a civilian administration took control in 2011. Myanmar's China policy has changed dramatically since then (Yoon 2017).

The next stage of China's relationship with Southeast Asia would be determined by its manufacturing investments. The degree to which China, particularly its private enterprises, invests in Southeast Asia's manufacturing sector will have a significant influence on the region's growth. China's investment in Southeast Asia's manufacturing sector is small in comparison to other investor nations, but it is growing. Despite the fact that China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and policy financial institutions are attracting international attention with their enormous infrastructure projects and substantial loans, Chinese private firms may play a larger role in altering regional economic ties. China used to be primarily a processing centre in the global value chain, but it is now increasingly serving as a provider of production factors for assembly processes in other developing countries. It may also be on the verge of developing its own production chains, maybe with Chinese lead companies. External partners must be proactive and constructive in their responses to Southeast Asia's shifting economic landscape. China's increased involvement in Southeast Asia may put pressure on other foreign enterprises and development partners, but it may also open up new markets and improve infrastructure for everyone. External partners must also pay more attention to employment and environmental practices compliance in their FDI and infrastructural development in the area, learning from some of the negative reactions to China's investments. Finally, as recent security and economic events have clearly demonstrated, foreign partners and Southeast Asia have shared interests in diversifying regional economic links away from over-dependence on China (Yoon 2017).

In response to former President Trump's trade policies, China moved to other countries, especially Southeast Asia to enhance economic engagement, especially during the first year of COVID-19 outbreak. ASEAN has eclipsed the United States as China's second biggest trade partner. ASEAN-China trade increased by 6% year on year to US\$140 billion in the first quarter of 2020, accounting for 15% of China's overall trade volume. China's purchases from Vietnam and Indonesia climbed by 24% and 13%, respectively, year on year. With Trump's denial of

Obama's "Pivot to Asia" philosophy, as well as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Southeast Asian countries have been left to strengthen their relations with China. With the conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, ASEAN's trade interconnection with China, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand will expand (RCEP). With a population of 3.8 billion people and one-third of global GDP, the RCEP is projected to be the world's largest free trade agreement. Agriculture and tourism are two further areas in which China seeks to strengthen its connections with Southeast Asian countries. China expects the ASEAN industrial sector to profit much more from China's post-COVID 19 readjustment of consumer spending, which will result in greater in-depth collaboration. China is also considered taking the lead in ASEAN's digital connectivity development. Alibaba and Huawei are aiding ASEAN member states in increasing online commerce and artificial intelligence (AI). China's Digital Silk Road aims to serve as a backbone for most of Central and Southeast Asia's digital infrastructure (Chatterji 2021).

## **CHINA PROMOTING PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION THROUGH TRADE RELATION**

According to international relations experts, China poses the greatest threat to ASEAN. China's economic and military capabilities are much superior to all of Southeast Asia's resources. According to some commentators, Southeast Asian countries can only join China's bandwagon or balance against this. Both of these studies appear to be unpleasant to the region's security situation. If a SEA region nation decides to join China's bandwagon, it will signal acceptance of China's hegemonic control over regional institutions. In pursuit of economic growth, keen to encourage industrial trade development and tourism, Southeast Asian countries have a generally beneficial relationship with China. The Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, signed by Southeast Asian governments and China at their summit in Bali on October 7-8, builds on China's progress since 1997 in establishing itself as an insider in ASEAN councils and portraying itself as a benevolent regional partner who shares the values and goals of the ten ASEAN states. It is China's first established "strategic cooperation" with a regional body, as well as a first for ASEAN, according to Chinese authorities (Putra, Andika, Darwis and Burhanuddin 2019).

Individual SEA region states' relationships with China can be divided into four categories. The first is a game in which there is a lot of cooperation and competition. The second is a complimentary type characterised by great cooperation and low competition. The third category is the flight type, which is characterised by a lack of cooperation and a high level of rivalry. A loose relationship is the fourth category and it is characterised by poor collaboration and low competition. The Belt and Road Initiative, on the other hand, plainly highlights China's impact on individual ASEAN member states. Given the volume of two-way commerce between Southeast Asian and China, the current economic interdependence is extremely worrying. With the advent of the programme, economic interdependence would reach a point where China's global economic dominance will dictate investments and commerce. The BRI's reach encompasses significant and strategically important chokepoints in Europe, Africa and Asia (Putra, Andika, Darwis and Burhanuddin 2019).

In 2013, Xi Jinping announced a set of policies targeted at reorganising the economies of Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan revealed its Silk Road Economic Belt in September 2013, a plan to connect China and Europe by road, with routes connecting key countries. A month later, in Indonesia, Xi Jinping unveiled 21st Century Marine Silk Road, a marine development initiative aiming at ports in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, East Africa and the Mediterranean. The BRI is comprised of those two Silk Road initiatives. China's most important economic and

diplomatic policy in dealing with its neighbours and beyond has been in place since 2013. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has drawn over \$1 trillion in investment, which will continue to have an impact on China's foreign relations. Despite the fact that the BRI is China-driven strategy, unlike other national strategies in China's internal political economy, its operations and effectiveness are heavily reliant on the engagement and response of nations that are not part of the BRI (Liu and Lim 2019).

Greenfield investment accounted for the majority of FDI inflows into China during the first era. From the standpoint of international investors, there are two fundamental motivations for inbound FDI to China: market finding and efficiency-seeking incentives. China has large and growing local goods produced by international enterprises as the world's most populous country with rapid expansion and rising affluence. Furthermore, China's enormous labour supply and low salaries attract companies that outsource labour-intensive manufacturing operations. Large investments in China tend to prioritise domestic demand above foreign markets. In terms of sectoral allocation, manufacturing has received the majority of FDI inflows to China. FDI inflows from those other Asian economies also come from Singapore, Taiwan, and Korea, in addition to Japan, Hong Kong, and Macau. In comparison to total FDI inflows into China, FDI via Southeast Asia has been very minor. FDI from growing Southeast Asian nations has certain distinct features when compared to FDI from industrialised western economies. First, these developing economies have production technology expertise that complements China's development strategy. They also specialise in export-oriented manufacture. In reality, while western corporations generate more overall sales, Asian enterprises investing in China generate greater output for export markets. They also have expertise in areas that neither Chinese nor western companies have historically specialised in, such as agricultural or hotel services (Krislert 2011).

This trend may be seen in investments by Thailand's Charoen Pokphand (CP) company in feed mills, farming, and food processing manufacturers, as well as investment by Shangri-La hotels throughout China, led by Malaysian business mogul Robert Kuok. Second, throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, financial liberalisation in growing Southeast Asian nations permitted Southeast Asian businesses to invest abroad. The physical proximity of China, as well as its cheap labour and big domestic market, make it an appealing target for Southeast Asian investment. Third, offshore Chinese enterprises have dominated corporate sectors in these Southeast Asian nations, which usually have ties to families of their ancestors in Mainland China. These ties were advantageous for foreign Chinese enterprises in Southeast Asia considering investing in China, at least in the beginning. Finally, since Deng Xiaoping's "Southern Tour" to Southeast Asia in 1992, trade relationships between ASEAN and China has been fostered and supported, including foreign investment. Singapore has also been considered as a growth model by China, as it combines open markets with such a strong government. Although their influence to the fast-growing economies of Southeast Asia is questionable, the abroad Chinese have unquestionably controlled the region's corporate sector. Given the proportion of individuals of Chinese ancestry in the area, this is a perplexing phenomenon (Krislert 2011).

Globalisation has had significant repercussions for offshore Chinese firms in Southeast Asia during the last few decades. The huge overseas Chinese corporate giants not only expanded their home operations, but they were also progressively investing in international nations. The opening of China's economy to the rest of the world, along with their competitive advantage in conducting business in China, has resulted in increased investment and collaboration between Southeast Asian and Mainland Chinese enterprises. Initially, investments from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, and Southeast Asia was concentrated on the Pearl River delta's small and medium-sized businesses. This money was mostly spent on consumer goods for both domestic and international

markets. There were few outliers, such as when the Thai Charoen Pokphand firm embarked in a big agriculture joint venture in Shenzhen's special economic zone in 1979 (Krislert 2011).

The Malaysian Shangri-La hotel group established its first hotel outside of Southeast Asia in Hangzhou in 1984. Southeast Asian investments in China have recently expanded to include consumer goods, autos, minerals, telecommunications, retail, and wholesale commerce. The private sector and government-linked firms have contributed the majority of FDI through Southeast Asia to China. Corporate sector capitalists are mostly offshore Chinese business giants, who are the main corporate actors in most regions of Southeast Asia and have cultural linkages to Mainland China. Many of the investments made by Southeast Asian companies are in joint ventures with multinational businesses from the West and Japan, Chinese local private companies, or Chinese state-owned enterprises. The Charoen Pokphand corporation (CP) from Thailand was one of the earliest foreign investors in China, and it remains the most powerful Thai investor in China to this day. CP began by focusing on agribusinesses, such as animal feeds, maize, vegetable oil, and cattle, as well as biotechnology, but it gradually moved to other industries (Krislert 2011).

Malaysian business tycoons have invested in China. Robert Kuok, Malaysia's richest man, is best recognised for his luxury hotel chain, Shangri-La. Shangri-La, like Charoen Pokphand of Thailand, was a pioneer in China, opening the first Shangri-La hotel in Hangzhou in 1984. The hotel was indeed the third Shangri-La to open, with the first two located in Singapore and Malaysia, respectively. Since then, the Shangri-La hotel and resort chain has expanded globally, with more than 270 locations worldwide, including more than 30 in China. Guoco Group, another Malaysian conglomerate, entered the real estate market in the late 1990s in a slow and quiet manner. GuocoLand, a subsidiary of both the Chinese-Malaysian Hong Leong Group, is the group's property investment arm. In Beijing, GuocoLand built its first commercial structure in 1998. The company has recently begun aggressive bidding for sites in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Nanjing. The company's recent strategy proved to have been to secure development contracts during the recession, betting on the economy's quick recovery. Lion (Parkson supermarket chain), Genting (hydrocarbon exploration), KKK (palm oil), IOI (palm oil), Rimbanan Hijau (logging), and MUI (mining) are some of the other Malaysian overseas Chinese conglomerates that have invested in China (retailing, hospitality) (Krislert 2011).

There are also a considerable number of smaller Malaysian-Chinese enterprises that concentrate their investments in the districts of Guangdong, Fujian, and other Chinese coastal districts. In addition to individual companies, public investors from Southeast Asia, such as Temasek Holdings and the Development Bank of Singapore, are investing in China. Similarly, Thailand's Siam Cement company fits under this category, despite the fact that it is owned and managed by the Crown Property Bureau rather than the Thai government. Investment from Southeast Asia's government-linked corporations in China has various advantages and drawbacks than investment from private equity firms. Many of these government-linked Southeast Asian corporations have experience with investment and operations in specialised industries because they are generally the market leader in their own nation. They do have a lot of money. Temasek Holdings is a good example of this. Temasek has evolved from such a conglomerate to a worldwide sovereign wealth fund thanks to the resources it has amassed over the years. Temasek is a special investor in China because of its Chineseness and also the tight relationship between both the Singaporean as well as Chinese governments. However, being controlled by other nations has drawbacks, since these government-linked enterprises might be viewed as a foreign government's investment arm, creating national security concerns in China (Krislert 2011).

A collaboration developed between these corporations and certain private overseas Chinese enterprises that brings synergy from both sides has been one of the answers to this negative reputation. For example, Temasek and Hong Leong Holdings (an overseas Chinese conglomerate based in Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong) participated in Beijing Riviera, a residential real estate development, in 1994. (another overseas Chinese business group based in Malaysia and Hong Kong). Furthermore, this discovery was achieved in collaboration with a Chinese partner, the Beijing East Suburb Agriculture Industry Commerce United Corporation. On the one hand, Hong Leong Group Singapore CEO Lingming Guo has extensive experience and competence in asset development, finance, and the hotel business. In addition, he has a large network of contacts in China. Temasek's involvement, on the other hand, provided openness and a professional image to the investment initiative, which helped to ameliorate the impression of poor corporate governance among Southeast Asian family businesses. The Beijing Riviera development is regarded as one of a Singapore consortium's early, largest, and most profitable ventures in China (Krislert 2011).

## **CHINA COMMITMENT TOWARDS PROSPERITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

The goal of the ACFTA agreement is to further the growth of ASEAN-China commercial and political relations. Objective circumstances suggest that there has been a great deal of economic alienation between ASEAN members and China. Even before the first phase of the ACFTA is implemented, businesses in Southeast Asia will certainly worry about a flow of cheaper agricultural and industrial items from China. China's ability to generate lower-cost manufactured goods for the global market is putting ASEAN's competitiveness to the test. There is no denying that ASEAN needs to strengthen its ties with China. A stronger relationship between the two parties would undoubtedly offer East Asia more wealth and stability. Economic cooperation between ASEAN and China is intended to enhance people's lives in both nations. To achieve this, it was decided to lower trade barriers, resulting in reduced-cost trading. It was also decided to boost intraregional commerce and investment, as well as promote economic efficiency. One way to get there is to gradually remove all tariff and non-tariff obstacles to trade in all commodities. The liberalisation of goods and services trade will gradually reach all major industries. According to article ACFTA 1(b) of the Framework Agreement, the purpose of these agreements is to not only strengthen and expand economic cooperation, trade, and investment, but also to gradually liberalise and promote trade in goods and services, as well as to create a transparent, liberal, and facilitative investment regime. Both parties must also exploit new sectors and adopt suitable measures to improve economic cooperation, according to Article 1(c) of the agreement. It is unquestionably an issue that must be examined on a long-term basis (Riswati and Warsito 2010).

When the PRC's Foreign Minister, H.E. Qian Qichen, did attend the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1991, a dialogue on ASEAN cooperation began. In 1996, ASEAN awarded China full Dialogue Partner status, and the ASEAN-China Expert Group was founded in 2000 to investigate bilateral economic relations. Beginning in 2004, a framework agreement made in 2002 formed an early harvest programme that reduced tariffs on 500 goods, mostly agricultural. This agreement laid the groundwork for the eventual ACFTA, which was composed of three separate contracts: The Agreement on Trade in Goods, the Agreement on Trade in Services, and the Agreement on Investment, all of which were signed in November 2004. The growing economic expansion of ASEAN and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) represent a huge opportunity for both ASEAN and China. ASEAN member states must hold the same view, viewing bilateral trade with China as a strategic opportunity to promote regional peace and stability. While many ASEAN members are sceptical of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the ACFTA is increasing economic interdependence, which is fuelling not only China's but also ASEAN's rise (Keller 2020).

After the United States, ASEAN is China's third-biggest import and export partner, whereas China is ASEAN's largest trading partner. The ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was China's first important partner, and the FTA is essential to the PRC's East Asia growth and the BRI. ASEAN has a strategic opening of ability to negotiate increased economic interdependence between China by capitalising on these accomplishments. Encouraged by the success of the ACFTA's first agreement, the Agreement on Trade in Goods, the ACFTA's second agreement, the Agreement on Trade in Services, started opening potential for FDI between ASEAN and China, which ASEAN needs to grow further while taking use of the PRC's BRI. China agreed to extend investment opening-up measures, such as enabling sole investors, lowering the foreign shareholding percentage, and providing national treatment to ASEAN investors, as part of the deal. The PRC's continuous growth of the BRI provides a great chance for ASEAN to benefit from these investments and increase economic connectivity, hence enhancing the possibility of SCS stability. As a consequence of the ACFTA's achievement, ASEAN and China initiated talks in 2015 to improve the existing FTA, allowing for more goods and services trade. ASEAN will achieve increased regional interdependence and, ultimately, a more stable SCS by continued economic development through multilateral agreements between China and other parts of the regional partners (Keller 2020). The table below (ref Table 1) shown that the success of the Agreement on Trade in Goods, the second agreement of ACFTA, the Agreement on Trade in Services, opened up opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) between ASEAN and China that ASEAN needs to expand further while taking advantage of the PRC's BRI. This agreement that took effect in 2007 secured significant commitments from China in the construction, environment, transportation, and commercial services sectors.

**Major Commitment in Services under CAFTA**

	China	Singapore	Malaysia	Thailand	Philippines	Brunei	Indonesia
Construction	V		V	V	V		V
Environment	V						
Transportation	V	V	V	V		V	
Sport	V	V					
Commercial services	V	V	V		V		
Financial services		V	V				
Entertainment		V					
Travel services			V	V	V	V	V
Energy services					V		V
Professional services							
Medical services		V		V			
Education services				V			

**Figure 1: Source Gregory (2020), p. 9.**

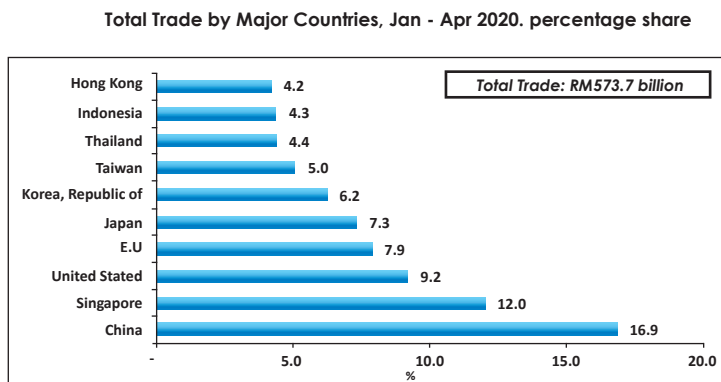
China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have a long history of trading connections. In the grand scheme of things, China and the ASEAN countries are becoming mutually beneficial. One of the most distinguishing features of this trading relationship is ASEAN's massive trade imbalance. In terms of trade, China-ASEAN trade has generally concentrated on items with high and medium technological content, demonstrating the expansion of manufacturing capabilities in both China and ASEAN nations. China's economic size has a significant impact on both the export and import sectors of commerce involving China and ASEAN countries. The similar language and shared border are also seen as favourable indicators for the two areas' commercial operations (except import sector). However, entering the BRI used to have a negative impact, showing that ASEAN nations may be concerned about China's strategic objectives under this project. For the both exports and imports with China and ASEAN nations, China's economic size has a favourable influence on the low technology subsector. Access to the BRI, on the other hand, is beneficial to China's low technical exports to ASEAN, demonstrating the BRI's limited effect in upgrading the China-ASEAN trade framework. The calculation of trade potential suggests

that trade between China and numerous ASEAN nations, notably Malaysia, Brunei, and Laos, still has capacity to grow. This means that if both parties want to progress, they must develop a new proactive strategy; else, they may be stuck in their current stalemate (Tran, Hoan, Nguyen, Truong and Dong 2020).

## MALAYSIA-CHINA TRADE RELATIONS

According to Chatterji (2021), despite the China's frequent presence in Malaysia's maritime EEZ, the country had avoided conflict. It has also strengthened its ties with China in economic matters. Although Tun Mahathir administration stated opposition to some BRI projects, all it did was revise some of the agreements. Malaysia's major source of the foreign investment is China and two countries have significant trading ties.

When Tun Abdul Razak, the Malaysia's second Prime Minister had made his historic visit to China in 1974, Malaysia had become the first ASEAN member to establish diplomatic relation with China. As a result, Malaysia-China diplomatic relations celebrate their 47th anniversary in 2021. Economic cooperation between countries has increased dramatically during the last four decades. While Tun Razak was accountable for normalising diplomatic relations between the two countries, Tun Mahathir was in charge of the economic relationship. Tun Mahathir strengthened political connections and promoted tourism industry between China and Malaysia. Dato' Seri Najib Razak whom Malaysia's sixth Prime Minister, had established 16 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with China in 2009. Malaysia's main trading relationship is China and Malaysia become China's third largest commercial partner in Southeast Asia region. Malaysia and China's bilateral trade has grown at a phenomenal rate. The presence of a substantial Malaysian-Chinese minority in Malaysia has already been critical in fostering Malaysia-China business cooperation. The Malaysia-China Business Council (MCBC) which became a non-profit organisation in April 2012 plays a crucial facilitative role. Malaysian and Chinese businesses in Malaysia can both benefit from the MCBC's information and consulting services. It is considered strategic by the Malaysian government (Kim 2016).

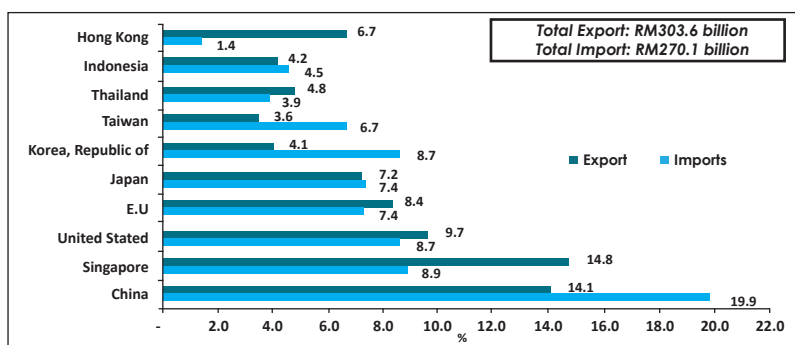


**Figure 2 Source Department of Statistic Malaysia (2021)**

Malaysia's economic growth is heavily reliant on international markets as a small and open economy. In this regard, the PRC is an important export marketplace for Malaysia. Because of China's rising demand in recent decades, Malaysia has been able to rapidly increase its exports of finished goods to this massive market. The general public still believes that bilateral trade between the two countries has plenty of room. Malaysia and China may be able to take advantage of trading opportunities, as both nations' political and socio-cultural linkages are thought to be beneficial

in encouraging bilateral collaboration in a variety of fields. With most ASEAN countries' trade balances with China recently weakening, additional export options for Malaysia have opened up. Wider economic collaboration is needed to improve and sustaining Malaysia's exports to China. It has the potential to be expanded to include science, education and technology. Malaysia might potentially diversify its export composition or specialise on high-quality commodities to boost its exports to China. Trade in goods that have not yet flooded the China market and that Malaysia can make to a high grade might be the way to go. Malaysian halal foods as well as the Chinese halal market, for example, constitute a possible trade sector. From frozen seafood, spices and several palm oil-based products to a cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, a number of Malaysian enterprises have begun exporting authorised halal items to China (Hong, Sun, Beg and Zhou 2020).

**Exports and Imports by Major Countries, Jan - Apr 2020, percentage share**



**Figure 3 Source Department of Statistic Malaysia (2021)**

The comprehensive diplomatic environment between nations has a substantial impact on economic flows. Diplomacy as an institution provides light on its function as a constituting framework of principles, rules and structured behaviour patterns in interstate interactions. The impact of bilateral political ties' cooperation and antagonism on trade flows is just as essential as economic variables like prices. Malaysia's government has created diplomatic ties with China, which might be used to improve the country's export infrastructure without jeopardising existing export markets. Malaysia benefits from this political link in terms of developing the Chinese market, which includes its Chinese Muslim market. The Malaysian government can introduce and promote items as well as network with Chinese traders through diplomatic exchange visits. At the same time, it gives tremendous possibilities for policymakers and industry leaders to acquire a genuine grasp of the Chinese market. Malaysia should use strong diplomatic ties in business and optimise its export network in order to further boost its exports to China (Hong, Sun, Beg and Zhou 2020).

China no longer constituted an ideological threat to Malaysia after the Cold War ended but China assertions in the South China Sea posed a threat to Malaysia. Malaysia does not see China as a potential adversary, but rather as a country with enormous economic potential. Tun Mahathir was excited at the potential of China having greater influence in Southeast Asia and he had invited Beijing to an ASEAN meeting which held in Kuala Lumpur in 1991 in order to open a dialogue with the organisation. ASEAN and China were confused on how to approach to one another. China still had been unsure how to define its future relationship with ASEAN, while ASEAN seem unsure in the same thing. Malaysia's decision to approach China through ASEAN was a critical, since Beijing did learn multilateralism's laws and standards. A modest gathering in 1991 developed into a more formal dialogue cooperation. He established the way to make China-ASEAN cooperation

prosperous in 1996. Other events have also bolstered Malaysia's positive relationship with China. Tun Mahathir did share China's displeasure with the West's which emphasis on human rights and democracy, instead of individualistic Western norms, he found common ground in collectivist Asian ideas. Asian countries, with the exception of China, have been lukewarm in their support for Tun Mahathir's proposed East Asian Economic Group, which would exclude the US and Australia due to the blame on the US for obstructing their progress (Ngeow 2021).

Malaysia and China had signed their second coalition agreement in 2004, agreeing to work together more closely in key areas. In 2013, the two countries' relationship was regarded as the methodical strategic cooperation. In 2009, bilateral trade had increased and China overtook Singapore as Malaysia's largest trading partner. Prior to an official visit to Malaysia in 2011, Wen Jiabao highlighted two occasions in Malaysia which he claimed China would always remember and also appreciate the diplomatic reconciliation in 1974 and Malaysia's special invitation to join the ASEAN summit in 1991. Malaysia's has two crucial acts had far reaching implications that extended beyond bilateral relations, positively impacting China-ASEAN relations. These events had laid the foundation for Malaysia-China friendship stories. A narrative evolved about a rumoured great relationship between Malaysia and China, which appeared to be real. China had become more assertive in the South China Sea starting around 2009. The number of Chinese ships in Malaysia's exclusive economic zone has increased since the early 2010s and the China Coast Guard had maintained a near-constant deployment around the Luconia Shoals, which are situated about 80 nautical miles off the coasts of Malaysia's states of Sabah and Sarawak. Despite these Chinese incursions, Dato' Seri Najib endeavoured to separate the South China Sea issue from his administration's desire of stronger connections with China throughout his tenure as Prime Minister. By that time, however, Tun Mahathir had become a fierce critic of China. Tun Mahathir criticised Dato' Seri Najib in 2015 for being too servile to China, alleging that Dato' Seri Najib's acceptance of massive China-financed development and financial projects did not benefit Malaysia (Ngeow 2021).

Tun Mahathir crushed expectations that he would become more vocal in his criticism of China's actions in the South China Sea. He was able to maintain the same attitude as previous governments with carefully distancing bilateral cooperation. Malaysia and China agreed to set up a bilateral consultative mechanism in September 2019, which has long been considered as Beijing's preferred method of dispute resolution for the South China Sea. In December 2019, the government of Tun Mahathir did approve a new submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, reaffirming Malaysia's claim to an extended continental shelf within the South China Sea, prompting China to file a complaint with the same commission. On the one hand, Malaysian officials have indicated unequivocally that they have no plans to worsen the situation. The Malaysian government was furious when the US Navy sent uninvited warships to nearby waters in mid-April, accompanied by an Australian navy vessel, in what appeared to be a show of solidarity for Malaysia. Aside from that, there was another worrying event in the South China Sea. A tactical formation of sixteen Chinese military planes approached toward Malaysia's EEZ in the South China Sea on 31 May 2021. The Malaysian Air Force was launched a squadron of jet aircraft to accompany them away. On 1 June, Malaysia's Foreign Ministry did issue a strong statement condemning China's operations and accusing China of undermining Malaysian sovereignty. It also summoned China's ambassador to provide explanation. Malaysia's position is clear, according to the statement, and having positive diplomatic relations with any country does not imply that Malaysian security is jeopardised. Malaysia continues to defend its dignity and sovereignty with tenacity. China's claim that its aeroplanes were simply conducting routine missions was met with scepticism by many Malaysians. It is ludicrous to take the concept of sovereign state cooperation seriously in realist assessments of international events. Rather accept the nations that have no

eternal friends or enemies but only purposes. Malaysia aims to tell the world, as Tun Mahathir emphasised in a 2018 speech, that it must be a friend to all and enemy to none. Realist specialists, on the other hand, did argue that there was no such entity and that all governments have hedge diplomatically to some extent (Ngeow 2021).

## CONCLUSIONS

Southeast Asia, according to the research, it has been a significant component of China's security environment. ASEAN appears to acknowledge China's rightful influence in the area, but is concerned that China's ambitions to become an Asia Pacific militarily giant may come at the price of its smaller and weaker neighbours. Economic links are nevertheless important, even if they aren't significant from either side's standpoint. Overall, commercial and economic connections have strengthened dramatically. China's trade relationships with ASEAN is based on mutual benefit ties as well as shared political and geopolitical objectives. Southeast Asian economies are playing a larger role in the upcoming trade triangles which have emerged as a result of China's increasing industrialisation. China is Southeast Asia's leading export market, but it is also the region's greatest import partner. Agriculture is a vital sector for bilateral trade cooperation, particularly in the form of agricultural exports from Southeast Asia to China. Chinese manufacturing enterprises are shifting to or growing in Southeast Asia as labour prices rise and competition in local markets heats up. The most apparent aspect of China's growing economic impact in Southeast Asia is infrastructure development. China's increased involvement in Southeast Asia may put pressure on other foreign enterprises and development partners, but it might also open up new markets and improve infrastructure for everyone. China is also considering assuming the leading in ASEAN's digital connection growth.

The BRI, on the other hand, clearly demonstrates China's effect on the individual ASEAN member states in pursuit of economic growth and anxious to stimulate important industry development and tourism. The manufacturing sector has seen the largest FDI inflows to China. Recent trade and investment achievements as a consequence of the ACFTA reflect the PRC's readiness to strengthen economic ties with ASEAN nations, and the spirit of the ACFTA agreement is to expand economic and political ties. Despite China's regular deployment in Malaysia's ocean EEZ, the government has managed to avoid conflict and has deepened its commercial relations with China. Malaysia and China might well be able to benefit from trade prospects, since both countries' political and socio-cultural relations are regarded to be advantageous in boosting bilateral cooperation in a range of sectors. In order to increase its exports to China, Malaysia should be using strong diplomatic connections in business and enhance its export network.

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## EU PIVOT TO INDO-PACIFIC: RIVALRY OR STRATEGEM?

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### ABSTRACT

*Since Barack Obama's presidency, the United States' Pivot to the Indo-Pacific has become synonym with the world. This policy was designed to safeguard United States interests as a world hegemony while deterring China's influence and interests from growing further. However, it has recently been seen those European countries, including the European Union (EU), have followed the example of the United States in implementing a new Indo-Pacific strategy. This paper would like to form an argument whether the EU Pivot to Indo-Pacific is more of a rivalry with China or is it a stratagem. In another word, a pact with its allies to bring down China. This paper will also comment on how EU currently responses to China by making its presence in South China Sea, its trade and investment relationship with China and much more. The effects of this EU Cooperation Strategy on Malaysia will also be analyzed at the end of the research.*

**Keywords:** European Union, China, Hegemony, Indo-Pacific, South China Sea

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the geopolitics of Indo-Pacific has taken the place of Asia Pacific. The phrase Indo-Pacific does not refer to geographical location, but rather about the concepts of geopolitics. During the 2017 ASEAN Summit in Manila, Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe, Narendra Modi, Malcolm Turnbull, and President Donald Trump decided to resurrect the Quadrilateral alliance to challenge China's hegemony in the South China Sea. The Quads since then have adopted the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' policy to promote this strategy (Shah, 2020). The following month, Washington began adopting the term 'Indo-Pacific' in its National Security Strategy. Washington renamed the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACCOM) to the US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) in 2018 without affecting its function nor duties (USINDOPACOM, n.d.).

The Indo-Pacific region consists of the Pacific and Indian oceans, as well as the landmasses that surround them, including Japan and Australia. Unlike the Asia Pacific region, its physical extent is not specified. However, India is part of the Indo-Pacific since it is one of the Quads (Arfa Javaid, 2021). Furthermore, "Indo-Pacific is primarily perceived as a US-led containment strategy directed against China" (Heiduk & Sulejmanovic, 2021). The area of Indo-Pacific can be illustrated as in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Indo-Pacific Region

## **HOW EU START ADOPTING THE INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY?**

It all began in May 2018, when French President, Emmanuel Macron stated his country's position during a speech at Australia's Garden Island Naval Base. He spoke a lot about the Indo-Pacific-France-India-Australia axis at the time. The French Ministry of Armed Forces issued official documentation at the time, which were updated in May 2019. The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs later announced the Indo-Pacific policy in June 2019.

In May 2019, the Netherlands also published a new China strategy entitled "The Netherlands and China: A New Balance". The publication acknowledges China as one of the Netherlands' most important commercial and investment partners. The Dutch government aims to discuss unfair trade practices and strive for more balance and reciprocity in its economic ties with China. The Netherlands also said that it does not wish to be reliant on China. In contrast to the U.S. approach, the Netherlands seeks a fair balance in order to reach a win-win outcome. This paper also expresses concerns about China's military predominance. According to the document, China's pursuit of strategic aims may influence Dutch national security, but the threats posed by China will be mitigated accordingly (Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). Meanwhile, the German government issued its Indo-Pacific plan, entitled 'Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific,' in September 2020. In comparison to the Dutch strategy paper, the Germans outline their aim, objectives, and action plan more clearly. However, both the German and Dutch Indo-Pacific strategies have the same goals: to deter China's rising predominance.

The EU eventually joined the bandwagon on April 16, 2021, by issuing the council decision on The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. This 10-page report outlines its plan for contributing to the region's security, prosperity and long-term development via the promotion of democracy, international law, human rights and the rule of law. This paper also addresses seven additional aspects with its partners on the topic of ocean governance, research and technology, connectivity, health, strengthening regional organizations, intensify cooperation in multilateral fora and climate change (Council of the European Union, 2021).

## **THE QUAD AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

There are various writings and studies have been done by various scholars on the United States strategy in the Indo-Pacific. According to Agastya Wardhana (2018), this strategy was first adopted during the administration of President Barack Obama to balance China's growing hegemony in the Asia Pacific. The 'Pivot to Asia' marked by three important aspects, namely the reorganization of the United States military forces to Asia-Pacific, the enhancement of diplomatic relations with countries in Asia-Pacific, and the initiation of Trans-Pacific partnership negotiations aimed at creating regional economic design to realize the goal of restoring American leadership. These three strategies are implemented not just to safeguard its national interests, but also to ensure that China does not diminish the United States' influence in the region. This policy was entirely focused on increasing US participation in Asia Pacific areas as well as restoring US global influence.

During President Donald Trump's presidency, the United States replied to China's rivalry by releasing a strategic concept paper known as the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). It is a counter-narrative to the region's growing Sinocentric reformation or restructuring. The FOIP concept paper aims to give a fresh alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to secure freedom of navigation in the Pacific and Indian ocean, and to defend U.S. interests as the global hegemony (Heiduk & Sulejmanovic, 2021).

## **HOW EU WILL ADOPT TO FOIP**

The Quadrilateral Security Discussion (QSD), often known as the Quad, is an informal strategic dialogue between US, Japan, India, and Australia. It was founded on the ability to contain

China's rising influence and hegemonic power. It was founded in 2007 by Japanese former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with assistance from US Deputy President Dick Cheney, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Australian Prime Minister John Howard. This dialogue will always be followed by Exercise MALABAR, a four-country joint military exercise. Through diplomatic protest, the Chinese government aggressively opposed the formation of the QSD because it jeopardised China's interests.

However, the Quad's momentum was halted when Australia (under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's leadership) withdrew due to concerns over tensions with China. When Julia Gillard became Prime Minister in 2010, Australia re-established military relations with the United States. This partnership may be demonstrated when Australia permits the deployment of US Marines in Darwin, Australia's northern region. The four members of the Quad, led by Shinzo Abe, Narendra Modi, Malcolm Turnbull, and Donald Trump, decided to revive the Quadrilateral Alliance during the 2017 ASEAN Summit in Manila to counter the advancement of Chinese military activities in the South China Sea. According to researchers, conflicts between the Quad and China will lead to Cold War 2.

To realize Quad's objectives, the group strives for "Free and open Indo-Pacific" as its main strategy. Pitakdumrongkit (2019) defines 'free' as free from oppression by any individual, organisation, or country. In general, it connotes sovereignty and rule-based order. While 'open' refers to the sea or a sea line of communication (SLOC) in military terms, it also refers to air routes and cyberspace.

The Quad has participated in a variety of initiatives, the most prominent of which is the Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) conducted by the US military in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), a nation has the right to 12 nautical miles as its territorial water, 24 nautical miles as its contiguous zone and 200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). More than that boundary is considered international waters, within which anyone, even naval ships, has the freedom to travel. Therefore, Washington wishes to promote such rights through FONOP, which China does not recognise UNCLOS 1982 and demanded Nine-dash-line rights across the South China Sea.

China also had developed seven man-made islands, known as Spratly and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. China's military development in this region has made ASEAN countries feel threatened as well as overlap with the EEZ rights of the claimant countries. China also frequently sends China Coast Guard (CCG) ships to the South China Sea to provoke any actors passing through the Nine-dash-line region. China's provocative actions are of great concern not only to the claimant countries but also to stakeholders in the region. Beijing is expected to increase its military activities in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, especially when the United States maintains its strong stance to protect freedom of navigation and movement through such waters.

## **HOW EU RESPONSES TO CHINA**

In recent years, various actions have been taken by EU countries together with their allies to neutralize Beijing's influence. Among them are the following:

### **EU-China Trade and Investment Relationship**

After more than 30 years of good relations with Beijing, the EU finally imposed sanctions against China, following the United States, UK and Canada's lead. The sanctions began on 1st March 2021, involving travel bans and asset freezes against four Chinese officials and an entity due to human rights violations towards the Uyghur Muslim minorities in Xinjiang (Euronews, 2021). Brussels' action marks the first punitive measures against China since the arms embargo that took place in 1989 due to the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

China has denied EU allegation and as a tit-for-tat reaction, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China (2021) released an official statement mentioning that Beijing had imposed counter sanction towards ten EU individuals and four entities. Five of them are EU parliament members, three national parliament members and two think tanks. Their families are prohibited from entering mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. The companies and institutions associated with them are also restricted from doing business with China.

On May 20th, the EU unveiled its intentions to lessen its reliance on China. The European Parliament has also halted the ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) until Beijing lifts its sanctions (Emmot, 2021). This circumstance has deepened the gap in Sino-EU relationships while also denying EU businesses broader access to China. According to Zhao Lijian, a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Beijing expects that the EU would be more reasonable, less emotional and make wise decisions in its national interest. The EU is China's greatest trading partner, while China is the EU's second-largest trading partner behind the United States. It is a mistake for both economies to not working together to enjoy a mutual benefit. A good trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) relationship may facilitate more employment and opportunities, boost economic growth, enhance living standards, build infrastructure, encourage stable long-term lending, inject new technologies and bring in technological know-how and management skills.

### **EU Member States Presence in The South China Sea**

On 9 February 2021, France is stepping up its military presence in the South China Sea by sending its nuclear submarine, SNA Emeraude together with a support vessel, BSAM Seine. Further to that, France also deployed its Mistral-class LHD called Tonnerre and La Fayette-class frigate, Surcouf to start for the Jeanne D'arc 2021 Mission on 18 February 2021 (Naval News, 2021). This voyage will start from the Toulon Naval Base in Southern France through the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Malacca Straits, South China Sea and lastly to the Pacific Ocean. The naval force will traverse the South China Sea twice and participate in a military drill with its allies, the US and Japan. According to French Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, the passage was seen as a form of defiance against Beijing's strong attitude in the disputed waters (Wang, 2021).

In addition, the United Kingdom (UK) has deployed its naval fleet, which includes an aircraft carrier named HMS Queen Elizabeth, two destroyers, two frigates, a nuclear submarine, and two logistic ships, to the South China Sea beginning April 26 of the same year (Rowse, 2021). According to Al-Jazeera (2021), the German Navy will also accompany this mission this coming August. All participating countries, including the United States, will take part in a large-scale military exercise sponsored by the Japanese Ground Defence Force (JGSDF) from May 11 to 17. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and US President Joe Biden have even pledged to stay tough against China's assertiveness in the South China Sea (The Star, 2021).

The presence of the United States and its allies, such as Japan and European countries, in the South China Sea, is intended to demonstrate military power (show off force). They want to prevent Beijing from expanding its military hegemony in these waters. They also seek to safeguard the sovereignty of their waterways and airspace, as well as their right to free navigation. Maintaining trade routes in the South China Sea is crucial because they were concerned that the growth of People's Liberation Army strength would jeopardise the merchant ship routes. However, the presence of European forces is expected to make Beijing behave more assertively by boosting its military activities in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

### **EU Hampered China's Vaccine Diplomacy**

At a time when western countries such as the USA and the EU are struggling with vaccine shortages, China has stepped up to show the world that the country is capable of producing its

own COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 80 countries have received the country-made Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccine for both emergency and commercial usage. 53 of those countries, including African countries and several Asian countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan, and Indonesia, have received free of charge. The remaining 27 middle-income countries, on the other hand, have paid for each dosage received (Zhao, 2021). Beijing's efforts not only indicate that its government is concerned about the global pandemic, but it is also one of its efforts to present itself as the solution, or a "way out," of the pandemic, rather than being accused of being the source of the coronavirus.

This vaccine diplomacy has also benefited China in boosting its global influence and capitalising on new possibilities. However, western countries, particularly the United States and the EU, are concerned about the situation. On 14th June 2021, the three main EU institutions namely the Parliament, the Commission and the Council have unanimously approved and signed the legislative procedure on the EU COVID-19 vaccination passport. Non-EU tourists can enter EU member nations with this passport. However, the European Union only accepts vaccinations that have been authorised by the European Medical Agency (EMA), which rejects all Chinese-made jabs, notably Sinovac and Sinopharm (Schengenvisa.info News, 2021). This scenario has hindered China's vaccine diplomacy efforts to some extent. Other nations, including Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Taiwan, have followed the EU's lead by prohibiting the use of China's vaccine (TRT World, 2021). However, on 1st August 2021, Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow international travellers who have been fully vaccinated with either Sinopharm or Sinovac vaccines to enter the country on the condition that they undergo a booster dosage (Dawn, 2021). Others country such as North Korea also rejects Sinovac vaccine offered by China (Reuters, 2021). It is apparent that the EU has effectively politicised vaccination issues at a time when the world is confronting a pandemic. It also carries the risk of dividing the world into vaccination silos based on vaccine nationalism rather than medical need. Millions of people who are unable to choose the vaccination they acquire will have lesser travel opportunities in the future, which will have a negative impact on the international tourism sector and economic prospects throughout the world.

#### **47<sup>th</sup> G7 Summit Targeted China**

On 11-13<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the United Kingdom chaired the 47<sup>th</sup> G7 Summit in Cornwall. All G7 members namely the US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan were present at the conference including India, South Korea, South Africa, Australia and representatives from the European Union as invited guests (BBC, 2021). The meeting covered a wide range of issues, namely 3C: COVID-19, climate change and China. Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, the G7 pledged to guarantee a fair distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination in order to avert future pandemics. Furthermore, the G7 has agreed to increase efforts to combat climate change and to provide USD100 billion each year to assist poor nations in decreasing gas emissions and ending coal usage. The G7 nations also commit to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

However, the most significant agenda item discussed during this meeting was China. Issues such as Hong Kong's freedom and fundamental rights, the South China Sea dispute, and human rights violations against Uyghur Muslim minorities have been brought to the negotiation table. In addition, the G7 nations created the Build Back Better World (B3W) Initiative to finance infrastructure development in middle-income countries. This effort is one of the G7's initiatives to offset China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's BRI has previously been harshly condemned by various groups for burdening small nations by keeping them in China's debt trap. This BRI has also allowed Beijing to conquer small countries through its economic power. However, how the B3W initiative would be funded remains unknown.

The subject of China has never been debated in a G7 meeting before. Previously, Russia was indeed the center of a major threat to major powers, but this has shifted to China. China has responded harshly to this Summit, accusing it of spreading slander and lies. Beijing also stated that the G7 has no jurisdiction to intervene in its domestic matters other than to warn that western countries refrain from damaging China's interests (BBC, 2021).

## **STRATEM OR RIVALRY**

Debates on stratagem and rivalry is hard to be established, taking into effect legitimization of European Union to represent its member states in foreign policies. At current, member countries have mixed feelings when it comes to receiving China's superpower, and have been dealing on the issue on individual foreign policy basis. This is certainly a different scope with US and China relations because the former is a country state which has sole sovereignty to craft a policy of stratagem or rivalry towards China.

However, the article would like to posit an argument that EU's pivot to Asia should be seen as a stratagem. Throughout history, EU's main interests in the international sphere are based on four main pillars – Democracy, Rule of Law, Human Rights and International Law. Through EU engagement and funded projects outside of the region are reportedly to be based on above-mentioned four pillars.

In 2018, the European Commission proposed foreign policy plan to develop Asia with energy and digital infrastructure on the basis of developmental needs. It made clear that this is not to challenge China's lead in infrastructure and energy in the Asian region. According to Emmott (2018), "the 13-page strategy outlined by the EU executive did not specify how much the bloc would spend, but the Commission is relying on a proposed 60 billion euro (\$70 billion) fund that would act as an insurance for investors if projects fail."

Controversies of the 2018 foreign policy stems due to the ongoing Belt and Road Initiative which begins since 2013. Initiated by China, BRI is a form of Chinese investment, spread throughout the region with the aim to form economic access for China to regional players and back to China. Antagonist to Chinese investment coin such effort as Beijing's debt diplomacy, luring countries into non-performing loan situation and consequently had to adjust certain ownership and access in order to perform the loan.

Asian region accommodates developing countries who are still in need of FDI. Hence why, the investment market has consistently centralised in the Asian region. FDI are pumped into the region as world's fastest growing economies i.e. China 8% growth and India 9.5% growth are situated in the region (Lee, 2021). Not only BRI or EU-linked investment, Asia has been receiving a lot FDI which makes it neutral for any regional bloc like EU to also invest in the region.

Given the narratives of pillars projection of the EU, and neutrality of Asia as an investment hub, it would be a less attractive opinion to establish EU's pivot to Asia as a form of rivalry towards China's expansion into the region.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR MALAYSIA**

Despite not being a part of the Quads, the EU remains as United States' most important ally. Everything the United States does will be scrutinised by its allies. These actions taken by EU member states as well as their allies are portrayed as a realist behaviour from the perspective of International Relations. It's a struggle for power and influence in the Indo-Pacific region. It is a collaborative strategy to bring down China since no single country can do it alone. This struggle can also be illustrated according to Figure 2 below. According to the picture, the United States has effectively deployed its military troops in numerous Asian nations, including Afghanistan, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, South Korea, Japan and the island of Guam. With strong connections and partnerships with other countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan, it will increase the United States influence and power in this region. As a result, the EU Strategy for Indo-Pacific Cooperation is a supplementary strategy for American and its allies to prevent the rise of Chinese influence and hegemony in this region.



**Figure 2: USA Arc of Containment**

From the current issues mentioned above, various analyses can be made regarding the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. This partnership can provide Malaysia with a multitude of advantages and prospects. The most obvious advantage is the economic prosperity of both sides. Malaysia can boost its trade with European nations, enhance its digital connectivity, technology transfer, and economic supply chain. More open markets with EU member states, as well as more foreign direct investment, can be explored. Aside from that, Malaysia will have easy access to European vaccination supplies such as Pfizer and AstraZeneca.

However, market access with China would be limited, and many investments will be restricted. This situation is concerning because China is Malaysia's largest export and import trading partner, accounting for RM158.6 billion in export value and RM171.18 billion in import value in 2020. Malaysian exports to China accounted for 16.2 percent of total exports and 21.5 percent of total imports in 2020 (MITI, 2021).

In the security aspect, Malaysia will have freedom of navigation in the South China Sea with the presence of these major powers. The presence of the UK in the region will also be able to enhance the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA). The FPDA is a defence cooperation agreement signed in 1971 by Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Singapore to provide mutual support in the event of a threat or armed assault on any of these five nations. However, there is always a drawback to anything that happens. The presence of European powers, along with the United States, will allow foreign powers to intervene in this region, as well as causing smaller nations to serve as a buffer states for major countries when conflict arises. Of course, there will be a massive gap on the world's bloc between the Quads and China's allies. The participation of European countries will aggravate the long-running trade war between the United States and China. If this Trade War continues for an extended length of time, countries all around the world, large and small, will hurt.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there have been a significant shifts in the EU prospect and policies towards China. The Quads, together with its close allies especially the EU is perceived as leaning more towards realism than liberalism when handling its rivalry. As such, EU countries are serving as a stratagem to deter China's hegemony. With this new policy, the EU's primary focus on domestic problems will shift, as will the cost of national expenditure each year. This partnership strategy will not only exacerbate the trade war between the US and China but it will also severe its economic relationship with China. It is a mistake for both economies to not working together to enjoy the mutual benefit because both EU and China are the world's top economic power.

Furthermore, numerous human rights violations are occurring across the world nowadays. If the EU sincerely wants to solve these problems, it should also focus on other nations, such as the Palestinian oppression, the Rohingya crisis, women trafficking in Nigeria, the Syrian dilemma and Muslim persecution in India. EU sanctions on China in retaliation to Uyghur persecution are simply just an excuse to compete with and bring down China. The EU and its allies, particularly the G7 countries, have exploited human rights and climate change as their strategem. China's struggle for fisheries and mineral resources in the South China Sea will definitely be debated in the future under this climate change platform.

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## **EFFORTS IN COUNTER THE NARRATIVE OF ISIS IN MALAYSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The Salafist Jihadist have a skewed perspective in terms of Islam where Muslims must always strive to distribute and enforce Islam in all areas of life by eliminating any other religion that is practised and imposing Islam through jihad or the holy war which is deeply understood as the personal responsibility of every Muslim. Hence, they believe that a Muslim must oppose the enemies of Islam through violent and uncompromising military struggle. This ideology and perception are seen as among the attractions in luring youths worldwide even in Malaysia who are eager in joining the ISIS. Moreover, according to this school of thought, the enemies of Islam are not limited to only the US as well as the West, but also includes the Arab regimes that is seen as being cooperative with the West or secular Arab governments that are considered as “infidels”. Thus, according to Salafist Jihadist, the Islamic religious law justifies overthrowing them.*

**Keywords:** *ISIS, Moral, Ideology, Propaganda, Media Campaign, Theme, Intention, Target Audience*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ISIS has embedded the concept known as “takfir” or a declaring a Muslim as apostates in its organisation which later makes it turn into a “takfiri” group where members of the group could denounce the faith of a person and claim the person as an infidel thereby enabling his or her execution according to Islamic Law. (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2014). According to Burnett (1989), propaganda has viewed by some scholars as an inherent thought and pattern in mass cultivation. A more recent trend that draws on most of these allied disciplines is the study of propaganda as a purveyor of ideology and to this end is largely a survey of how dominant ideological meanings are constructed through the mass media. According to Ingram (2014) the three traits of the Islamic State’s information warfare was analysed and it is found that it serves the purpose of being a multidimensional, multi-platform approach that simultaneously targets ‘friends and foes’ to enhance the scope, relevance and resonance of its messaging - the synchronization of narrative and action to maximise operational and strategic ‘effects’ in the area and the centrality of the Islamic State ‘brand’ for its entire run. The ISIS has used Information Operations to give its audiences the perception of an accountable and transparent authority. At the forefront in promoting the ISIS is the arrangement of controlled publications through Al-Hayat publications such as Islamic State News and Dabiq.

### **ISIS IN MALAYSIA**

The Islamic State has become one of the most serious regional concerns for both domestic and international security. Many Southeast Asian nations are now facing the foreign fighter phenomenon with an increasing number of their citizens being lured by the ISIS ideology. Over 200 Malaysians are believed to have joined the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (Julien Gradot,

2015). This is a worrying trend, especially for Malaysia given its relatively small population. Since 2013, approximately more than 193 individuals have been arrested by Malaysian authorities either because of trying to join the Islamic State or returning from fighting with them (Utusan Malaysia a, 2016). This poses a serious threat given the group's stated aim of expanding their operations locally. According to some of Malaysia's top counter terrorism officials, an ISIS attack in Malaysia "is just a matter of time" (Julien Gradot, 2015). According to the Bukit Aman Counter Terrorist Division, Principle Assistant Director, Datuk Ayub Khan Mydin Pitchay depicted the fact that about 98% of Malaysian militants were recruited online. He stated that several secondary school students with jihad tendencies were on the authority's radar and had been persuaded through Facebook. Based on a case study on February 2015, a 14-year-old girl from Muar, was arrested as she was about to board a Cairo bound flight at the KL International Airport to marry a 22-year-old Malaysian student in Egypt before accompanying him to Syria.

The ISIS ideology that has been spreading in Malaysia is considered as a major threat to the stability and security in the country following their provocation to recruit Malaysians and targeting youths as well as other potential security personnel who will benefit the Malaysian IS in Syria. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had stated that the IS a terrorist threat of a religious nature and Malaysia deals with this matter seriously. He assures that certain steps will be taken in order to prevent terrorists and will foil any attempt taken to threaten the harmony of Malaysia (Utusan Malaysia, 2016c). The ISIS have utilised the convenience provided by the social media in order to deliver their messages directly to the individuals in Malaysia. They have also posted well edited videos and flicks from the battlefield on easily accessible platforms such as Twitter and YouTube, which provides a clear and simple narrative. This is often due trend as people nowadays are more attracted to the interactive viewing mode and this does not exclude Malaysians. Thus, this fascination turned weakness is manipulated by the adversary (ISIS) as an opportunity to embed their ideology and perspective by infiltrating into altering our cognition, ideology and beliefs.'

## **ISLAMIC STATE NARRATIVE**

The effect of the ISIS may be seen as a psychological impact on the target groups. Modern technology and the internet is used in the pursuit to achieve their goals. The strategy deployed pertaining to Information Warfare is the use of Social Media as a medium and a platform to disperse information in order to keep the public properly informed on the ISIS narrative in altering their minds into accepting the ISIS ideology.

Technological changes and developments in the situations pertaining to international relations has given a new dimension to the global terrorism phenomenon. Terrorism is not only limited to certain areas, but it has spread across the world in line with the current technology. Radical ideologies have now been exported to countries that previously have no experience in dealing with terrorist activities. For example, the phenomenon of Al Jama'ah Al Islamiyah, which had spread to countries in the Southeast Asia in the late 1990s is a perfect example of how terrorism scenarios has now become a global phenomenon. Currently, the Islamic State scenario was filling the space and a major threat to world security (Zulkarnain Harun & Lailatul Afidzha, 2016). There are seven major elements identified for the counter narrative of IS ideology in Malaysia, consists of moral, ideology, propaganda, media campaign, theme, intention, and target audience.

## MAJOR ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED FOR THE COUNTER NARRATIVE OF IS IDEOLOGY IN MALAYSIA

First point of ISIS narrative is an ideology where the researcher highlighted on ideology Salafist-jihadism of the Islamic State which aims to purge Islam of outside influence but through violence. Another point is in *takfir* belief that from the ISIS belief, they have been reject any change or progress to their understanding from claiming religion concerning illustration and calling them (person who deny/reject *takfir*) apostates starting with Islam along these lines never again Muslim. The second element is propaganda whereas ISIS capable presenting advanced propaganda material to a larger audience by social media, especially Twitter and propaganda video produced by them requires a more sophisticated understanding of storytelling that is easy to use in order to penetrate and brainwash their target person.

The third is media campaign, which ISIS encourages their member States with maximum effort to use their smartphones to teach, guide and recruit other people on social media accounts, e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Kik, Ask. FM, Skype and blogs. Apart from that, they use their main branding, recruitment campaigns in the Google Play App, Dawn of cheer, ISIS Simulator 2015 and a monthly electronic magazine, Dabiq. They move into community events such as seminars, religious and social activities and including schools such as high school and college through their 'Jihad Mentor'. The fourth is the theme of the ISIS claims to use "the methodology of the Prophet", 'Caliphate' and migration (hijrah) to the land of Islam is obligatory. They also have demonstrated outstanding strategic award for 'brand' as a symbol of the narrative and actions.

Fifth is the intention by Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in fulfilling its vision of 'Call for jihad' in which he called on Muslims to support the Islamic state through jihad for the sake of Allah. He also promised to jihadis that happiness awaits them in heaven. His promise was made weak and deluded as used on the basis of the name of Allah and Islam. The sixth is moral which is a major point of influence. ISIS success using these elements is described as often portrays its war as defensive rather than offensive. Apart from that, in Malaysia, people are simply encouraged by partnership sentiment, inspiration and motivation for a struggle. Idea sharing is fostered through relationships in social media and lead to further terrorist acts on the initiative of the individual.

The last point is the target audience, ISIS uses the basic narrative on themes familiar to every Muslim and successful approach to Muslim youth. Their attention is to implement a set of techniques that appeal to young children because children and young people easily propagated and misled to join the terrorist group. These people have a burning passion and willingness to use firearms seems to be a soldier. Their weakness has become a golden opportunity for ISIS to directly influence their target

## EFFORTS IN COUNTER THE NARRATIVE OF ISIS IN MALAYSIA.

ISIS is a number one threat in the world and in Malaysia. Their technique of recruitment, mislead and use propaganda through the internet and technology have made them one of the most successful militant group in the world and the richest in raising funds from supporters who successfully recruited through social media. Malaysia has taken steps to prevent the spread of the ideology of ISIS Malaysia. However, prevention techniques are implemented are not exhaustive. The number of ISIS supporters or jihadist were increased time by time although there are many

arrests were made by police. Based on the interviews and seven elements of counter narrative, which include moral, ideological, propaganda, media campaign, theme, intention, and target audience, there are some important findings and gaps that can be discussed in this section to enhance the efforts in counter the narrative of ISIS in Malaysia.

## **MORALE**

To prevent, fight and destroy ISIS ideology in the Armed Forces, the Armed Forces issued a **directive in written document** and distributed to all the soldiers of the three services to argue them not to involve in ISIS. The discipline actions will be taken if there are any personnel involved since the Armed Forces is very serious in this issue. In addition, the **leaflet** from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has been produced and distributed through a joint effort with the National Security Council. There is number of statements from Malaysia leaders through electronic and print media that the Government will take action to oppose any ISIS activities in Malaysia. The actions by the Armed Forces and government agencies have to be conveyed and understood by all people in Malaysia. This is because only a small number of departments in public and private agencies were issuing **instructions** to their employees. There are still many other departments and agencies that have not implemented this prevention steps. In addition, the instructions and letters related to IS issued should be extended to all the employees. This must be ensured by the employers. The role of the Higher Education Ministry is also important. It should issue a **circular** to all public and private educational institutions to alert them on the IS ideology. It will prevent the students from affected by the IS because the ISIS targeted audiences are mainly young people.

Involvement of family members and friends to help give advice, motivation and inspiration to individuals who has intention to involve in IS. The government through the responsible agencies need to expand this **rehabilitation program**. For example, the Malaysian Armed Forces also carried out rehabilitation program, motivation and counselling to members who are likely to support the fight ISIS continues to be involved in such activities. Among the factors that make them are attracted to IS because they do not know the right channel and to whom they should complain about problem faced by them. As an alternative and shortcut, they logged on to the social networking sites and shared their problems. Most of them felt that by joining IS, it can help to release them from the past sins. Therefore, the **family members and friends** need to have knowledge about the threat of ISIS, informed about the ISIS in the country, always be aware of the behaviour of family members, more sensible to a change in attitude, and discuss the problems faced by youth. The family members and friends have to advise, provide encouragement and motivation to the individuals, who potentially affected by ISIS, so that they feel valued and did not choose to join the ISIS. This **prevention from home** can decreased the involvement of youth in ISIS. To combat the effects of ISIS, the problems experienced by family members or persons should be reviewed. This is due to the recruitment of ISIS can easily take advantage of the weakness of a person and invites them to join the fight ISIS. In addition, emphasis perfect **religious education must begin at home**, the values to be applied, the true teachings of Islam are explained and understood by all people. Based on the interviews conducted, there are individuals who are attracted with ISIS because they do not understand the true Islam and regarding to the ISIS, Islamic teachings can be viewed as an easier way to Paradise, to make “hijrah”, and get the title of Caliph.

In relation to the ongoing cooperation with foreign countries in Malaysia reached an agreement against the effects of ISIS, have been implemented by the Ministry of the Interior, the police and other agencies through a **special task force**. Such relations should be strengthened and the public should be informed about the government's actions through the mass media, electronic and social media so people often hear, see and understand through exposure to this issue every day. Daily monitoring should be carried out by the task force in the field of cyber and computer networking more aggressively because through monitoring indicators to identify potential recruiting and recruited will look at social sites. The importance of this strategy for social media is the main medium of spreading ideology and society ISIS Malaysia is also an active users of social media and often share issue, expression of feelings, share photos and all personal data themselves. This is a golden opportunity for ISIS to continue the plan affect the targeted group. Therefore, the restriction of use of the Internet should be done by the responsible party to give priority in the implementation of this approach. ISIS is sensitive to individuals who often share their problems and they will act as if as a motivator to these troubled individuals in the solution of their problems by getting to join the fight ISIS.

In term of counter narrative from the perspective of moral, the **military assets and expertise** can be utilised. According to Lt Col Dr Zulkarnain, military intelligence takes seriously ISIS threats and get all the information related to it. In fact, Mr. Thomas also supports the role and the work carried out by Malaysian intelligence agencies, either of the army or the police. In this case, the intelligence had been monitoring and collecting information, but need to be consistent because the security forces did not want to miss any potential recruits who support the ideology of ISIS. For military personnel who involved in supporting the ISIS jihad, the action will be taken and **counselling** sessions will be given to make them realize that joining ISIS does not bring anything good in their lives. In addition, the security forces also need to constantly maintain the spirit to perform their duties. The role of top officials determines the needs and welfare of their members to be awarded and not be influenced by ISIS. If the welfare of the armed forces is neglected, it will demoralize the security forces and they can be targeted based on their expertise and criteria required by ISIS.

Besides, the **educational awareness program** should be exposed to the public through media distribution about ISIS. In the context of suitability in Malaysia, it is proposed to approach in person and gentle man should be taken as easily touched hearts and inspiration based on emotion. By reading the magazine Dabiq, human hearts will be touched by the verse, the Muslims are treated cruelly and this has raised the spirit of a handful of individuals for jihad. In addition, a group sympathetic to the struggle of ISIS in Malaysia should be given attention and focus because of the problems faced by children and young people have to make a handful of parents who support children and youth to Syria to perform "jihad" there. Related actions to provide information Takfir ideology, the armed forces of Malaysia have issued a number of articles that can be accessed online connection with ISIS against narrative explaining Takfir ideology brought by ISIS. Nowadays, there are efforts of others who try to explain the dangers of ISIS and ideology brought by them. However, the "Takfir" ideology is not explained in detail. Based on the interviews, and articles were read in addition to experience in the business, they do not understand the meaning of the "Takfir" ideology as infidels. The involvement of security forces in apprehending suspects ISIS televised and watched by the entire community. However, the punishment and the development of the suspects should be stated clearly so that people know and are afraid to join the legal action that will be imposed. Therefore, those responsible will have to devise a strategy to publish 'sense of fear' of society in Malaysia so as not to engage and collaborate with ISIS.

According to Lt Col Dr Zul (2016), ISIS said the notion was only God who deserves to make the law, those who deprive Allah categorized apostates and deserve to be killed, those who engage in the democratic process, election and be a candidate, using the law legal and utilized by humans, they are categorized as an infidel. This belief led to the lawfulness of their blood to be killed, the property may be confiscated and jihad can be launched to fight against individuals who do not support and do not follow their creed. Therefore, the National Security Council and the Religious Department of Islamic Development Malaysia needs to develop appropriate programs for the public perception of potentially neutralized with bearish deflected to follow the teachings of Islam. In implementing the program debate, the parties responsible should examine suitability of this effort whether it will bring a lot of advantages or disadvantages to the target group. The debate will make people more aggressive in thinking and certain parties need to focus on identifying individuals with relevant and credible to implement this effort in addition to gaining the full support from various parties.

## **THEME**

Based on the interview, JAKIM will be responsible for implementing the activities of religion talks and religious programs by their selected religious leaders in order to give talk related **the prophet way of life**. However, the two most important things are a clear understanding of the message delivered and able to influence the minds of the public. Based on the information obtained, there are parties involved, not only targeting the quantity or number of sessions or ISIS program description, but the results were based on acceptance, understanding and effectiveness of these activities to the target group. Activities should be disseminated through electronic media, especially on television and radio that gets the highest rating from the public and the press should have disseminated on a timely basis. Malaysia has yet to implement the **strategy of argument** through counter messaging action to ISIS and young people influenced and targeted by ISIS. In view of the researcher, this strategy should be implemented as soon as possible through social sites and blogs frequented by young people because it has become the trend of Malaysian society is now spending more time surfing the Internet and reading the blog for a more casual reading material. However, the Armed Forces have been carrying out the matter. The youth including university students should be approached and be involved with leisurely activities, discussions and negotiations so that they can give their views, share ideas as well as their needs and requirements are taken out.

Besides, **SEARCCT will be responsible to drafting module** includes provision of arguments against the narrative of ISIS because their task to serves as a regional counter-terrorism centre focusing research and public awareness programs. They also collaborate with other government and international organisations to counter the threat. For the Armed Forces, they have established **MINDEF (Ministry of Defence) Strategic Communication Centre** in order to fight and destroy all the militant elements especially ISIS. The center will monitor all activities carried out by terrorists that using Malaysia as a location to expand its ideology. Three services were involved from Army, Navy and Air Force, headed by their service commander.

## **IDEOLOGY**

In fighting ISIS ideology, the Armed Forces has implemented **Intelligence Exchange** bilaterally and multilaterally to obtain information on ISIS ideology. Strategy for negotiating have been executed but not comprehensive. It should be implemented with the support of a number of

proactive measures to increase because the statistic individuals involved with ISIS. Up to the date, a total of 177 Malaysians were believed to be in Syria for jihad ideology under the influence of ISIS. In order to strengthen cooperation with other government agencies and intelligence agencies, exchange the current information should be implemented and there should be no element to store an information or data important to not distribute to the relevant agencies. It is because, one of the factor of intelligence failure is important information obtained is not passed on to the relevant agencies. The Armed Forces have been providing information programs about the **true teachings of Islam to non-Muslims** from being misinterpreted by some people of Malaysia. Islam and ISIS is totally different entity. Islam is a way of life and emphasizes love, peace, familiarity and simplicity. While ISIS more focus on the ideology of terrorism to fight and misuse the name of Islam. The articles related to the true Islamic teachings and concepts should be disseminated so that people can learn the truth of Islam.

**Religious awareness program** should be expanded in every region and the Islamic Religion Department must provide guidance and encouragement to the program. Group of potential recruits should be restricted in terms of their desire and the spirit of jihad under ISIS and the authorities should not be overlooked in these programs because in Brazil there are many theologians and preachers are regularly invited to explain the concept of Islamic teachings. ISIS ideology easily gain a foothold in the mind as the basic religion of Islam that is not enough and took the easy way to get heaven than honor. This allows the effect of ISIS desire easily seep into the minds and beliefs of individual Muslims, especially when ISIS play hadiths and verses of Al-Quran with meaning according to their own version. The lectures in each area should be organized by the religion teachers to devise and remember the locals about the injustice that ISIS do. Program organized by the local headmen, representatives of the people and the priests will be able to attract more participation of local residents to hear a lecture or sermon or through informal activities. Frequency of activities performed must be followed by the effectiveness of the program. In addition, the village chief task is to identify the affected population, are involved with ideology than Islam although stray horse and this effort needs the cooperation of local communities. Individuals who are responsible for the welfare of local residents should also have a good knowledge in a clear understanding of ISIS ideology that is not disputed by the locals.

To counter the narrative of IS ideology, full **commitment from community and neighbourhoods** is needed. An ideal location to organize religious activities are in mosques in every district. The responsible party may appoint young people and make them young leaders because it can affect their interest to study Islam, for young people, especially adolescent phase still searching for identity themselves. The role of the Department of Islamic Affairs and individual stakeholders in the region should be concerned and identify the problems of the local community as the relationship between the factor stuck with the family problem and spouses and disappointed with life. Community programs should be increased and the teachers can act as motivators or set up counseling centers in parliament were voluntarily from qualified individuals. It is going to equip the youth by superficial knowledge of religion, thus solve the problems faced by them and preventing them from choosing the wrong path to join IS as fighters.

**Malaysian society need to be educated** and exposed to downside ideology of ISIS, consequences of joining ISIS, and how to counter the ISIS narrative. Actively campaign on true Islam and misinterpretation of ISIS jihad have to be explained details. Citizen have heard and seen the arrestment of suspected individuals, however the explanation about the real cause and

effect is not in place. Therefore, special documentation program should be designed and educated the public about the consequences of joining ISIS. Based on the experience of Ain Khadijah, she did not understand the meaning of ISIS, but many articles relating to the social ISIS shared to the reader. According to her, the articles focus on the ISIS, but there are no restrictions implemented. Actions have to be taken to block the negative information in social networking sites or blogs that are related extremist ideologies.

So far, Malaysia has said it will continue to stand against ISIS and condemn injustice ISIS and make a few steps and action to curb the influence of ISIS, despite the efforts made are still not comprehensive. To eliminate ISIS ideology is not easy and not all men know, really understand and have knowledge of ISIS. This matter needs to be studied, read and understood in depth because of lack of knowledge about the advantages of ISIS will be a chance to ISIS to expand their ideology in Malaysia assisted by individuals elected and easily deflected.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

Malaysia government needs to identify **credible religious leaders** who able to influence the citizen by explaining the ideology of ISIS. Religious speakers on television are mostly talked about topics that do not related to the dangers of ISIS. According to Mr Thomas, Malaysia has credible experts, but they were not given opportunity to showcase their talents and knowledge. These experts are important in conveying the messages about ISIS. Roadshows to the learning institutions are needed to alert the students about the threats of ISIS. **Face-to-face or house-to-house campaign** can be implemented. This approach more focuses on individuals and local community. The campaign can be done by the elected parliament representatives and such approach has yet to be implemented in Malaysia. Products such propaganda brochures, leaflets, banners, and posters can be distributed to the local community to raise the awareness about threats of IS. The propagated materials will mindset the community about the danger of IS and prevent them from involving in their activities. Malaysia is **cooperated with Islamic countries and OIC** to counter the Islamic State ISIS. Malaysia is often used as a staging point for IS activity in South East Asia. IS is targeting our citizen for financial and human resource support. Therefore, this cooperation is important to identify the manoeuvre and characteristics of militants among the Islamic countries. It will help to identify the militants from entering Malaysia.

In identifying individuals with potential to ISIS is difficult. The role of law enforcement agencies has to use the **experts in computer networking** to detect any elements that are suspicious and threats by ISIS in social affairs recruiting, distributing funds, planning activities, and coordinating the entry of foreign terrorist activities before being sent to the regional countries in Southeast Asia. These experts can help to break the bridge between IS and its targeted audiences. The enforcement agencies can effectively prevent the outreach of the social networking sites, thus decrease the influence of IS. In addition, some link or suspicious sharing info on social sites should be blocked from being read and shared by users of social sites. Expertise in computer networking should also regularly update and remove all links to the threat by ISIS to sabotage the computer system. Application through Google's Play Store also be blocked for providing games that provide opportunities and exposure to fans of games to try out applications involving terrorist. One example is the Terrorist Simulator 2015 is a blatant show ISIS symbol in the application. The intelligence in Armed Forces and PDRM have to closely monitor the suspected individuals whose has potential to be recruited as IS fighters. The **surveillance** from all government and private sectors is needed to

help the authorities to identify the suspected individuals. Once suspects are identified, immediate report should be sent to the authorities for immediate action.

**Promotion on ideology of Islam through social media by individual in making propaganda** need to be considered by the NSC and the government agencies involved. ISIS uses multiple routes through social media in order to provide an alternative to the user to select and interested in promoting their ideology. The process should be done by the government so that people continue to choose ways of live better and based on the Islamic religion. Parties involved should be sensitive because recruits are Muslim and ISIS played sentiment 'Islamic State' and keep mention the people who want to back to square one and the new way to get to know Islam. In Malaysia, 98% of individuals who are recruited through social sites. Therefore, the need for skilled individuals in making propaganda to counter all signs and articles published by ISIS. Continuous monitoring on a daily basis and often needs to be done by the party responsible for the group ISIS always monitor all issues prevailing in the country and identify individual potential. In addition, individuals who were recruited consist of Malaysians residing in Syria as Mohamad Wandu Mohd Jedy and Akil Zainal. They know the trends and desires of the people of Malaysia and the affected individual will also promote ISIS ideology and plans to buy weapons for an attack in Malaysia. Individuals who become targets before ISIS consists of the security forces, housewives, university and college students, individuals with family problems, life, social issues, women and children under age. Given the target group ISIS before, NSC and other relevance agencies must carry out under the program mainly on young people and problematic to build their own counter-message.

## INTENTION

In order to fight of ISIS and their intention, there are need to set up an ASEAN **anti-terrorism digital messaging centre** to fight the ISIS narrative online. It was informed by Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahidi to designed and counter ISIS's social media strength and present a more attractive alternative, including on digital platform. Apart from that, agencies whose responsible such as MCMC and Cyber Security needs to actively carry out preventive measures, using all the expertise available to them. There is need to activated our **cyber trooper involvement** in order to curb and counter the intention of ISIS to attract as many supporters by using social media as a medium to target their individual recruited. Similarly, with Malaysia, our intention is to fight and destroy their ideology by using social media. All material information disseminated by ISIS includes blogs that have been created regularly because ISIS also does not enable them when detected link, even create more links to spread their narrative. Besides, in order to **combating and eliminating the takfir belief** contrary to the teachings of Islam, greater efforts should be mobilized at national level. Involving such issues require the involvement at the national level who have the expertise knowledge and be able to explain this ideology that explicitly not based on Islam. Credible figures to be identified that can deliver these explanations to all walks of life. Until now, there has been no comprehensive measures undertaken in the social as well as through interaction in focus groups.

## MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The NSC and the security agencies must be consistent in identifying the clues to understand the **weakness of ISIS and modus operandi made by ISIS in social media**. This is because of the weakness ISIS is a strength for us to fight them passively (defensive). All elements that describe

ISIS cons should be exposed and disseminated regularly on social media in order not to provide an opportunity for them to meet cyber trooper slot in the social sites. In undergoing the campaign, the main thing to note is related to the **effectiveness of the campaign based on the acceptance** by the people of Malaysia. There is no doubt that ISIS is very powerful in social media and has its own experts to influence and persuade people of the world to sympathize with the oppressed Muslims in Syria. The same process can be used by Malaysia to show sympathy for the bereaved family related problems if there is one member of the family to go fight in ISIS seen vain and without clear direction. The approach can be used as a family man influenced by emotional than rational thinking.

Another effective way to influence people is by **using television and radio as traditional method** that will be watched and hearing by the whole community and have a lively audience. Apart from that, the government and the agencies involved need to look at the content transmitted in electronic media, printed and social media. Based on interviews, currently, the media more focused on political issues, entertainment seen as less important than issues of national security. ISIS-related issues need to be resolved and interesting analysis is structured so as to be accepted by society. In addition, the need for **frequently sharing an articles, arguments and evidence through internet** made against the narrative and accentuate social backend ISIS atrocities, as Malaysians prefer to read short stories than a book and a long article. Besides, through the using social media, the message will be conveying the truth about the dangers of ISIS.

Regarding of **free speech campaign**, this can be seen in terms of its effectiveness if it is to be implemented. The role of media is very significant in shaping the agenda and spread the message that has been made. Advantages and disadvantages of using free speech can be evaluated, but the implementation can be done by looking at the situation and the sensitivity of the Malaysian society without racial and religious disputes involving other nations. Department of Information and the media can assess the medium most frequently used by the public for information. Youtube consumption is greatly favored by the people of Malaysia and can be used as free speech activity. The implementation of **free speech in higher education institutions** have also seen relevant because many students among young people who are potentially affected by the ISIS if not properly briefed. However, the interpretation of the content in free speech should be emphasized so that students can accept and understand the true concept of Islam and not tanning with ISIS struggle more to politics to meet their objectives to monopolize the oil and interests in Syria.

Cyber security and the MCMC should take aggressive steps to address the threat of cyber ISIS through to the credibility and reliability of the agency are not in dispute. Restrictions and identify early indicators ISIS maneuver through social media networks. Through indicators that have been identified, the media campaign or media operations can be designed based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of ISIS against the targeted group.

## **PROPAGANDA**

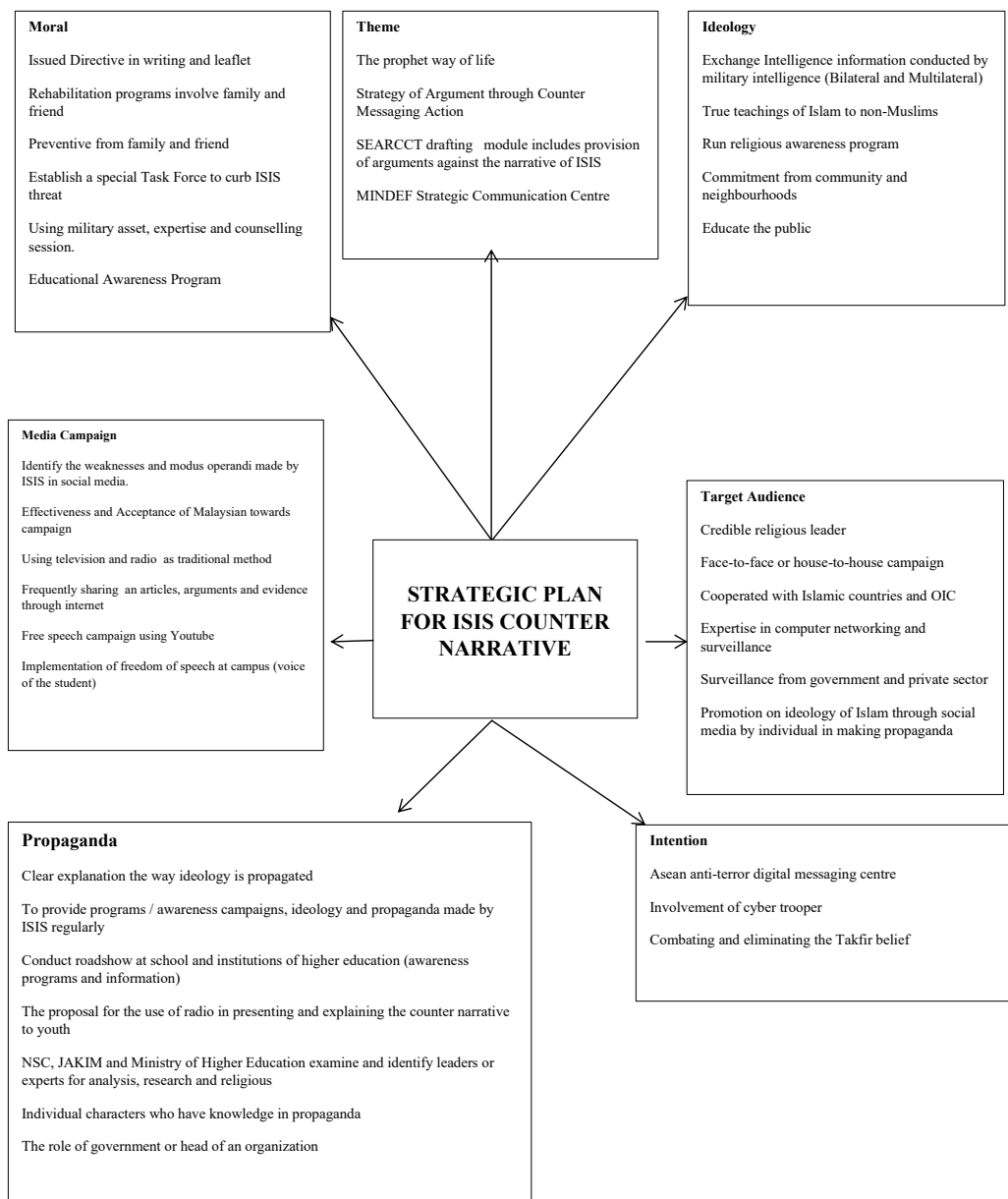
Based on the feedback, there is a need to counter to public mindset by the **clear explanation the way ideology is propagated** in Malaysia. The lack of efforts from the agencies responsible to correct public perception, the dangers and effects of ISIS Malaysia is just a statement issued by related efforts to combat ISIS Malaysia. The government should take proactive action and considers this a serious threat by giving it as priority one. Government through the National

Security Council should devise a joint strategy departments and agencies **to provide programs / awareness campaigns, ideology and propaganda made by ISIS regularly** so that in the minds of Malaysian society is synonymous with the word and the violence perpetrated by ISIS.

Ministry of Higher Education also plays an important role to **conduct roadshow at school and institutions of higher education** as a reminder to all students in higher learning institutions both public and private because young people are easily targeted by ISIS. Young people are very vulnerable due to the frequency ISIS uses social media and these people want to know all the phases. In addition, the roadshow programs should be conducted and its effectiveness should be given focus so that the programs achieve objectives. Related Topic ISIS can be made between the discussion in the classroom so that students will indirectly acquire facts and information on ISIS and the danger to the State, but must be guided by the instructors so that they are not stuck with the information support to the struggle.

The proposal for the use of radio in presenting and explaining the counter narrative ISIS is seen as a good step for young people and adults for radio as a medium to be heard by the public even wherever they are. Therefore, the department proposed to develop a program description and a title that appeals to impress listeners. National Security Council, the Religious Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and Ministry of Higher Education can **examine and identify leaders or experts for analysis, research and religious** either in terms of giving lectures or author of scientific books to answer the question of religion and the wrong interpretation of the concept of Islamic struggle real. They have been identified to create a counter narrative ISIS must understand and be clear about ideology, concepts, ideology and modus operandi of ISIS. Dabiq online magazine produced by ISIS as a major propaganda product that can attract people to gravitate to fight ISIS. The NSC should take special measures to identify and eliminate elements that are spread by ISIS through reading.

Malaysia is also seen to have **characters who have knowledge in propaganda** and can be active in the production of propaganda against ISIS narrative. Department urged to assess the relevance of the establishment of media production for the production of programs that can affect people not to get caught up with ISIS ideology. **The role of government or head of an organization** is very important. They should play a role in organizing awareness activities, warns about the effect of ISIS in addition to programs involving the community. The program involves a subordinate level survey should be carried out to see the reactions and attitudes about ISIS and ISIS whether they know about or not. Through the survey conducted, the responsible agencies can formulate an appropriate program based on the reactions and views of Malaysian society



**Figure 1: The Diagram of Strategic Plan for Counter Narrative of ISIS Ideology**

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data by using of seven elements which is moral, theme, ideology, target audience, intention, media campaign and propaganda, the government takes a serious view on the inclusion of ideology ISIS this and have taken steps and oppose vigorously spreading ideology ISIS Malaysia introduced legislation Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA), Security Offences Act (Langkah-Langkah Khas) 2012 (PIN 2015) (SOSMA), Crime Prevention Act 1959 (PIN 2015) (POCA). While the Malaysian Armed Forces in accordance with existing regulations of the Armed

Forces Act 1972 to prevent individuals and members of the military involved with militant or terrorist activities. Based on the seven elements, the Malaysian government and relevant agencies have responsibilities in drafting the strategy for making counter narrative of ISIS ideology from spreading and recruiting more Malaysians to Syria. Malaysian media agency must play a key role in order to compete and produce propaganda such as magazines, video games, video, articles and booklet as a counter to media belonging to Al-Hayat ISIS. Dabiq magazine issue can affect readers if they do not have knowledge in the teaching of Islam in depth. The Malaysian government must recognize the religious scholars and experts credible and proactive motivation, to have an understanding and knowledge of ISIS, claiming to fight the Jihadi Salafi ideology but influenced by takfir, infidels, namely individuals who do not support their cause.

Some people who tend to support the fight ISIS due sympathy for the situation of Muslims in Syria described by ISIS through their propaganda. In addition, ISIS emphasizes the concept of the caliphate, jihad and his supporters will be moved to a shallow knowledge of Islam to be affected. While the ISIS main goal is to involve the security forces because they require skilled personnel handling weapons, bomb making, skilled in computer, receive instructions well and durable. These features are a major threat to Malaysia in terms of national security and the need for the supervisor to monitor and restrictions on social media. Monitoring on social media, youtube, whatsapp, blogs and articles by the MCMC and cyber security as ISIS spread their ideology through social media that is most rapid and efficient method. Malaysia was also intelligence fight and destroy the effect of ISIS to identify sentiment played by ISIS to his followers and sympathizers continue to support ISIS. Malaysian Government through the National Security Council should put a high effort in developing campaigns, programs and various approaches start from the grassroots up to the higher authorities in eliminating ISIS activities in Malaysia. ISIS has a range of experts in propaganda move. Therefore, Malaysia should be more aggressive in organizing action to prevent more and more Malaysians to support the fight ISIS on the basis of sympathy, jihad, caliphate moved and wanted to be was to go to heaven. All the constraints and gaps include plans and actions that are not yet fully implemented and before these were given special attention for the sake of our security and sovereignty of Malaysia.

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## CHALLENGES FOR MALAYSIA IN ADDRESSING MARITIME SECURITY ISSUES

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### ABSTRACT

*Bridging the Pacific and Indian Ocean, Malaysia is indeed a maritime nation. It is flanked by the South China Sea, an area focuses on territorial contestation between Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei and China. To the west, it is situated at the Straits of Malacca which has close proximity to the Bay of Bengal an area that are flocking with illegal seaborne threats. With this maritime geographical proximity, Malaysia has sought to continuously develop its own maritime capabilities and strategies. Common threats to security concerning sovereignty, territorial disputes, jurisdiction, and non-traditional issues continue to haunt the nation. For Malaysia, all the challenges need to be tackled with a comprehensive maritime strategy. The objectives for this paper is to first reassess the maritime challenges faces by Malaysia today, second to reevaluate Malaysia's capabilities in tackling emerging threats and third analyse the existing maritime mechanisms and discuss some of the internal measurement adopted by Malaysia in safeguarding its maritime interest. It is suggested that government should priorities national policy making, port management, engagement with coastal and local maritime communities, improve military standard operating procedures and collaboration with other agencies in order to obtain optimum result in safeguarding Malaysia's maritime interest. This paper is a qualitative research consisting both secondary and primary data collections.*

**Keywords:** *Maritime Security; Malaysia Maritime; Maritime Agencies; Traditional Maritime Issues; Non-Traditional Maritime Issues*

### INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a Southeast Asia (SEA) member where Peninsular Malaysia shares a border with Thailand while Singapore is detached by Straits of Johor. With 4,675 km of coastline covering 2,068km in peninsular Malaysia and 2,607 km to the east, Malaysia is expose to a huge maritime space. To the west, the Straits of Malacca (SoM) is another open water space for Malaysia. Besides being a strategic waterway, the shortest path from the sea, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean is also vulnerability to various forms of non-traditional issues. Borneo is separated with Peninsular Malaysia by the South China Sea (SCS). Separated landmasses allows Malaysia to possess a vast area of territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Malaysia has 148,307 sq. km of territorial waters and, 598,450 sq. km of it is under the EEZ. To further emphasise, the position of the two territories separated by the SCS makes maritime and airspace security issues a priority in defence.

In terms of economy, Malaysia relies on the wealth of natural resource extraction found on the continental shelf, largely oil and gas at sea. The state depends heavily on trade in seaborne goods, products and raw material for import and export. Malaysia's economy has shown significant progress and almost 95% of Malaysia's industry is seaborne. The maritime trade and industry

have contributed almost two thirds of the overall economy. Malaysian offshore is home to the majority of its oil reserves. In addition, much of Malaysia's natural gas production comes from offshore Sarawak. Other than that, fishing industry provides about 2% of Malaysia's labour force. Such maritime activities and resources are vital contribution to Malaysia's prosperity, therefore influencing national ambition to build and use sea capacities and to become a fully-developed country.

The vast maritime areas which also being surrounded by other states, nonetheless, have contributed to several maritime threat such as piracy, illegal immigrants, smuggling, drug trafficking, terrorism and overlapping claims. In order to tackle these threats, all states have a nation's overall approach to the oceans around it, in order to synergise all aspects of maritime activities and optimise national benefits. Malaysia's maritime strategy has emphasized strategic maritime areas as the national interest that must be constantly defended, which its surroundings include land territories, territorial waters, airspace, the EEZ, SoM and its methods as the Sea Lane of Communications (SLOCs) linking Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. Malaysia has exercised authority and accountability for the purposes of maritime zone regulation, national defence, economy, consistency of state administration and maritime safety.

Nonetheless, implementation is ineffective as too many agencies are involved, leading to overlap, jurisdiction, poor coordination, competition for asset procurement and an unconsolidated use of resources. It is important to consolidate all enforcement agencies as it will allow the country to counter emerging threats at sea. On the other hand, Malaysia struggles with limited assets in safeguarding its maritime interest in the region. The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) for example, the restricted resources for maritime patrol operations were among the limitations that Malaysia needs to take into account as it is an important aspect in meeting the requirements of maritime patrols. Malaysia, only have a limited number of aircraft with limited equipment for maritime operations such as a meteorological radar, screen, binocular, and new maritime monitoring system in comparison to the neighbouring country, Singapore. No doubt Malaysia has several existing maritime mechanism and enforcement units but it also entails several challenges which this paper will deal with.

In line with this background, this paper seeks to identify and discuss the main challenges in maritime security to Malaysia, the capabilities of Malaysia in safeguarding its' national interest and lastly to analyse the measurement taken by Malaysia's government in order to safeguard its maritime interest.

## **TRADITIONAL THREATS**

The threats for Malaysia in the maritime domain comes both in traditional and non-traditional forms. The following are some of the traditional maritime threats for Malaysia.

### **China's Intrusion in the South China Sea**

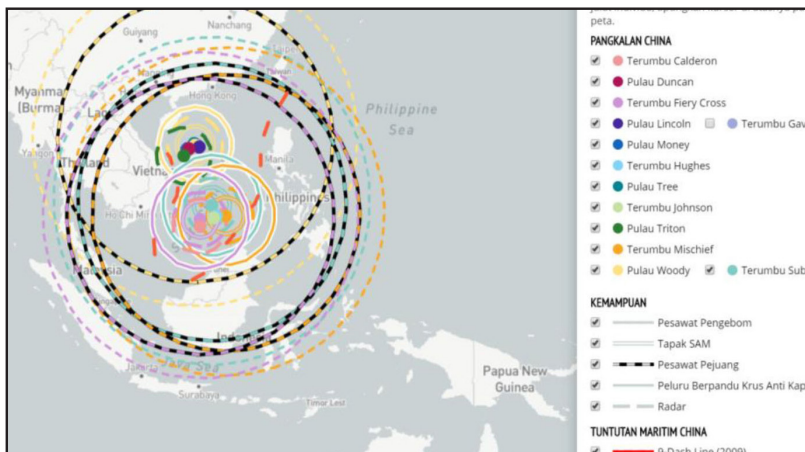
China's actions clearly reflect a traditional threat faced by Malaysia regarding its maritime territory, that of the SCS dispute. The dispute, stemming from multiple claims to segments of the area, involves Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines and Taiwan, which clamber over the Paracel Islands, Scarborough Shoal and Spratly Islands. China however, has gone overboard, claiming the entire area. Brunei was once a co-claimant too of a 200nm EEZ under the terms of United Nation Convention of Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in addition to a variety of land features within its legally boundaries in the southern portion of the shore, including Louisa Reef, Owen Shoal and Rifleman

River. In 2018, however, Brunei abandoned this claim, in exchange for monetary assistance from China. The argument of China is based on its historical rights. For Malaysia, the area concerned in the claim is Lucania Shoal (Beting Patinggi Ali) and Beting Serupai, which overlaps with claims by China, bringing the possibility of a military clash as both sides are intent to stake their claims.

However, China seems to have asserted itself aggressively. One of the tactics used is offering financial assistance to needy co-claimants, such as in the case with Brunei. Another, is the use of military propaganda. By using its Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) vessels (identified as civilian vessel instead of military vessel), it attempts to chase out other vessels from the disputed area, on the account that this is not a military act, it makes it as if China has a *casus belli* to defend itself. It was a tactic used by China against Vietnam in 2015, and is not impossible that Malaysia would also face similar act. In 2018 for example, Malaysian fishermen in Miri reported of being harassed by CCG vessels, when their fishing vessels were harassed. Luckily, they were not chased, but still, it was nearly so. Their complaints, though channelled by Malaysia through diplomatic channel, were ignored even though the vessel had war equipment, but it was more suitable for use in the SAR mission. For Malaysia, this would cause a grievance. If every time China's military vessels encroach the contested area disguised or claimed as other entities (such as search and rescue missions or hydrographic study missions), there would be a problem for Malaysia to enforce area control as any act against such missions would draw international criticism and actions.

China has also been significantly expanding its capability and its construction of two civil-military bases on the disputed Spratly and Paracel Island chains is evident. This include the building of an array of new radar and communication facilities, air strips and hangars for military aircraft, as well as the placement of mobile air-to-surface guided missile and anti-ship guided cruising missile systems.

Figure 2.1 shows how China's capabilities in SEA overlaps with each other. The interactive map, developed by Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) illustrates the range for high radar frequency being 300 km, while the range for smaller array is shown as 50 km. The combat radius for the aircraft is based on China's J-11 jets, while the range for bombers is based on the H-6 Bombers. Both these aircraft have been deployed to Woody Island before. The fighter aircraft and bomber ranges in the Fiery Cross, Mischief and Subi reefs show upcoming projected deployment referred on the shelters built to place the assets.



**Figure 1: China's Power Capabilities Projection in The South China Sea.**

*Source: Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*

China's expansion in the SCS is participated by its numerous parties, from its People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the CCG, China Fisheries Law Enforcement Command, China's maritime militia - even its own fishermen. This has resulted in a number of aggressive manoeuvres, in which Malaysia's fishing crew, shipping crew, and even military forces have been at the receiving end. Meanwhile, confident to the point of being arrogant, China's fishing vessels have been so daring to encroach into Malaysia's sovereign territory, venturing as far as eight miles from Kuala Niah and Kuala Sibuti in Sarawak.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2013, China's Navy invaded James Shoal, just 80 km from Bintulu. It was a direct threat to the country's sovereignty, taking place while Malaysia was facing another threat in Sabah - the intrusion of the Sulu terrorists into Lahad Datu. At the time, the majority of the MAF strength was focused on dealing with the Sulu threat, and most of the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) ships were tasked to barricade the national maritime border to prevent the terrorists from leaving Tawi-Tawi in the Philippines. It was an opportunity taken by the Chinese Navy to encroach into Malaysia's territory and conduct amphibious landing exercise on James Shoal. The incident did not get much publicity, but China's People's Daily newspaper itself reported that the Chinese military had landed on James Shoal in a naval exercise that began on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2013. Among the assets involved in the exercise were fast patrol crafts, amphibious landing crafts, hovercraft, helicopters, amphibious tanks, jet fighters and bombers. On 25<sup>rd</sup> March, a Chinese high official visited the exercise and without any reservation, the Chinese military swore an oath to defend James Shoal, which they claimed as China's territory.

In April, a CCG vessel disembarked their personnel, who installed a steel plaque, which was later removed by Malaysian personnel. Despite the many actions taken by Malaysia at the time, like installing signage on James Shoal and sending its military vessels, in addition to sending diplomatic notes to China, James Shoal was encroached again in Jan 2014 by Changbaishan and two destroyers, Wuhan and Haikou. These incidents are just some of the examples how another state blatantly encroaches into Malaysia's maritime territory, challenging Malaysia's sovereignty. As reported in AMTI published in 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the CCG vessels maintain a near-constant presence at Lucania Shoal off the coast of Malaysia's Sarawak State with the observation within 60 days, the rotation patrolling of the Zhonggue Haijing 3306, 3501 and 3502 at the shoal. Until today, it has continued sending its CCG to patrol the area.

## **MARITIME ENCROACHMENT BY INDONESIA**

Another traditional threat to Malaysia comes from maritime encroachment by sovereign parties, such as the case of an Indonesian Fishery Monitoring vessel encroaching into Malaysia's water off Jarak Island in Lumut, Perak, on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019. A Malaysian fishing vessel was damaged and two fishermen were injured. The Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) sent their asset to the area, and managed to chase out the invading vessel. This is but one of the examples of how foreign officials encroach into Malaysia's waters, and it has taken place for a long time. Indonesians and Vietnamese particularly, are active perpetrators. This happens, despite agreements between the states' security agencies with Malaysia's.

Indonesia for example, has a standing agreement with Malaysia about necessary acts to be taken to avoid maritime disputes. Yet, the country's security agencies still seize Malaysian fishing vessels, often accused of crossing the border onto their side instead. This could lead to diplomatic tension, as it also gives rise to a method of non-traditional threat, as the security personnel acts are meant to acquire ransoms or conduct piracy. These are possible, given the fact that RMP-VAT69 Komando were used to capture a number of Indonesia's security agencies' vessels which tried to seize Malaysia's fishing vessels illegally.

From talk sessions with fishermen at the fishing jetty in Kuala Muda, Kedah for example, they recall numerous times how they were pursued by Indonesian enforcement agencies' boats, and had their own boats dragged into the Indonesian waters. They would be held with threat of being captured unless they pay these personnel certain amount of money, often at least RM50 for every person on the fishing boat, before they are released. The matter has been brought up a few times with the District Fishing Committee, but to date, not much action has been taken, and the fishermen still experience this tremendous risk when they leave for the open sea in the SoM or Andaman SEA region.

## ISSUES WITH PHILIPPINES OVER SABAH

Sabah is a part of Malaysia since it joined the Federation in 1963. However, there are still issues of the state being claimed to be a part of the Philippines, and that the joining in 1963 was somehow invalid. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, parts of Sabah's east were ruled by the Sulu sultanate – a Muslim state which ruled several islands spread across parts of Mindanao, Palawan and Borneo. The sultanate in 1878 signed an agreement handing the territory over to the North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC), a British colonial company tasked to exploit the resources in North Borneo.

The Philippines has long claimed that this agreement constituted a lease, rather than a full cession, of the territory to the NBCC. Malaysia considers Philippines' claim a "non-issue" as Sabah in 1963 – along with neighbouring Sarawak state, and Singapore which became one of the founding states of the Federation of Malaysia, in what Putrajaya maintains was an act of self-determination by Sabah residents. The endless claim in fact, was the factor that caused the Lahad Datu incursion incident. The conflict began on arrival of 235 militants from Simunul Island, Tawi-Tawi, in the southern Philippines.

Sultanate of Sulu, Jamalul Kiram III specified that their goal was to confirm the disputed territorial claim of the Philippines to the East Sabah. Malaysian security forces surrounded the village of Tanduo in Lahad Datu, whereby the militia had assembled, after couple of weeks of talks and deadlines for the removal of intruders, in particular after the killing of Malaysian police officers, conducted a major operation to extinguish militants. 56 activists were killed, along with six civilians and ten Malaysian security personnel. The rest of the rebellions were either captured or managed to flee back to the Philippines.



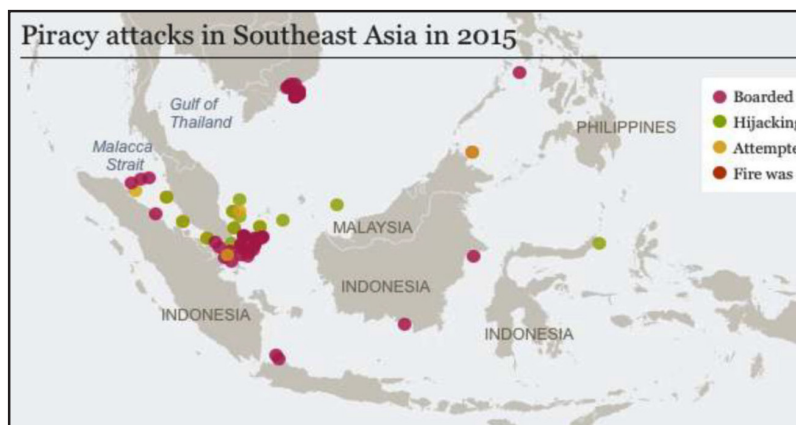
**Figure 2: Philippines' Claim on Sabah.**

*Source: South China Morning Post*

## Non-Traditional Threats

“Non-traditional security concerns are challenges to the preservation and the well-being of people and states that arise primarily from non-military sources, such as climatic change, scarcity of resources, contagious diseases, natural catastrophes, irregular migration, food shortages, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking and transnational crime”. Among the non-traditional security threats for Malaysia’s maritime areas are as the following.

### MARITIME CRIME



**Figure 3: Piracy Attacks in Southeast Asia in 2015.**

*Source: International Maritime Bureau*

Maritime criminal activities such as sea robbery and illegal trades has been a long-lasting issue for Malaysia. While most domestic syndicates and gangs have been disrupted, occurrences of this type of crime, both in and near Malaysian waters, are still widespread. The stealing of fuel to the flourishing illegal fuel market in SEA has been a key objective. Most of the goods robbed by SEA pirates were liquid goods including gasoline, palm oil, bio-fuel or liquid gas.

According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a total incident in first half of 2016 seem reduced to 24 compared with the same period of time on 2015 which recorded at 54 cases. However, the SEA region is still the major trade route in the world and opens up a lot of opportunities for piracy activities.

### Kidnap for Ransom (KFR)

Malaysia is the recruiting ground for terrorist groups, particularly in southern Thailand and Sabah. *Jemaah Islamiah*, *Abu Sayyaf*, *Tanzim Al-Qaeda*, *Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia* and *Darul Islam Sabah* are quite well-known terrorist groups. KFR is how they will receive capital for their operational expenses. In the waters of Sabah, there is a massive catch to the Moro and Abu Sayyaf pirates, who be used as an Islamist militant terrorist group when they are not out of kidnapping. KFR remains a main threat in the Sabah maritime area due to this. By regularly patrolling coastal areas, this has reduced the number of kidnappings in coastal resorts and fishing villages. Statistics indicated that the kidnappers began targeting the commercial ships and fishing boats are at sea in the hectic route between southern Philippines, East Sabah and East Kalimantan started in 2016. There is also a movement made up of supporters and even leaders of the various militant groups involved with the radicalism of the southern Philippines that has also become a threat.



**Figure 4: KFR cases in Sabah.**

*Source: The Sunday Post*

## Illegal Fishing

A total of 256 foreign vessels worth nearly RM180 million were seized while 2,199 foreign crews have been detained since 2016. This is an issue that is important to be addressed. They come from Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. The fishermen from Vietnam seem to be more aggressive compared to the others, as exhibited in the case where they actually apprehended Malaysia's RMN's personnel who seized their vessel, after re-possessing the said vessel. The incident went unreported, and no further news has been received on the fate on the personnel.

According to the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Malaysia is losing up to RM6 billion per year due to illegal fishing. This is happening in spite of strict regulation measures in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains endemic because the return on investment is profitable and because the vast area makes it almost impossible to control. Research teams at the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) have discovered that there is still a critical level of fish supply in the country and fast action needs to be taken to stop the smuggling of Malaysian fish products from the region. Around 980,000 tons of the Malaysia's sea product value between RM3 billion and RM6 billion lost annually due to illegal fishing activities, only 50% makes its way to the local market but the rest are untraceable.

Regards with all these loses, in July 2019, the Fisheries Act of 1985 was amended with enhancing the penalty for wrongdoings. The Fisheries Act raises the overall penalty for the owner or captain of a foreign vessel captured in Malaysian waters from RM1 million to RM6 million and the penalty for each crew member from RM100,000 to RM600,000. The authorities have also stumbled across what could be a common dirty tactics used mostly by local ship owners to engage in illegal fishing, pulling in mega bucks. Among the tactics that have been identified are using international crews to fish in areas dedicated to small scale fishing activities.

This was successfully detected by the MMEA vessel after the arrest of three trawlers in Miri. These three trawlers are operated by Indonesians but are registered by local companies.

The next mistake is the use of fishing licenses in the offshore area of 7nm up but they have cast nets in the coastal line i.e. in the range below 5nm. The trawlers seized had been monitored for a few weeks, and all 13 Indonesians crews were arrested. Investigation found that the owner of the trawlers was a company in Sarawak which received a net profit of RM100,000 each time during the peak season.

## **Smuggling**

Together with illegal fishing, another non-traditional threats that exists in Malaysia's waters is smuggling. Often, this activity is conducted by the same foreign boats conducting illegal fishing, as a sort of add-up value to their activity. Agencies such as the Royal Marine Police (RMP), *Pasukan Gerakan Marin* (PGM) and Special Investigation and Intelligence Division has managed to capture over 2,129 people with a total of RM 171.2 million as a result of the smuggling of goods and illegal fishing.

Goods are smuggled into the country by falsely calling them "permitted goods" as they are brought to different ports and points of entry. Many syndicates often use vessels to carry products across white sand beaches to escape the authorities. The offenders captured were mainly those employed by the syndicates that will provide logistic support, such as lorry drivers and storage managers. Normally, they will be mainly locals employed for the job, with only a limited number of foreigners. The group masterminds may not be on the ground throughout the smuggling operations, as they will be controlling the operations remotely. With the enforcement initiative taken, the perpetrators of both smuggling and illegal fishing have resorted to drastic action to avoid capture, such as burning their boats to get rid of evidences.

## **MALAYSIA'S EXISTING MARITIME MECHANISMS**

As a country that gives high importance to maritime domain, there are several mechanism adopted by Malaysia to facilitate maritime interest in the country. RMN, RMAF and enforcement units are also in line with the aim of serving the maritime interest of Malaysia.

### **The Centre for Ocean Law and Policy (OLAP)**

Striving to become Malaysia's National Centre of Excellence for Legal and Maritime Study, MIMA comes with mission of offering advisory and consultancy services relating to maritime issues to related parties through measures such as training, education, research policy and public awareness activities. Besides having good relationship with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other maritime industry, OLAP also maintain a good working relationship with local government ministries and agencies. It is the function of OLAP as to providing advice and policy choices that are appropriate and current. It also determines the concerns and adherence to various disciplines including ocean and maritime law that include the UNCLOS 1982 and international law relating to the other. OLAP is responsible for providing knowledge, information and awareness of the importance of maritime law to all relevant parties. This is done through workshops and seminars where all this information is given on an ongoing basis to ensure that it will create interest by calling researchers and knowledgeable speakers to deliver it.

## Maritime Enforcement Coordination Centre (MECC)

The establishment of the MECC provides some sort of coordinating possibility for all the relevant agencies. The point of such centre was so that there would be no competition on a personal level among the enforcement agencies, in portraying their effectiveness and efficiency, in order to garner more attention. It was also meant to address the issue of overlap of jurisdiction that would hinder the effectiveness in the enforcement of Malaysia's maritime interest. The centre, based at the RMN's base in Lumut, Perak, was disbanded later.

Such centre is still very much needed, especially in the light of emergence of various non-traditional security threats related to the maritime domain. This can serve as a one-stop or central contact point to coordinate all maritime issues, including all relevant maritime and enforcement agencies. It will make it easier for them to work together, sharing whatever classified intelligence each gathers or obtains, in order to improve compliance at sea. Having the centre would expand the enforcement agencies' scope of tasks to deal not only with illicit fishing, but also with other problems such as contraband smuggling (cigarettes, weapons, liquor, etc.), narcotics and trafficking in human beings. It would also reflect a 'whole government approach' to address the various crime and illegal activities that are taking place in Malaysia's waters. The centre can also serve as a control measure in curbing the problem of information-leaking among enforcement personnel, who resort to the act as a way to generate side income. This tends to happen when the agencies work in isolation, and when this happens, it seriously disrupts enforcement efforts, particularly by other agencies. Such centre would act as a check-and-balance surveillance to keep the enforcement personnel continuously aware, as well as ensure their integrity.

In the meantime, the agencies would have to resort to existing measures, or find measures that can help them curb illegal maritime activities. One of them is the RMN's '*tanya khabar*' initiative with local fishermen who can be their 'eyes' and 'ears' secretly. Such act also serves as a confidence-building measure for all stakeholders and help to counter crime more successfully, in addition to the utilisation of technological assets such as artificial intelligence.

## Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN)

The RMN began its formation as the Straits Settlement Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (SSRNVR) in Singapore on 27 April 1934. It then went to be known as the Malay Navy, later disbanded in 1947, only to be reactivated 24<sup>th</sup> December 1948 due to the Malayan Emergency. The RMN came into being on 12 July 1958, and was later renamed as the RMN when the federation was formed. The RMN saw active tasking during the *Konfrantasi* with Indonesia, and has since upgraded its inventory with the procurement of a number of vessels since the 1970s until hitherto. The RMN's capability has been tested, and it has shown its ability to undertake a number of roles including patrolling the Gulf of Aden to thwart piracy since 2009. Though it is far off from Malaysia's EEZ, it highlights the capability of the RMN, and the force was also involved in the control of Malaysia's maritime zone from piracy, such as recapturing the hijacked vessel Okim Harmony in 2015. There are 13 bases throughout Malaysia, with one dedicated to the submarine fleet, in Teluk Sepanggar, which houses the Scorpene-class submarines. The RMN also possesses offshore bases in the disputed Spratly's Islands area. The five offshore naval stations were initially established on outlying atolls, with the most modern Station Lima now being extended. Among the facilities available at these bases are basic accommodation blocks and a basic aviation requirement. The military aircraft landed here are B200T, C130-H and CN-235.

The RMN conduct patrols over the area using the CB90 attack vessels and patrol boats such as the Kedah-class offshore patrol vessels. Since the 1980s, the RMN's modernisation has expanded its inventory of assets, to include the Laksamana class corvettes, Lekiu class frigates, specific missile system, Sea Wolf VLS point defence SAM system, Westland Super Lynx helicopters, new generation patrol vessel and Scorpène-class submarines. A number of other additions are in line with the 15-5 Transformation Programme but some of it were earlier postponed due to financial issues. But it has now began to resume – this effort was evident with RMN acquiring its second Littoral Mission Ship (LMS) KD SUNDANG on January 2021. Two more will join the LMS Squadron in mid 2021. The recent being the Littoral Combat Ship Project.

In addition to the vessels and aircraft patrolling and guarding the maritime area, the RMN also has a commando unit, PASKAL, whose roles include the handling of non-traditional threats such as ship hijack and hostage taking at sea. The RMN has also established a floating base, designated as the Tun Sharifah Rodziah sea base operating in the sea off Sabah. It is basically a re-purposed decommissioned oil rig turned into a floating base, equipped with a network centric system for the deployed units, particularly tasked in the ESSZONE.

### **Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF)**

Key role of the RMAF is to watch over the nation's air sovereignty. This means its role would also encompass the maritime airspace. In general, the RMAF works in tandem with the RMN in conducting air patrol over the maritime area mainly using the C130-H aircraft initially, though there have been plans to procure maritime patrol aircraft to increase its maritime-related role. In 1992, No 16 Sqn was established with 4x Beechcraft Super King Air (B200T) and has flown from Wichita, USA on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1994. This B200T officially operating on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 1994 with the military operation role, air and maritime surveillance operations, search and rescue operation of this site constitutes of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. The key tasks of this B200 T were to include warning and immediately report of ships in EEZ waters, to watch and reporting activities in the platform area and fishing zone, to watch and patrol the reef, island and rocks occupied and claims. They are also responsible to watch and reporting influx of illegal immigrants, smuggling and activities water pollution besides search and rescue mission. The additional asset from RMAF to support the maritime air patrol is three CN235 which will be acquired end of 2021 with assistance of the United States. The task, role and responsibility are the same as the B200T other than the main task as a transport aircraft.

### **Malaysia's Enforcement Units**

There are a few maritime enforcement units in Malaysia. The MMEA acts as the leading maritime law enforcement agency, supported by RMN, RMAF, which performs its own maritime air patrols, as well as the Department of Fisheries under the MoF and the RMP Marine, officially known as the Marine Operations Force.

### **Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA)**

The MMEA began its existence with the KD Lembing and KD Sri Melaka, and offshore patrol vessels KD Marikh and KD Musytari from the RMN, in addition to the 17 other vessels belonging to RMN fleet to support their compliance operations. It began operations in 2005, with

the objective of transforming and consolidating Malaysia's maritime enforcement efforts. Formally known as Malaysia Coast Guard (MCG) for global identification, The Coast Guard Organisation of Malaysia and the primary government are responsible for maintaining law and order and managing SAR activities in the MMZ and the high seas. Starting December 2017, the role of the MMEA has been enhanced where they have been held fully responsible for a major player in the airborne surveillance in the national waters. However, this statement raised a range of concerns as the MMEA, unlike the RMN, have very little experience in coordinating maritime air surveillance operations. There are ongoing discussions on the establishment of a joint committee led by the MMEA, with important roles to be played by the RMN and the RMAF. It gives the idea that the MMEA should shift to an apex leading role on maritime protection in Malaysia.

## **Marine Police**

The Marine Police Force (*Pasukan Gerakan Marin / PGM*) is the Marine Police Division of the RMP under the responsibility of maintaining law and order and carrying out national security operations in the Malaysian Territorial Waters (MTW) with no borders until the High Seas. The PGM serves under Malaysian Internal Security & Public Order (ISPO) Department with the role of safeguarding the security of Malaysian waters from any threats. They operate mainly from five bases located in Penang, Johor, Kuantan, Sabah and Sarawak. The PGM team is accountable for patrolling MTW, EEZ and Contiguous Zone. The major tasks are to support SAR in the MTW and EEZ. In specific, help in transporting victims of flooding or natural disasters, in specific shipwrecks, etc. They also support other divisions in the RMP organisation to conduct activities other than PGM activities with the permission of the Head of the ISPO Department with the PGM Commander's advice. In addition, they also having a task to patrol, investigate and protect the coastal areas and islands of Malaysian waters, provide communication facilities in areas accessible only by sea or boat, and defend the country from subversive elements and external threats.

The force's assets include the PT Class Transport Vessel, PLC - Police Landing Class Vessel, PSB - Police Sea Basin Vessel, PA/PC/PS/PSC patrol crafts, RHIB - Rigid Hull Inflatable class boats and PAR/PGR class patrol vessel. The PGM has proven its capability in addressing threats in Malaysia's maritime zone through a number of operations, such as during the Lahad Datu pirate attacks in 1985, the operation against Moloi Wuah @ Moloi Hijang - a wanted Filipino criminal in 1996, and Ops MV Paulijing to capture a hijacked ship in 2005. the PGM also has a special unit dedicated to hardcore operations, called the UNGERIN (*Unit Gerakan Marin*).

## **MEASURES BY MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT**

Although exist maritime bodies and mechanism, the Malaysia government has taken several steps in beefing up its security in the maritime domain. It consists of national policy making, port management, engaging coastal and local maritime communities, improving military standard operating procedures and collaboration with other agencies.

### **National Policy Making**

Despite being a maritime country, Malaysia has yet to possess a holistic National Maritime Policy to reconcile the various maritime activities. Tun Mahathir Mohamad in his speech in the National Maritime Conference 2019 in Langkawi Island on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019 said that the need

for an overarching maritime policy in Malaysia encompassing all aspects — including security, safety, economy and environment. He also addressed that such policy in ocean governance is needed as fragmented sea management would not be able to solve overlapping jurisdictions and conflicts of interests between the sectors. Of course the Malaysian government plays a role in the internal political sector in empowering Malaysia as a maritime nation. Since 1957, Malaysia has established its National Defence Policy (NDP). The NDP is a classified document that can only be reviewed by other government departments. It relates to highly classified defence policies that were available in 1971, 1979 and 1981. The aim of this strategy is to protect and defend Malaysia's national interests, which are at the core of sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic well-being. Malaysia also opposes the use of the use of force to settle international conflicts and seeks peaceful solutions.

Malaysia's National Defence Policy (NDP) can be useful to provide some general views because its goal is to protect and defend Malaysia's national interest, the core of which is sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic well-being. This strategy outlines three concepts, which is the national interest, the principles of defence and the concept of defence at the level of the immediate, regional and global level. It covers the need to maintain a secure and healthy environment in the immediate areas of its strategic interest. This NDP represents the ongoing commitment to improve the modernisation of national defence and armed forces, which includes the introduction of preventive measures as well as efforts to build a military with a strong combat capability.

In conjunction with Malaysia's declaration of a maritime nation, the Malaysian government launched its Defence White Paper (DPW) in December 2019. The DPW would protect the nation through a holistic security framework with open participation. This paper is an open paper comprising the security course and goals for the duration of ten years (2021-2030), covering the 12th and 13th plans of Malaysia. This is appraisable to all people as it is the culmination of interaction with the military and civil society. With the existence of these two documents, all the agencies involved and even the Malaysians themselves have a common knowledge base on the standing and importance of defending Malaysian maritime sovereignty.

### **Improving military standard operating procedures**

Under the MMEA as a leader, MAF has joined a co-operation in providing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and *Perintah Tetap Pengawasan Udara Maritim*. This document should be streamlined in accordance with circumstances and current needs and reviewed every three years. The limitations of each agency are identified through this cooperation to address the shortcomings and weaknesses of other agencies. For this, the existing gaps will be filled and this will ensure that no maritime area are left unattended and overlooked. With the SOP and the *Perintah Tetap Pengawasan Udara Maritim*, all maritime agencies have the same purpose and direction in carrying out the responsibility of defending the maritime area of Malaysia.

In order to ensure the SOPs are properly designed, and comply with standards without any confusion or inconsistencies in procedures, SAR Exercise (SAREX) has been implemented by Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) once in a year. This training involves all government agencies directly or indirectly. Another purpose of SAREX is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the members in the operation of CARILAMAT operations. A similar attempt is observed through

the establishment of '*Prosedur Tetap (PROTAP) Operasi Bersama Agensi Penguatkuasaan Maritim Malaysia dan Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia*' – a common Standard Operating Procedure which was shaped in 2016 to coordinate and regulate Rules of Engagement (ROE) between both maritime entities in order to achieve effective coordination and communication at sea. A prior research by the author found that the maritime entities shared geographical setting and boundaries (territorial and EEZ) make it easier to operate functions in the same area with similar assets. PROTAP has further reduced miscommunication and overlapping functions and has become a benchmark, and such ROE can be implemented in the SCS. *Ops Sekat* is one such example.

### **Consolidation with Maritime Agencies**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the government seek to consolidate various maritime agencies to curb threats coming from the sea. The National Task Force (NTF) that was established in 2020 is a success story as it did bring 19 agencies under one roof to consolidate and manage overlapping functions and resources. However, its role and function are confined to curbing refugees and illegal immigrants. Hence, without a holistic national maritime policy, it disrupted the capability of the enforcement agencies in executing their roles without interruption. Nonetheless there is no doubt that has been assisting and acting as a support system for Malaysia in addressing its maritime security at its territorial waters.

Similar is in the case of Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) om 2013 after the intrusion of Royal Sulu Force (RSF) from Philippines at Lahad Datu. ESSCOM general aims to watch over land and maritime security involving various agencies, including the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), RMP, MMEA and Immigration Department (JIM).

### **Engaging Coastal and Local Maritime Communities**

Subsidies to the fisheries market have been in force in Malaysia for several years. With subsidies, it will reduce the expense of fishing activities and raise profits that make fishing enterprises more competitive. According to LKIM, there are several categories of subsidies given to Malaysian fishermen. These include fuel subsidies, monthly allowances to fishermen, basic equipment of fishing, installation of automatic identification systems, construction of fishing piers, financing of fishing boats, construction of marine protection areas, artificial reefs and special housing funds for build and help repair fisherman's homes that are eligible for assistance.

One of the programs under the government subsidy are the availability of capacity-enhancing subsidies which lead to non-investment in natural capital assets. These programs will maximise fishing capabilities to the point where more resources are maintained. As fishing ability develops, it is impossible to achieve the maximum sustainable target. Subsidies that increase capacity include all forms of capital input and government assistance that increase income and reduce costs. These are included pricing and marketing support, processing and infrastructure programs, or temporary and institutional support given. The Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry (MOA) for example also have introduced new fishing boat for local fishermen use Global Positioning System (GPS) to locate fish. With this initiative, fishermen may be able to save so much diesel for their boats by fishing efficiently. The system, defined as the Fishing Sites Identification System (FSI) implemented by the National Fishermen's Association of Malaysia (NEKMAT) developed in conjunction with the MoF and the Malaysia Remote Sensing Agency

(ARSM), can effectively provide additional information such as chlorophyll and sea surface temperature data. In addition, ARSM analyses these data before providing information to fishermen on a number of potential fishing zones. This data helps to detect fish that swim to the sea surface and seems to be easier to catch. In short, as addressed by ARSM, one of the advantages of FSI is to help identify the location with high density of fish based on the biophysical parameter and marine physical through oceanographic satellite images.

## **CONCLUSION**

Malaysia is a maritime nation; a fact that has been established by its rich history abound with proofs of existences of glorious empires that once shaped mankind's civilisations. Sitting amidst one of the world's most important contemporary trade paths - the, Malaysia's sea borne trade has become among the biggest contributors to the profits generated for the country, helping the country establish its economic stability, then provides the ability for the country to construct a stable region. Nevertheless, threats still remains for Malaysia. Traditional threats have the potential to disrupt diplomatic relations such as SCS disputes, claims of Sabah that affecting Malaysia's position at the national level which will involve military intervention such as the involvement of China in SCS. Maritime crimes, KFR, illegal activities at the sea are an example of non- traditional threats, which seen to disrupt the country's source of income and create a threatening situation that will affect the safety and security of the people in the nation.

The key finding is that protecting and regulating EEZ is prerequisite because Malaysia is a maritime nation based on its dependence on natural resources where these duties and responsibilities are delegated to the designated authority agencies. There are still limitations and challenges faced especially due to lack of resources either in term of budget or assets itself. The law and policies that already published were not fully familiarise and fully applied by the respective agencies. In the operational level, the problem faces by most of the agencies involved are the lack of manpower hands on in the organisation itself and the vital issues are about the ship and the aircraft used for the patrolling in the MMZ. Nevertheless it is simplified that Malaysia able to uphold and safeguarding its maritime sovereignty. This will be long lasting as long as Malaysia keep the good performance and maintain the right leadership attitude. The study proves that all this can be achieved from practising good governance and also better transparency and consolidation between maritime agencies.

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## COMPREHENDING COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This research examines the global phenomenon of Jihadi-Salafi terrorism based on the conceptual framework of terrorism, and Malaysian government's reaction to the threat from the standpoint of Neorealism approach to security in International Relations and National Strategy. On the basis of national security concept and 'self-defense' principle promoted by neorealists, it analyzes the government's counter measures between the period since the emerging of Al-Qaeda in international political domain following the 9/11 attacks on the United States (US) until the present phenomenon of ISIS. In doing so, the main objective of this paper is to explore the national strategy and the overall implementation of national power as well as the government's level of commitment in the practice of domestic counterterrorism to address the issues that revolved around Jihadi-Salafi inspired terrorism and violent extremism. The finding from this study concludes, while the level of racial and religious intolerance, local support for ISIS, and the number of attempted terror attacks in Malaysia have increased, the government is still sluggish to implement measures other than hard-security approach to address the multifaceted elements of Jihadi-Salafi threat, notwithstanding, the state has the experience in dealing with ideological-inspired violence. The omission of clear policy objective in the fight against Islamist terrorism has made the current practice of counterterrorism in the country rather reactive, therefore, only provides short-term success.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorism, Jihadi-Salafism, Neorealism, National Security, Counterterrorism*

### INTRODUCTION

The 9/11 attacks on the United States (US) exhibited a new form of global security threat that challenges the traditional notion of relations between states and how they respond to the post-modern terror activities. The unprecedented attacks have significantly shaped the post-Cold War geopolitical context and revealed the world's new enemy, Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization with a dispersed and globalized network of insurgents aims to alter the course of global history with its radical ideology and deliberate asymmetrical attacks targeting civilians, which is arduous to be halted or prevented by traditional military intervention. Aiming at replacing the Westphalian state system with Islamic political regime, Al-Qaeda emerged as a principal threat to the international political system and broadly defined the theme of global security context in the first decade of 21st century that effectively demonstrates high motivation power which according Newmann (2011), "derive much from the political religion" and its capability to project power and disrupt the international system by mean of terrorism.

The emergence of a highly clandestine organization known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) in 2014, indicates that the threat of global terrorism is exacerbated

(Gunaratna, 2016). ISIS attracted worldwide attention through a series of conquests of Iraq and Syria's territories, followed with the proclamation of a self-styled 'Caliphate' led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Quivooij 2015). Commonly transliterated as *al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham* (DAESH), the group manifested the enormity of global terrorism phenomenon, outperformed its precursor, Al-Qaeda with estimated 80,000 fighters. ISIS emulated the conventional armies of which its underground cells served as military division – organized in battalions and brigades, equipped with high-technological weapons and doctrinal manuals. Hit-and-run and guerrilla tactics were used in its military campaigns to conquer and hold territories in Syria and Iraq (Barret, 2014). Gunaratna (2016) described ISIS and Al-Qaeda are cut from the same cloth – both groups are identical when it comes to ideology. As this study observed, ISIS supporters have significantly increased as the group acquired more territories where states failed to govern particularly in Iraq and Syria as well as other Muslim majority territories where local jihadist groups pledge allegiance to its leadership.

### Jihadi-Salafi Violence in Southeast Asia

The international community has been warned of the global consequence of ISIS's territorial demise in the Middle East in 2019. As the group's ideology, ostensibly remains widespread, terrorism and violent extremism inspired by Jihadi-Salafism becomes more decentralized and resilient given the group's regenerative capability that enable it to evolve and pose a significant threat especially to Muslim-majority countries of which the security concern is described by Ullman (1983) as degrading the quality of life of the inhabitants and narrow the range of policy choice of the state in preserving the national security. As the group begins to shift its focus from 'near enemy' to 'far enemy' with its lasting and expanding strategy, countries in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia are immensely distress with the prospect of renewed Jihadi-Salafi inspired terrorism influenced largely by ISIS, given the region has been engulfed with locally embedded militant activities that linked with Jihadi-Salafi violence centered in Indonesia and Southern Philippines for many years.

Malaysia, among other countries in Southeast Asia, provides an important case study on the global spread of *Jihadi-Salafi* networks. Radical individuals and groups like Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayaff, and former Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM) members who cooperate with global terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda help to assimilate the groups' ideology with local conditioning. With a strong foothold in the region, they support the global terrorist groups to establish new safe havens and seek ways of conducting spectacular attacks against democratically elected governments whom they consider infidels. Although Malaysia did not experience ISIS-related attacks in 2017 ahead, the country strongly being suspected remains a source of transit and destination country for suspected ISIS followers including suspected individuals who were deported from Turkey and those planning to travel to the southern Philippines (The Straits Times, 2019). The return of foreign terrorist fighters from Syrian and Iraq wars is also a major military security issue in the region as they are likely to shape the future trend of Islamist militancy in this region. Other than a mounting concern that Southeast Asian fighters would return home with skills and combat experiences that could further strengthen local terrorist networks, Malaysian government also face difficulty in how to track down the terrorist suspects, prosecutes, and deradicalize them given the limits of the current counterterrorism framework.

In addition, there is also a growing concern on the leaning of certain political and religious figures and organization in the country towards certain religion exclusivism, especially Wahhabi doctrine to advance their political motivation and to maintain the status quo of Muslim ruling.

As this study observed, radical ideas of terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda that built upon a narrow, literal, and puritanical interpretation of Islam are Salafi/Wahhabi oriented. While military coalition and law-enforcement efforts have progressively contained terror related activities by ISIS and other jihadist groups in the country, the ideological threat, arguably the root cause of the problem remains and will continue to take hold of Malaysia socio-political space if the government fail to acknowledge the issue.

The innovation in telecommunications, especially the widespread of internet access, invention of end-to-end encrypted messaging platforms and VPN have advanced the global terrorist operations more than ever as it enables terror-related activities more accessible to the masses on a larger scale via remote and hybrid environment. ISIS members evidently capable of exploiting new communication technologies by remotely recruiting potential cohort of ‘jihadist’ among Muslims, gives online tactical planning, inspire and direct attacks from abroad. The success of ISIS media campaigns was evident in the number of foreign fighters including from Southeast Asia joining the group as estimated between 27,000 and 31,000 by the Soufan Group in 2015. The group was also described as the most adept terrorist group in using social media for propaganda and recruiting new members. For example, 28,880 Twitter accounts – that produced 17, 424,323 contents in 2015 alone – were identified as ISIS followers in a study conducted by Alfifi, Kaghazgaran, and Caverlee (2018).

## **JIHADI-SALAFI TERRORISM, NEOREALISM AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

The rise of these new non-state players – designed as terrorist groups by the United Nation Security Council – especially Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Taliban and ISIS – in the domain of global political affairs which stimulated by rapid technological innovation, global communication, international trade and obliteration of cultural boundaries between sovereign states has challenged the traditional definition of security in global affairs. The phenomenon demands a new interpretation of ‘security’ as it represents multi-dimensional security threats that significantly departs from the traditional view of security. In explaining the characters of *Jihadi Salafi* terrorism, this study in accord to Gray’s view, “asymmetrical combat that carries the stamp of extreme violence aims at achieving political objectives is the cutting edge of strategic history. The so-called post-modern terrorism is theologically motivated and globally asymmetrical, which according to his observation “had never been practiced by major powers in the past centuries” (Gray, 2007). The newly emerged phenomenon of *Jihadi-Salafism* terrorism post-Cold War period broadly known as the fifth wave of terrorism and described by Brown (2017) as a ‘shadow side’ of globalization is characterized with increasing terrorists’ ability to spread their cause, widen their operations, launch widespread attacks and create global scale effects due to human inter-connectedness. Mandaville (2007), in reference to Al-Qaeda’s functional elements, described the fifth wave of terrorism is characterized with three global components: first, the mythology of military success against the US’s hegemony as demonstrated through 9/11 attacks; second the ‘global corporation’ setup that enables the group to expand its military mission abroad, assert influence and claim responsibility for attacks all over the world by financially, logistically and materially assisting local terrorist groups; and three, the grand strategy aims at promoting global Islamic identity into political objective by injecting the local conflicts predominantly in Muslim countries with the “clash of civilization” narrative.

The current phenomenon, ISIS represents the latest protagonist image of terrorism, as it evolves to a proto-state group that has control over a significant portion of Syria and Iraq’s territories. The group’s capability to launch attacks outside its occupied territory, promote and

localize its religious-political goal worldwide, including in Malaysia in short span of time, signifies a significant physical and ideological threat. Malaysia has not only contributed to the number of ISIS's foreign fighters but also remains as the transit point for militant networks due to its porous border. The five months battle of Marawi between the Philippines government and pro-ISIS militants in 2017 highlights the evolution of terrorism in the region and exposes the governments' shortcoming in dealing with terrorism. Pro-ISIS militants with their astounding ability to operate in larger scale proved their capability of controlling territory and threatened to turn Marawi to "the Mosul of Southeast Asia".

From sectoral security point of view postulated by Buzan (1994), Jihadi-Salafi inspired terrorism poses a significant threat to the states in Southeast Asia including Malaysia beyond the traditional concept of military security. Terrorist and militant groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Jemaah Islamiyah's factions present a threat in the form course of action i.e., martyrdom and suicide attacks that can be understood in traditional security context. The groups also design those who rejects their ideological belief as infidels and apostates, therefore, deserve to be killed. Evidently, the growing number of local radical Islamist and militant groups pledging allegiance to ISIS, of which their membership also overlaps with Khatibah Nusantara marked a new development of terrorism in the region. Although the attacks claimed by pro-ISIS groups in the region were mostly poorly coordinated, Southeast Asia assumes a critical role for ISIS's decentralize strategy as a new breeding ground for its survivability – politically and militarily. The region has all the strands to be ISIS's next cauldron of violence – porous maritime borders that are convenient for terrorist transit point and irregular migration, long-standing militant operations, and the existence logistical base for terror activities as well as the disenchantment of marginalized Muslims. Even without territorial hold and less centralized military structure, the substantial elements of ISIS remain and continue to threaten territorial sovereignty of the states. ISIS is still able to launch terrorist attacks around the globe, often by the adherents who were inspired by its radical ideology. Its surviving militants disperse to unstable areas around the world and the so-called ISIS's provinces in other countries to regroup themselves safely.

Apart from the innovation in insurgency capability that can be understood in traditional military domain, jihadist groups, by mean of their pervasive ideology also challenge the political and societal security of nation states. Although it is difficult to establish a single conclusion to explain the trend of individuals from around the world supporting Jihadi-Salafism and terrorist networks like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, the Cognitive Theory provides an account how jihadist groups develop subjective interpretation of the world and what motivates their acts of terror or determination to convince their target audience to see the world according to their worldview (Borum, 2004). From the cognitive perspective, perceptions of political and social events are filtered through the beliefs and attitudes that reflect jihadists social experiences i.e., interpretation of Islam, and cultural influences imparted to individual members through socialization as well as formally constructed ideology or political philosophy (radicalization) that influence their thought process and behavior, which eventually become a source of threat to the states including Malaysia as it encourage the construction of a new global identity that negates the traditional sources of national and communal identities.

In the context of Jihadi-Salafism, Al-Qaeda's strategic objective is to vanquish US government and other "Zionist and Crusaders" regimes and replace them with Muslim-led governments based on its interpretation, while ISIS on the other hand, seeks to form a global Caliphate, an Islamic state under the leadership of Islamic steward that needs a local starting point.

Taking advantage of the ongoing instability originated from the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Syrian Civil War since 2011, ISIS's occupation of Iraq and Syria's territories up to approximately six million Muslim residents is the example where its global strategic objective is also aiming to eradicate 'apostate' Muslim regimes – including Shia (Bayman, 2015).

## **NEOREALISM PRINCIPLE OF 'SELF-DEFENSE' AND MALAYSIA COUNTERTERRORISM**

Terrorism alludes to political tactic which is used to coerce or intimidate its target audience in which, the terrorist - whether the states or non-states - are considered as threatening actors through realism perspective depending how security threats are perceived by the threatened states. Lutz and Lutz's (2008) definition of terrorism succinctly described the phenomenon of Islamist terrorism:

“the use of violence or threat of violence; that is directed against a targeted audience that extends beyond immediate victims (often innocent civilians); by organized groups; to achieve political objectives; government can be either the perpetrator of violence or the target, it is considered an act of terrorism if one or both actors is not a government; and terrorism is weapon of the weak”.

How the state responds to the threat, therefore, depends on the basic assumptions of the threat, power capability of the states and – to some degree – how the international community perceived the aggression. By its very nature, the contemporary challenge of global terrorism inspired by Jihadi-Salafism and how the major states reacted to it by far, exhibits what Zahra (2011) describes as:

“re-affirmation and validation of the logic of fear and security interest according to the interpretation of realism. The GWOT initiated by the US and its allies against Al-Qaeda to prevent more attacks manifest deep insecurity and the logic of power politics at the international level has not change regardless of the threatening actor”.

The strategic objective of countering the threat, thus, is still within the context conventional military domain - to assure security by means of foreign policy variables and the rule of war that traditionally governs the relation between parties of the armed conflict and to some extent requires the internalization of such threat to domestic security framework. However, building upon that proposition, the construction of national security and development of an effective national counterterrorism strategy, requires a thorough understanding of the present threat posed by the global terrorist networks to the international system and nation state, individually. ISIS represents the new face of terrorism in this decade and should not be regarded as a merely ordinary terrorist group, but an evolution of its parent organization – the Al-Qaeda – that equipped with more sophisticated tools of globalization to take their fight underground, rally adherents and challenge the establishment around the world.

Realism – both classical and neorealism – postulate that state as the main actor in the international system, therefore, vulnerable to all form of security threats. Zahra (2011) in her reinterpretation of realism in the post-9/11 context, argued that the international terrorism poses new challenges to national security as it forms a new category of non-state actor but nation states remain central in global political affairs and their role is paramount in addressing the threat. In

such way, this study paper also conforms with the argument that international politics in the age of global terrorism is still a self-defense game assuming any states that face security dilemmas are compelled to play a considerable role to preserve their security (Ifantis, 2019). Neorealism framework is constructive to understand state's response to the threat posed by the ruthless terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda which can be justified as act of self-defense and balancing the growing power of terrorist groups to ensure its survivability in the anarchic system. Framing an effective counterterrorism framework, thus, also requires a comprehensive understanding of the concept of war and application of national strategy within the realism framework. State in the anarchic domain engage in war to protect their sovereignty and national interest from the external threats including terrorism and violent extremism. Preoccupation with identifying dangers and counteracting or possibly balancing the threat become the way of life of individual states to bolster their security (Waltz, 1988).

The emergence of transnational jihadist groups with multi-dimensional elements of threat in the international security realm, urges the states to evaluate their sources of national power in the pursue of the most effective intervention to address the threat that increasing blurring the foreign policy, military, and home affairs domains, as well as the context of war and peace time. This study concurs with Murray and others' argument that national strategy expands the traditional concept of military strategy within the three conditions that are applicable to the context of religious inspired terrorism: first, the use of instruments of power that goes beyond military means including diplomacy, financial, economic, and information and communication technology; second, taking into account both internal and external security thereby bridging the foreign and domestic policies necessary to achieve political objective; and third, the inclusion peacebuilding element during post-war period (Murray, et. al, 1994).

In response to the re-emergence of Jihadi-Salafism as a result of ISIS growing influence, the Malaysian government was expeditious to identify the threat of the terrorist group to the national and regional context and immediately set about reinforcing their counterterrorism framework by amending the existing laws and introducing new legislations such as Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) 2012, Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2015 and Special Measures against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act (SMATA) 2015 to give the police and other relevant law-enforcement agencies greater power to hunt down terrorist suspects and immobilize terrorist related activities in the countries including in terrorist financing. The Malaysian government claims they have adopted a combination of 'hard' and 'soft' measures to tackle the visible and ideological threat of terrorism posed by ISIS and other *Jihadi-Salafism* inspired militant groups (Ahmad Zahid, 2016). Notably, there are several ministries and government agencies that have been directly involved in counterterrorism initiatives, among others:

- a. The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) as the leading law-enforcement agency to deal with terrorism issues has its own division, Special Branch to uncover crimes relating to terrorism and establish law enforcement operations to counter the threat (Ahmad El-Muhammady, 2016);
- b. As part of the effort to prevent ISIS's online recruitment, the police also jointly worked with Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to shut down numerous pro-ISIS website believed to be responsible for promoting extremism and convincing Malaysians to join militant outfits and run public awareness campaigns (Mohd Azizudin, 2016);

c. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Wisma Putra) represents the government in the strategic partnerships with other countries and actively participates in ASEAN and United Nations led counterterrorism and counter violent extremism initiatives. It also holds the responsibility in ensuring Malaysia counterterrorism measures adhere to the international laws standards and ASEAN legal instruments while at the same time protecting the national security interest; and assisting the government in the adoption of international conventions and policy recommendations such as the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, the 2017 ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (2018-2025) (Mohd Norhisyam, 2019).

d. Through Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counterterrorism (SEARCCT), the government provided and conducts various training courses, conferences, and forums to discuss and disseminate the urgency to have a multi-pronged and multi-faceted approach in countering terrorism (SEARCCT Annual Report, 2019). Among of the training activities included media training to local journalists on the role of journalists in covering news pertaining Counter/Prevention Violent Extremism (CVE) and radicalization; workshop to inform civil service and civil society organizations on the emerging threats of ISIS; as well as to encourage knowledge-sharing and awareness in addressing terrorism and CBRN training programs. The government also established Digital Strategic Communications Division (DSCD) in SEARCCT which primarily responsible to implement digital counter-narratives initiative. The unit produced hundreds of digital materials including banners, videos and digital comics to counter online radicalization and mitigate terrorist recruitment on social media platforms (SEARCCT, 2019);

e. Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) a federal agency under Prime Minister's Department, through its National Fatwa Council blacklisted ISIS in 2017, stating the call for jihad in Syria and Iraq is un-Islamic and declared those who were killed in the wars are not martyrs. The agency set-up a multi-agency committee namely the Jihad Concept Explanation Action that include officials from Malaysian Civil Defense Department, RMP, Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM), Al-Hijrah Media Corp, Institute of Islamic Strategic Research Malaysia (IKSIM) and National Security Council to come up with a clear plan of action to address misconceptions about jihad and holy war as well to implement other counter radicalization activities at the grassroot level (Jani, 2017); and

f. The government's deradicalization program through a joint effort of various government agencies including Prime Minister Department, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), the RMP, Prison Department and JAKIM - focusing on rehabilitation of terrorist detainees through re-education and re-integration components (Yunus, 2018).

However, as this study observed, other than the deradicalization program, Malaysia relies much on the short-term collaborations depending on thematic interventions, notwithstanding, the government had established agencies or units dedicated to counter the online threat from ISIS. For the most part, the analysis identified weak collaboration between security agencies and low participation of other important stakeholders especially civil societies and religious community especially in Malaysia, indicating the current implementation of 'soft' measures in both countries

is still behind the global recommendation of Countering/Prevention of Violent Extremism (C/PVE) that gives emphasizes on “all instruments of national powers” and “community centric”. The closed-door policy and territorial behavior of some agencies involved in counterterrorism especially the RMP have impeded information sharing and government’s ability to fully leverage all non-military or security aspects of the counter measures and engaging in multi-stakeholder collaboration to balance growing influence of *Jihadi-Salafism* in the county. This study also found that Malaysia’s strategy for counterterrorism is top-down approach and not holistic enough to fully embrace the social and cultural dimension of strategy to suppress the spread of misinformation and strict interpretation of Islam that is Wahhabi oriented among political and religious elites as well as the public. The next section below further elaborates three rationales why counterterrorism measures currently implemented by the government are less effective to yield positive outcome, particularly to address the growing influence of *Jihadi-Salafism* ideology and violent extremism associated to it.

### **The Absence of National Strategic Objective for Counterterrorism from Neorealism Standpoint**

This research identified weak government’s demonstrate weak commitment to apply a coherent strategic thought into the practice of counterterrorism and show lacks clarity in regard to strategic objective of the counter measures currently being implemented. Almost 20 years in its battle against religious inspired terrorism, Malaysian government, for example, despite so much applauded for its self-claimed hybrid approach by the global community is yet to identify a broader strategic objective to guide policy makers and law-enforcement practitioners in strategic planning as well as to develop the procedural components of its national counterterrorism strategy. The situation deviates from what Clausewitz had reminded the statesmen – to deliberate the ultimate political objectives before they decide to commit their nation to war. In his words, “no one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it” (Howard and Paret, 1976). The absence of an overarching official national policy of counterterrorism indicates government’s lack of commitment to clearly define what are the political objectives it seeks to achieve from the existing countermeasures, as well as to identify and employ any means other than repressive security apparatus (such as police, military, intelligence and immigration department) to protect the homeland against the rising threat of global Islamist terrorism.

Malaysia’s National Security Council (NSC) generally functions as an umbrella body for the state’s security agencies which its mandates are broadly on crisis management. Structure wise, NSC was established to tackle traditional security threats. The Council ideally plays a significant role in counterterrorism coordination as stipulated in NSC’ Directive No.18 on Crisis Management (Ahmad Zahid, 2016). It coordinates the elite unit National Special Operation Forces (NSOF) which comprises of the armed forces, police, and maritime enforcement agency – as set forth in its mandate – to be the first responder to any terror threats including ISIS in the country (Nik Imran, 2016). The unit, however, was disbanded in July 2018 and replaced with the Special Operation Force Command under the armed force because of the Pakatan Harapan government’s change of policy. At the institutional level, without active involvement of Information Department and Ministry of Communication and Multimedia, the role of NSC in managing the inter-agencies coordination is still limited, especially to counter ISIS’s propaganda narratives and messages in the cyberspace.

It is argued that terrorism is a form of psychological warfare aiming at instilling a sense of insecurity among members of the targeted group which normally civilians, agents of state or government's interests to reach specific political objective (Orehek and Nieuwenhuis, 2014). The effectiveness of terrorism as a mean to an end, is not only rely on the magnitude of terrorist attacks to garner public attention and elicit psychological impact, but also relies on the ability of the terrorists to create a shared social reality to justify their acts. Terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS have a very high power of extreme ideology and specific political objectives, in which at their disposal, systematically used to mobilize and radicalize certain segments of society to justify their acts.

Findings from the review of Malaysia's current counterterrorism strategy, however, reveal the setback in the application of instruments of national power to counter the influence of *Jihadi-Salafism* in the country. As this research observed, the government's efforts to counter ISIS's ideological influence remain insufficient. Ideally, the government needs to pursue a more aggressive preventive strategy through rigorous CVE/PVE interventions involving multi-stakeholders and multipronged sources of power in dealing with the complexity of political extremism posed by ISIS and groups that subscribe to *Jihadi-Salafism*.

The return of ISIS's foreign fighters to this region and increased local support to the ISIS's version of *jihad* necessitate a better intervention by the government to prevent the radicalization of Malaysian citizens. Traditionally, terrorist acts especially with separatist elements or state sponsored have been regarded as criminal acts, therefore, best treated with strict law-enforcement approach aiming at capturing terrorist suspects and degrading the capacity of terrorist networks to execute for large-scale operations. 'Military victory', while an important part in the fight against terrorism, is far from sufficient to accomplish the ultimate political goal of ideological warfare. While hard security approach is the tenet of counterterrorism, the strategic context of terrorism greatly revolves around human security dimension, thus, entails the government to use the instruments of national power beyond military means to counter the ideological element of terrorism.

Gray (2007) pointed out, "the terrorist branch of irregular warfare is very much a moral and psychological and cultural struggle" which is difficult to be defeated with the use of force alone. Of necessity, a stringent articulation of national strategy - the art and science of developing and using instruments of power including political, economic, informational, psychological, or cultural together with armed forces, during peace and war - by the government is paramount to achieve a long-term success in the practice of counterterrorism. Furthermore, terrorism as a tactic poses a significant challenge to the conventional military conduct. This research contends that the non-state political violence could only be suppressed through a careful combination of military and non-military means in any situation. As highlighted by Jackson (2005), the use of military force to combat or suppress terrorism only proportionate if the threat is easily identifiable and does not causing high collateral damage to the society.

In the same vein, Gearson and Rosemount (2015) when assessing the United Kingdom counterterrorism strategy (CONTEST), note that one should not overlook the importance the use of well-articulated "strategy" to structure and address the longer-term response to contemporary security challenges such as international terrorism, and CONTEST by virtue of its design meets the classical conceptualization of a carefully considered strategy. Quoting David Omand (2005), the former UK's security practitioner, the strategy of counterterrorism is "a process of harnessing and

aligning the efforts of dozens if not hundreds of different agencies and organizations to a common purpose recognizing that most of them have many important missions other than counterterrorism, without falling into the trap of over-management, which will offend their sense of autonomy and lead to discord, or stultify them with over-prescription, or both”.

Online radicalization and violent extremism inspired by ISIS are characterized with dispersed forms of communication which is difficult to be monitored and controlled. For the Malaysian government, the ability to incorporate the non-military means in its counterterrorism framework is yet to be proven, although government’s new defense strategy mentioned the “Whole-of-Government” (WoG) and “Whole-of-Society” (WoS) approach in every aspect of the national security as noted in the Defense White Paper 2019. Although the UN and ASEAN had issued the guidelines for member states to formulate National Action Plan (NAP) on P/CVE, Malaysia is yet to produce its own national plan to address the local drivers of extremism to strengthen the existing counterterrorism framework. Five years on, the progress is rather dawdling as Ministries and agencies especially Minister of Home Affairs (MOHA) and the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) as well as other critical sectors are mostly working in silo. The Counter Messaging Center led by RMP for example, has been operating for more than two years, yet the enforcement of counter-narratives or terrorists’ online propaganda efforts in corporation with other agencies especially with SEARCCT, MCMC and JAKIM, however, remains to be seen. Given the absence of national working plan specifically to lay out the coordination of counterterrorism operations, counter-narratives programs and prevention of extremism, Malaysia faces the challenges to mount inter-agency collaboration such as multiple agencies pursuing individual yet duplicating agendas and competing interests, as well as weak institutional capacity to address the ideological *Jihadi-Salafism* threat.

### **Failing to Address the Underlying Causes of Terrorism in a Broader National Security Spectrum**

It is widely recognized that Malaysia, home to the majority Muslim population, institutionalized the practice of moderate Islam. Having said that, there has been a very little effort to rigorously address the root cause of *Jihadi-Salafism* inspired terrorism i.e. literal interpretation of Islam such as the concept of “*Jihad*” and “*Caliphate*” that harm the cultural and communal values of the societies, the misconception among Muslim society about pan-Islamism propaganda and the complexity of political context of the Middle Eastern countries – the melting pot where diverse interpretations of Islam collide which in many cases, become the source of armed conflicts in the region. In that regard, this research argues that government needs to acknowledge the threat posed by global terrorism is a manifestation of a complex interaction between states and human security in the international system. For many average Muslims, the common perception about conflicts and violence in the Middle Eastern countries is always about “the West (infidel) against the Muslim” and in solidarity, Muslims around the world bear the religious responsibility to free the oppressed Muslims brothers from the Western military occupation. This narrative, which has been a strong ideological weapon of Al-Qaeda and ISIS be that it may, obscured the other side of reality, that decades of conflicts and revolutions in the region are also sectarian. In different circumstances, some civil wars occurred as a response to corrupt and oppressive Muslim governments, as a result, people calling for political reforms by exercising violence which best describes the “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” situation. While Muslims around the world have often portrayed a strong sympathy for the consequences of the ongoing wars in the Middle East, the religious-political stories narrated by terrorist-propagandist that appeal to the Muslims worldwide,

is arguably not relevant to the Muslims in this region. Bringing Al-Qaeda and ISIS's *jihad* to the region is a major conceptual fault line because wars in the Middle Eastern countries are greatly distinct from the Southeast Asian geopolitical context.

Second is the threat of Wahhabism and other form of misinterpretation of Islam which consequently drive radicalization of Muslims that are not under the jurisdiction of Saudi ruling. Globalization, as exhibited in the phenomenon of international terrorism has changed the practice of religion and its role in international affairs. From the geopolitical perspective, Wahhabism a tool of Saudi's foreign policy, although is not the direct cause of violent extremism, facilitates decades of systematic radical interpretation of Salafism – especially on the *takfiri* view and intolerance toward other creeds – among Muslim population outside the Middle East through indirect financial and religious education support from the Saudi government, which eventually led to the phenomenon of self-radicalization and homegrown terrorist in Muslim countries including Indonesia and Malaysia. For example, Abuza (2003) pointed out some of the charitable funds linked to Saudi government were channeled to rebel and terrorist organizations fighting for religious-political cause including Al Qaeda network and JI, allegedly, because of the overlapping membership of the group members with the charity foundations. Failing to enlighten the citizens about the Middle Eastern geopolitical issues, and to counter the influence of Wahhabism breeds local support and sympathy for violence acts and extreme ideology propagated by groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. For Muslims who believe that Islam and democracy are anti-thetical, ISIS offers a genuine revival of “Caliphate” system to address decades of geopolitical instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region - a motivation to justify violence - which according to radical Salafists, can only be accomplished by *jihad* method including terror acts. Blind allegiance to radical Salafism leads to rigid interpretation of *jihad* concept in Islam, a conducive path to terrorism.

The former Principal Assistant Director at Malaysia's Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division, Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay (2018) affirmed that addressing the extreme jihadi-Salafism ideology embraced by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS is the key to combating terrorism. Although government's de-radicalization and rehabilitation programs targeting terrorist individuals had produced some positive success rate (Laili Ismail, 2016), yet little has been done to address the prevailing threat of violent extremism within the public sphere, in which to some extent indicates failure or hesitation to acknowledge the ideological character of international terrorism due to sensitivity of the subject for Muslim population in the country as well as government's relation with other Muslim-led countries associated with the ideology.

Parties involved in a conflict always create conflict-supporting narratives to make justification of their cause (Bar-Tal, 2018). In many cases of terrorism, societal narratives provide explanation and justification of violent behavior. Countries with Muslims majority population like Malaysia are especially vulnerable to radicalization, extremism, and terrorist recruitment. Public's understanding of ISIS narratives is, therefore, paramount to prevent sympathizing or support for their violence and religious misinterpretation. ISIS seeks public support to justify their violent actions by pursuing these lines of religious arguments (Zulkarnain, 2017); first, Muslims need to support ISIS cause to establish an Islamic Caliphate on the basis of *Jihadi-Salafism* discourse, and anyone who does not support or participate in the struggle is considered sinful and apostate; second, *jihad* is an obligation for individual Muslims that has no other meaning than war; third, migration to ISIS's occupied territories is a religious obligation for Muslims to achieve the ‘perfection in faith’; and fourth, ISIS's governance is as good as religious claim, and the war in Syria and Iraq is a *jihad* to achieve martyrdom (Zulkarnain, 2017). *Jihadi-Salafist's* view on the concept of

nationhood along with the misinterpretation of Islam – described as external threat by Neorealism – illustrates a new dimension of security dilemma. Failing to address the underlying cause of *Jihadi-Salafism* terrorism and principal motives of terrorist violence gives opportunity to the non-state group like ISIS to harbor its ‘Islamic Caliphate’ agenda in politically unstable countries and areas as illustrated in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria and Southern Philippines which successfully threatens sovereignty of the states and safety of their citizens.

### **Over-Reliant to Hard Security Approach**

The current landscape of terrorism has dramatically changed from the previous waves of terrorism. *Jihadi Salafi* inspired terrorism is a complex interaction between the influence of foreign elements and social conditions that breed local extremism which proliferates across physical and cyber space. While terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS have continuously being innovative and adaptive, Malaysia’s counterterrorism strategy shows deficient outcomes. The government is overdue to improve its counterterrorism strategy as they increasingly rely on hard security measures. The government’s central strategy in fighting transnational Islamist terrorism since the 9/11 has been focusing primarily on pre-emptive strategy. By placing the criminal-justice system at the core of national counterterrorism framework, Malaysian government gives police greater power to arrest terrorist suspects, broaden legal definitions of terrorism and strengthen their punishment mechanism in internal security realm through the passing of new security laws such as SOSMA, POTA, SMATA, amendment of some existing laws, and establishment network of intelligence with regional and global partners specifically to monitor terrorist networks in the region.

The role of military in domestic counterterrorism, however, is still limited but significant in disrupting and destabilizing terrorist network operating at the national border through military exercises conducted with neighboring Southeast Asian countries and other states like United States, China, Japan and Australia. This can be described as a classical military move by a weak state to protect its territorial sovereignty and balance the power of its external enemy. The Malaysia’s National Defense policy (NDP) stated that traditional security issues will remain as the priority but threats like terrorism and other trans-boundaries crimes are also receiving attention in national strategic perspective. Even so, Malaysian government maintains that military intervention is the last resort of its counterterrorism component despite the grave concern over the rising threat posed by ISIS. Responding to ISIS’s increasing footprint in the region, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines governments established a trilateral maritime patrol to guard the Sulu-Sulawesi maritime – the main hub for transnational organized crimes and militant activities in the region – involving the armed forces (Zulkarnain, 2017). Under ASEAN Our Eyes initiative, military intelligence contributes to the exchange of intelligence relating to terrorism, radicalism, and violent extremism among the participating countries including Indonesia (Zulkarnain, 2017). These collaborations signify an increasing military presence in counterterrorism as described by Moltke (2012), to render terrorists “off-balance” in the form of defensive approach by ‘taking the fight to the enemy before the enemy brings the fight home’.

### **The Rule of Law and Human Rights Conundrum**

Malaysia adopts criminal justice approach to combat domestic terrorism in response to 9/11 attacks and 2002 Bali bombings in which the primary institution tasked with the duty is the police. Framing the act of terrorism under law-enforcement framework allows the government to use available means necessarily to pre-empt terrorist attacks and punish the terrorist suspects

using the appropriate tools available under the democratic system. Ideally, the government through this approach seeks to preserve all democratic principles including to uphold individual rights and civil liberties of the citizens in the implementation of counterterrorism measures. As the main instrument of national power in combating terrorism, the RMP is primarily responsible to reduce the threat of terrorism with their ability to destroy terrorist camps, infiltrate terrorist network, gather intelligence and capture terrorist suspects.

Supporting the law-enforcement agencies are the national anti-terrorism legislations to frame the act of terrorism and terrorism-linked activities as domestic criminal offence and stipulate the role and the code of conduct of security apparatus involve in counterterrorism operations. As pointed out by many observers, there has been a rapid development on anti-terrorism laws in the country following the rise of *Jihadi-Salafism* inspired terrorism, by that, gives the law enforcement agencies a greater power to combat terrorism especially following the increasing threat of ISIS in Southeast Asia. However, there is also ongoing criticism against the government for failing to respect the rule of laws and human rights in regard to the implementation of anti-terrorism legislations and counterterrorism operations. A study conducted by Foot (2005) pointed out, the global anti-terrorist campaign has increased the level of states' violation of citizens' rights in many countries. This sparks ethical debates among the liberals and inflicts moral dilemma for the governments – who mostly opt the realist approach – between the need to uphold the principal of human rights and safeguarding the national security. According to the proponents of realist school of thought, state can and should, employ any means necessary to achieve its political objectives in combating terrorists. Brysk and others, however, emphasized that the responsibility of liberal democratic governments to engage moral values when using force to preserve national security which requires an assurance by the government to abide the rule of laws and a certain level of public acceptance (Brysk et. al, 2007). Malaysia government enacted SOSMA 2012 and POTA 2015 and amended POCA 1959 to replace ISA (1960) to deal with the threat pose by ISIS network in the country. The use of SOSMA, POCA, and POTA reached its peak in 2017 in which more than 1000 detainees were detained without trial under the Laws. Between April 2014 to July 2017, 3,473 individuals were arrested under POCA in which 753 of them been placed under detention order while 1,768 were subjected to police supervision. Meanwhile, 979 individuals were arrested under SOSMA between July 2012-February 2017 and the government has been consistently secretive about POTA detention status (SUARAM, 2019).

SOSMA 2015 in principle, breaches the rule of law as it confers the police more authority to arrest and makes evidence against the suspects easily admissible. The Act broadly includes any acts deemed “prejudicial to national security and public safety” as “security offence”. Such definition vaguely describes who may be arrested under the offence. Although Section 4(3) of the Act states “no person shall be arrested and detained under this section purely for her or his political belief or political activity”, there had been two political-motivated arrests under SOSMA, first, the arrest of politician Khairuddin Abu Hassan and his lawyer Matthias Chan in 2015 for being critical of IMDB scandal and, second, detention of Maria Chin, BERSIH 2.0 Chairperson in 2016 (SUARAM, 2019).

Under POCA and POTA, Detention or Restriction Order is issued by Prevention of Crime Board (POCB) and Prevention of Terrorism Board (POTB). The Boards appear to be under the influence the executive body as the power of the appointment and termination of the Board members are entrusted on Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). In addition, the Laws also allow for the appointment of Inquiry Officer by MOHA minister. The creation and mechanism of the Boards

can be described as regressive and contradict with the principle of the rule of law and separation of power. The provisions of POCA and POTA, according to SUHAKAM, are identical and contradict to the universal principle of human rights as they allow for detention without trials, weakened judicial role and deny the individual rights to fair trials (SUARAM, 2019). The government, despite continuously being pressured by the civil society organizations to abolish 'the draconian laws' announced that it would keep both laws with some amendments (Free Malaysia Today, 2018). The then Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Hamid Bador stated, "the police are always concerned when it comes to terror threats in the country and are constantly vigilant". However, he affirmed, "if SOSMA is taken away from us, it means you take away our 'guns' to fight terrorists" (Prakash, G., 2019). Many human rights organizations were astounded with the political move of the new government despite the reform agenda following the change of government in May 2018. Civil society organizations such as Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Lawyers for Liberty and Malaysian Bar continued to put pressure on the government to abolish the Law (Ashwin Kumar, 2019).

The United Nations regularly convey the strong messages to the member states that respecting human rights while countering terrorism is not only a matter of legal obligation but is critical to the ultimate success of any counter-terrorism strategy. The United Nations' Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2018 reaffirms that "states must ensure that any measures taken to counterterrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism complies with international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law". Domestically, effective countermeasures and protection of human rights must be pursued together to reinforce and gain public support to the objectives of national counterterrorism. Referring to the United Nations Handbook of Criminal Justice, "terrorist suspects must also be treated according to the presumption of innocence until proved guilty in a court of law" (United Nations Office ON Drugs and Crimes, 2009). Further, Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states, "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Also, Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) stipulates, "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

## CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of the existing threat of transnational Islamist terrorism, this study analyzes the national strategy for counterterrorism in Malaysia in reference to the Neorealism approach to security and national strategy in International Relations. It discerns how the government perceived the threats posed by Islamist terrorism in the decades after the 9/11 attacks that has substantively shaped the overall approach of counterterrorism in the country. The growing threat of Jihadi-Salafism inspired violence necessitates the government to strengthen its security measures in order to protect national security from highly adaptive global terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIS, JI, as well as other regional and local militant groups that subscribed to the ideology. Notably, the fight against terrorism in the country has taken place within criminal-justice framework led by the police and supported by other security and enforcement agencies. This study learns that Malaysian government has persistently taken strong kinetic measures to eliminate terrorist networks and reduce the risk of terrorist attacks while dismissing opportunities to embrace a more holistic approach in developing a robust national strategy and policy framework. The police have remarkably reduced the risk of terrorist attacks in both countries through pre-emptive law-enforcement operations.

The downside, however, the governments are myopic in examining the danger of radical Salafism that has notably gained influence among Muslim population in the country over the past years. Although, the government has acknowledged the evolving characters of terrorism, policymakers are still struggling to engage in the battle of idea and holistically incorporate multi-dimensional approach of interventions for effective counter measures. Given the absence of robust counterterrorism policy, government's initiatives in the prevention of threat growing threat of radicalism are often piecemeal, hampered with inter-agencies and stakeholder's coordination issues, lack of expertise and resources, and shortfall of commitment to engage with radical Salafism narratives considering sensitivity of the subject to Muslim population. Although there is no 'one size fits all' approach in fighting terrorism, this study argues that resorting to hard security measures under repressive legal framework is counter-productive for democratic society if the government fail to find a balance between the need to protect national security interest and uphold democratic principles especially the rule of law, protection of human rights and the principle of separation of power.

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## THE EFFECT OF 5G TO ECONOMY AND SECURITY IN MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Reliable internet access from a motive high-speed wireless network has improved the way people communicate and interact with each other. Modern tech has made a difference. Reliable internet access from a motive high-speed wireless network has improved the way people communicate. Modern technology has made a difference with new business models and all segments of the business world were created with the emergence of a mobile Internet-enabled economy. Many expect that a new era of improvements will emerge from the introduction of 5G as the foundation of communications and backbone for the fourth industrial revolution. However, the economy and security of a country is depending on how the user utilizes it either on good or vice versa. This article presents a high-level overview of the relationship between 5G and past technology and the key technical characteristics of 5 G that support the Malaysian industry in the safety and economic sector. In addition, this article also gives insights into the operation of advanced 5G networks, which presents problems in the safety of counter-intelligence due to the possibilities to boost information collection and analysis.*

**Keywords:** 5G, Technology, Internet of Things (IoT), 4G Network, ICT, Network, Internet Medical Things (IoMT), Intelligent Connectivity

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has played a transformative role in the provision of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In addition to increasing the efficiency of the process, technology has opened up new and innovative channels for financial institutions to provide users with better access and convenience. Due to the demand of worldwide nowadays, 5G is the next phase of telecommunication standards beyond the current 4G standards. It is yet set to take on an even bigger role with the next-generation 5G mobile systems envisioned to support a wide array of services and devices. The Fifth Generation cellular network is much more than just a faster connection. 5G which is the Fifth Generation cellular technology that provides broadband access, with the theme “Intelligent Connectivity”, the new standard in telecommunications technology and everything else connected to it, it is more than what people are actually aware of. It is said that, 5G to capture value from the massive “Internet of Things” (IoT) opportunities, address the limited flexibility to support bespoke services across industry verticals and develop the next generation services that are not achievable with 4G network. As huge interest, 5G development is still at the very early stages with no approved standards or specification (Malaysia Equity 5G, 2016).

Based on this technology, all the consumers will be enjoy using the full high definition video also inline newspaper. In addition, this technology also helps to broadcast the voice in ultra-high definition quality. The main improvement from this technology as the movement of

data is concerned which is this technique can have more speed more than 1gbps. From the very beginning, 5G cellular networks were assumed to be the key enabler and infrastructure provider in the ICT industry. In that regard, though technologies may affect the current economy and security of Malaysia such in a long-term investments and R&D, engender public-private cooperation on development of 5G standards, ensure the regulation and permitting keep pace with the rate of innovation essentially to boost capacity in the 5G era. Instead, 5G cellular networks mainly revolutionize themselves by initially embracing the intelligence to agilely boost both spectrum efficiency and energy efficiency. Hence, there should be possible solutions to encounter the problems arose but still keeping up with the transition of the 5G era.

As smartphones and other smart devices technology has advanced, customers have seen multiple generations of data technology emerge in the past few years as the progresses of 4G LTE, and now people are starting to hear whispers of a 5G version on the horizon. Hence it is important for people to start learning about 5G technologies now so that they can decide if the features are right for them. Thus, what are some of the advantages of 5G technology when it comes to smartphone or other smart devices.

## **EVOLUTION OF WIRELESS TECHNOLOGIES**

In this section, a brief discussion about various wireless generations] are discussed. First Generation Networks (1G) First Generation (1G) of wireless networks was standardized in initial 1981 for voice communication. It was able to handle data transfer speed up-to 2.4kbps. The most popular 1G-access technologies were Advanced Mobile Phone System (AMPS), Nordic Mobile Phone System (NMTS), Total Access Communication System (TACS) etc. Analog signals were responsible to carry out voice in 1G. It suffers from various issues such as low graded signal quality, low capacity, less secure and unreliable handoff.

### **Second Generation Networks (2G)**

Second Generation (2G) of wireless networks was standardized in 1990. It was primarily used for voice communication and able to handle data transfer speed up-to 64kbps. It was also able to data communication with limited speed. The most popular 2G-access technologies were Global Systems for Mobile communications (GSM), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) and IS-95. 2G technology was also able to send text messages, picture messages, and MMS Multimedia Messaging Services (MMS). It is also able to provide secure point-to-point communication i.e. only intended receiver could receive and read the message. 2G was suffering from some of the critical issues such as low data rate, limited capacity of cells, higher handover latency, limited mobility etc. also the 2G enabled phones have limited facilities.

### **Extension to Second Generation Networks (2.5G)**

It was an extension of second-generation wireless systems. It introduces packet-based switching technique known as General Packet Radio Services (GPRS). Furthermore, it is able to provide better communication by use of packet switching and circuit switching techniques along with services provided by 2G. It is able to handle data transfer speed up to 144kbps. The most popular 2.5G-access technologies were GPRS, Code Division Multiple Access-2000 (CDMA2000) and Enhanced Data Rate for GSM Evolution (EDGE).

### **Third Generation Networks (3G)**

Third Generation (3G) of wireless networks was standardized in 2000. The basic objective to design 2G was voice communication and high-speed data transfer up to 2Mbps. The most popular 3G-access technologies were Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (WCDMA), CDMA2000 and Universal Mobile Telecommunications Systems (UMTS) technologies. To utilize benefit of 3G smartphone based specific applications were developed to handle video calling, online games, email service, social media services such as Facebook and Orkut etc.

### **Extension to Third Generation Networks (3.5G)**

It was an extension of 3G wireless networks and standardized in 2008. It was primarily designed to improve data rate of present 3G networks and able to handle data transfer speed up to 3.6Mbps. The most popular 3G-access technologies were HSDPA (High Speed Downlink Packet Access) and HSUPA (High Speed Uplink Packet Access). 3.75G system was proposed as an improved version of 3G network. The technology used in it was, High Speed Packet Access Plus (HSPA+). The technology used in it was known as Long-Term Evolution technology (LTE) and Fixed Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX). These technologies are able to provide high-speed services such as on demand videos, composite web services, social media services etc. to multiple users simultaneously. Although 3G technology brings a radical change in the field of communication but suffers from expensive implementation, compatibility issue with 2G systems, heavy radiation of magnetic waves affects our brains etc.

### **Fourth Generation Networks (4G)**

Fourth Generation (4G) of wireless networks was standardized in 2010. 4G has designed to handle data transfer speed up to 300Mbps along with Quality of Service (QoS). In 4G, the user can watch online High Definition (HD) video and can play online games. The most popular 4G-access technologies are Voice over LTE network VoLTE (use IP packets for voice). 3G Partnership Project (3GPP) is presently standardizing Long Term Evolution (LTE). It reduces latency for critical applications and provides secure mobility. It also supports IoT enabled devices to interact in an efficient manner. Like 3G, 4G also costlier in terms of hardware and implementation. For communication, it requires high-end multifunctional devices, which should be compatible with 4G technology. 3G and 4G systems mainly focus delivery of contents to mobile devices rather than efficient delivery. 5G of wireless network is able to provide services to billions of devices with latency close to zero. It is expected that 5G will be standardized in 2020. 5G can handle data transfer speed up to 10Gbps along with QoS. Higher speed allows watching online Ultra High Definition (UHD) video and playing on line games

### **IMPACT OF BETTER CONNECTIVITY**

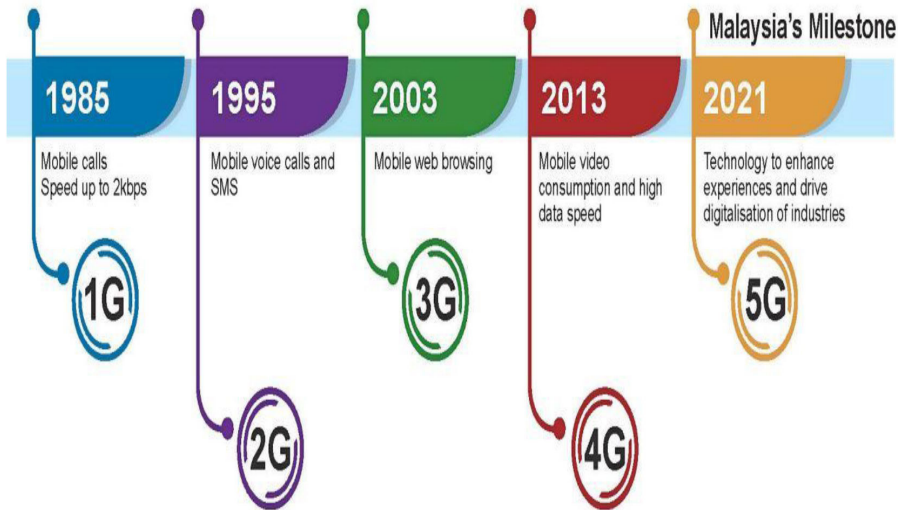
By 2020, video will be a major source of worldwide information traffic, mainly “Over the Top” (OTT) services (e.g. VoIP, social networking, and messaging). In addition, the penetration of broadband to distant locations will improve the efficiency of work. Above all, connectivity would create new jobs in rural regions, as 5 G is likely to interrupt a large amount of sectors, including one of the oldest in the world: agriculture. 5 G networks can be 100 times faster than 4 G so that

communication is much faster between devices and servers. Furthermore, 5 G helps to automate agricultural procedures. This makes the technology suitable to transmit remote sensor and drone data, which is a main tool for farmers to test. 5 G helps automate agricultural procedures as well. Drones who use 5 G help enhance the Netherlands ‘ potato output. In Japan, the water temperature and the salt level of oyster farms are monitored with 5 G sensors. Companies in Malaysia currently supply drone services in support of farmers in the sector (BrainTree Technologies). Braintree does not sell drones, but provides drone facilities and software that can be used on-site to supply drone imaging.

Healthcare Sector and Services Advance support for increased broadband speeds can possibly adopt services to Malaysia. Other applications include Tele-radiology, Telemedicine, Remote Health Monitoring for Patients, Tele Surgery, 3D brain imaging, Patient EMR, and so on. This piece, and a companion piece on the automotive sector, is an example of health care as a sector that will undergo substantial transformation fuelled by 5G adoption. 5G will place mobile technology at the centre of the “Internet of Things” worldwide economy. This assessment is designed not to be thorough but to be illustrative. Mobile in the 5G age will change from a technology which is progressively important to a real “general technology,” i.e. a technology that uses the entire economy, promotes additional innovation and productivity. 5G will make mobile technology a main means of connecting devices, transmitting data, facilitating transactions and enabling fresh connected operations. Why is 5G a health care change catalyst? 5G technology has three technological characteristics that will enable it to have a significant impact on the health care field. These are (a) low latency, (b) high reliability, and (c) the ability to support a plurality of devices and sensors, and to translate information from these devices and sensors into critical and meaningful data points. The effects of these characterizes will be felt equally in both the delivery of mission-critical services and in the personalization of health care.

5G has several key properties that will enable a vast network of connected “things”- devices and machines that can speak to other devices and machines, with or without human intermediation. 5G facilitates this “Internet of Things” through: • Greatly enhanced mobile broadband data rates that enable ever faster flows of greater amount of information. • Ultra-low latency and reliability – which is suitable for mission-critical services. • Ability to significantly and efficiently scale to connect a massive number of sensors. • Enhanced security, e.g., capabilities around biometric identification, which help safeguard the integrity of information. The Internet Medical Things (IoMT) “includes devices such as medical devices, wearables, remote sensors and wireless patches that monitor and electronically transmit vital signs, physical activity, personal safety and medication adherence”. 5G is an especially successful IoMT catalyst. At much reduced latency than today’s mobile networks, its performance, ultra-fastness and capability to support higher bandwidth transmission are not only going to allow quicker, higher information flows, they will also integrate back-end data centres, cloud services and distant servers into a computational behemoth. This achievement allows “medical stuff” to multiply. This “ubiquity” property comes because 5G does not only expand existing networks 3G and 4G. It plugs Wi-Fi and mobile networks into a seamless network. This allows linked devices to be proliferated and allows, for instance, ongoing patient monitoring. 5G security characteristics are critical for the protection of data safety and integrity, thereby reducing a critical obstacle to dissemination and use of data.

Impacts and Benefits of the Proliferation of Things in Health Sector - Connectedness and the Personalization of Health Care The benefits of this connected “ecosystem” are significant. As West (2016) puts it “these devices will provide never before seen telemedicine diagnosis and treatment services”. In this world, the point of care is now wherever you are, with sensors and devices that surround you every second of the day. Devices adapt to you, know about you and give you actionable insights. Every bit of information they gather will empowers to self-manage our health. As a tangible example, consider a glucometer. Today most diabetics do not use their glucometer to understand their blood sugar levels and the device does not store data in a way that lends itself to being analysed by the user. Even the act of keeping a systematic log of results is something that requires a significant amount of discipline on behalf of the patient. The patients with diabetes thus receives feedback on their progress and suggestions as to the future course of action typically through the medium of physician visits. In the connected world, not only can the glucometer continually transmit data to another device or a server that records it, but with the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning, the patient can receive both feedback and guidance that is tailored to their current situation, lifestyle and unique physiology.



**Figure 1 : 5 G Drives Malaysia’s Digitalisation**

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Upgrading from the traditional way of education by enabling learning anytime at anyplace. It will no longer a “classroom based” system whenever these platforms could bring top-tier global universities together to offer free and interactive courses for the web. As we can see now, in Malaysia, MOOC has become popular. Teachers can give live on-line lessons to a large number of students at one time irrespective of their location. From their smart phones, students can listen and interact with the lecturer and tutors who are also online. As we can see, this would greatly benefit our rural students.

Home Entertainment Smart TVs, Smart Gateways, Games Consoles and even tablets would vie to be the main hub for delivery of entertainment content in the home. Ultra HD TVs will have become mainstream with hundreds of Pay UHD channels being available in addition to plentiful streaming UHD services. Content based on a viewer's or family's preferences, past viewing history or even mood would be delivered. "Over The Top" content would also be streamed on multiple screens. Mood sensors – reflect person's mood and could be used to determine everything from their experience of music, online ads, TV programs, temperature, lighting in the room etc.

Connected commute, enabled by 5G, provides better commute experience such as Voice-activated alerts-upcoming traffic incident or public transport service disruption. Apart from that, real-time web and app-based comparisons of multiple routes or transportation mode for a sure recommended departure times to avoid being stuck in traffic delays. As reported in The Star on 5 May 2017, Malaysia is the highest number of Waze users in South-East Asia when it comes to the community-based traffic and navigation app. Other than that, GPS navigation visible on car windshield like hologram would be fantastic thorough the transition of 5G era where Way Ray and Orange Business Services have chosen United States as a market launch for this technology. Retail in Malaysia, virtual shopping malls with augmented reality would make On-line shopping and preferred mode of purchase. Furthermore, easily >50% of magazine and book sales are digital which will lead to closure of conventional stores.

## **5G AFFECTS THE ECONOMY AND SECURITY**

In this era, public policy is often strained at keeping pace with technological progress and promising transformations in the technological world and revamping countless activities within everyday life. With the emergence of the fresh corporate model and the historic modes of delivery of goods or services, the 5 G will bring a new level of complexity to policymaking and regulation. During the 4 G era, the problems arising with disruptors like Uber and Airbnb in terms of policy from the 'sharing economic' are emblematic of the emergence in the 5 G economy' of a wave of policy challenges.

To realize the economic potential of a country, it will be necessary to sustain the investment and R&D that drive innovation and advance new generations of technology in Malaysia. Hastening the Malaysia's journey through the economy in 5G requires that policymaking bodies: which are enable rims to make a long-term investments and R&D, engender public-private cooperation on development of 5G standards, ensure the regulation and permitting keep pace with the rate of innovation. After all, the challenge for policymakers in the 5G economy is that they must be prepared to address the performances of 5G in everyday life without creating requires that stunt continued innovation. This was less the case in prior generations of wireless technology that addressed the requirements of voice data and digital content via mobile devices. As 5G diffuses across home and businesses, leisure and workplace activity, and public and private spaces, modernization of policy becomes essential.

Furthermore, policy making will be effected at all levels of government- national, state/provincial, and local. The pervasiveness of 5G technology change evident in the use-cases outlined in this study places an even greater burden on policymakers to try keep up with the ways that 5G will transform lives and industries. Public safety, cyber security, privacy, public infrastructure, healthcare, spectrum licensing and permitting, and education, training and development are merely a few of the areas where policy and regulatory modernization is required for a 5G-ready world. In summary, while consumers and industry have voted with their spending with respect to integrating more technology into day-to-day existence, policymakers will be under new challenges to adapt policies and regulations to the many innovations engendered by 5G technology. In the mid-twentieth century, government investment led the way in transforming the global economy through massive investments in public infrastructure. Currently, private investment in technology

infrastructure is shaping how goods and services are delivered and private investment will likely continue to transform the Malaysia economy. Policy frameworks that safeguard the ability of firms in Malaysia to take risks, make investments and continue the relentless pursuit of innovations are important vehicles for continuing on the path to the 5G economy and ensuring growth in Malaysia. Commercial media attention to 5G cellular wireless communications system has grown steadily in recent months, in anticipation of a wireless communications network that will leave no stone unturned and possibly no citizen without a cell phone. But what does such a significant technological introduction as 5G, with its massive infrastructure building on top existing 3G and 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) towers, mean to defense electronic technology in Malaysia as there are also cavities in knowledge on how 5G is expected to impact the management organization on security level? Naturally, in Malaysia, military system designers will use available 5G hardware and software for current and future systems and benefit from such features as quick reaction times and broad bandwidth, for example the quick transmission and receipt of images representing battlefield scenarios. These problems raise some significant problems. How is the safety scene expected to improve in a world of 5G technologies with enhanced data volumes, high velocity and low latency? Is it an alternative way to organize current security-enabling methods? How can critical electronic defense systems, including terrestrial radars and mobile man pack radio, coexist with the promise of being the world's biggest ever constructed wireless cellular network? 5G is considered a business driver; it is an important question how to monetize security as a service in 5G. The more monetizable, the safer it is, the more companies are interested in providing safe services and goods through more investment. Cyber security is usually delivered by specific third party providers as service or as product or as a combination of service and product which helps to establish a stable, safe and resilient cyber environment to meet the economic and social needs of any user, company, especially for the government agency or organisation.

Furthermore, the modern political era is replete with tropes around this being the 'internet age', the social media age', the big data age', and the era of populist politics. There is truth in and to all these labels, and to the notion that what impacts upon wider society must also impact upon intelligence officers, agencies and intelligence practice. There are broadly two connected developments at play: 1) the development and growth in terms of usage and use-cases of electronic communication, storage and analytical technologies, and 2) the disruption to established political (and social and economic) cultures in the post-industrial world. These related innovations have created—as the article will grow—possibilities for intelligence organizations to boost their information collection and analysis, to build understanding of situations and to carry

out investigations and studies, despite the fact that some of the more obvious benefits are in post-hoc studies. The technological and political disturbance—collecting, retaining and analyzing—has given the intelligence authorities and officers excellent benefits, although it is not difficult due to the same difficulties and to vital components of intelligence activity like human intelligence and keeping secrets. However, these advances have put major difficulties on counterintelligence defences (both agencies and the infrastructure they are responsible for protecting) and covert human intelligence work because of social media presence and activity standards, the counter-subversion of political manipulation, government stories and the development of technologies and collective methods

## **TYPES OF CYBER THREATS**

Cyber threats are classified differently in the literature but the one most used is the model that classifies “cyber threats” on five levels based on the motivational factors of the threat agents. These are cyber activism, cybercrime, cyber espionage, cyber terrorism and cyber warfare. Cyber activism is the first level of threat and it entails cyber vandalism, the so-called ‘hacktivism’, and hacking. The intent of these actors may not be to cause any damage but may use the attack to embarrass an organization or send a political message. ‘Hacktivists’ are individuals or groups who hack into publicly available websites and overload email servers to send a politically motivated message or use it to convey a protest message, for example, against limiting civil liberties. The second level of threat is cybercrime. It involves the use of information systems and networks by adversaries for the commission of crime against a victim’s IT infrastructure. This act can be perpetuated by individuals or loosely-organized groups, terrorists, insiders or spammers. The motive for this attack could be stealing of vital information, disrupting the functions or operations of such organizations for financial gain or ideological cause. According to Lehto, cybercrime can be categorized into three groups: the use of ICT to commit traditional crimes like fraud and forgery; the publishing of illegal material over the electronic media; and attacks directed at the electronic network. Cyber espionage is the next level of threat, it is the use of illegal means on the internet or networks, programs or computers to get secret information from individuals, organizations, competitors and government for political, military or monetary gain. Cyber espionage is carried out by professional intelligence agents, individuals or groups who exploit the vulnerabilities in their adversary’s system in order to get high-value information. It is a tactic employed by nation-states and their militaries to gather intelligence on their perceived or real enemies. This espionage is not limited to political, but it extends to an economic domain. Professional organized crime group or agents of an organization’s competitors can hack into a business entity’s system and steal their proprietary like intellectual property and trade secrets.

The fourth level of threat is cyber terrorism. It is the use of cyber-attacks targeted at IT systems or critical infrastructure of government and private organizations with the intent of intimidating a government or causing fear and panic among the civilian population. This attack is perpetuated by sophisticated terrorist groups whose aim is to grab national or international attention. For example, in 2015, cyber security Malaysia has published a statement on their official website regarding “Malaysia at Risk of Terrorism” it stated that the government agencies and private institutions must upgrade their cyber security to avoid from falling victim to cyber terrorist attack as happened to the Canadian government in 2011 reported a major cyber-attack against its agencies, including Defence Research and Development Canada. The attack forced the

Finance Department and Treasury Board, Canada's main economic agencies, to disconnect from the Internet. Furthermore, Dr Zahri Yunos at time of he as the Cyber Security Malaysia Chief Operating said "you may have a good system and you may have spent billions on your equipment but if you did not have the right people to mend it and then there is no use" Then, cyber warfare is the fifth level of cyber threat and it involves the conduct of warfare in the virtual world or cyberspace.



**Figure 2 : Type/ Source Cyber Security Threats**

The typical threat agents are nation-states' military and their intelligent services, organized insurgent groups or terrorists. The action aims at immobilizing the information system or destroying critical infrastructure of the enemy through the use of weapons like computer viruses, worms or denial of services attacks (DOS). Cyber warfare is not a standalone strategy but it is used with other strategies (e.g: kinetic' warfare) in an offensive or defensive operation. The forgoing analysing has centred on the various types, levels of severity and complexity of cyber threats. The threat can emanate from various sources like nation-states, organizations, organized crime groups, individuals, terrorist, insurgent groups and competitors. The motive of these actors may be to enhance their ego or have some bragging rights, to advance a political or ideological cause, for monetary gain, to get access to sensitive information for a future cause of action, to cause or force the government to take or abandon a certain cause and used a strategy in conflicts and warfare. The severity of these attacks may differ from one another and intent may be to cause minimal or collateral damage. In the next section, I will examine the might-be solution for the problems arose.

## CHALLENGES

With increasing number of sites required for full coverage of 5G, site acquisition will present new challenges for timely deployment of 5G. New range of equipment poses a new challenge in terms of power requirements, structure loading and space availability at sites. First, Telcos will also be required to make careful judgment on the combination of 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G technologies to reduce operational expenses. Second, Since NSA will be most likely deployed in Malaysia, existing types of structures will still be used. For new site deployment, low height structures such as lamp poles, and Street Furniture will become more prevalent. Hence, it will require enhancements on the current process, Third, the increase in both total number of sites

and antenna size at existing sites will raise aesthetic considerations. Although some degree of aesthetic improvement is possible through careful design of installations and use of camouflage, these solutions will increase cost and decrease speed of network rollout, both directly, and through the impact of any additional further approval processes. Fourth, Telcos are expected to face the same challenges in enabling 5G services at sites. Considering the relatively high number of sites for 5G compared to the existing 4G or 3G systems, any complications in this area will impact on the smooth deployment of 5G.

### **Mitigations to Reduce Cost**

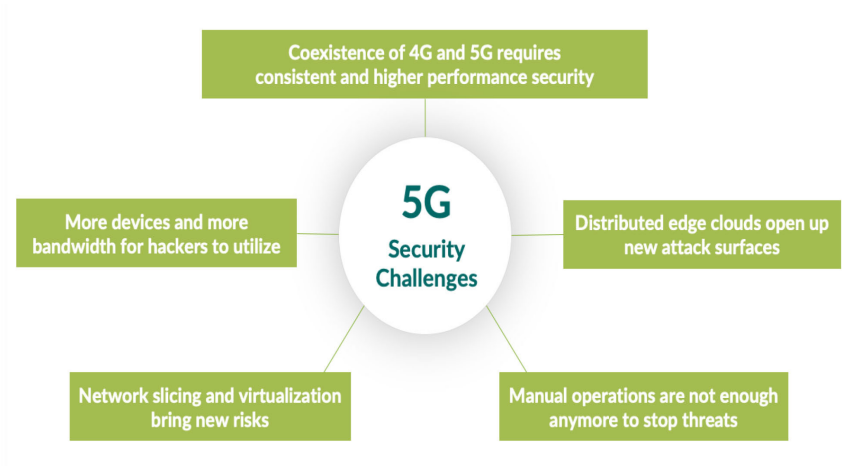
Considering the massive upfront investment required for 5G, some mitigating methods should be collaboratively supported by different stakeholders. Some level of sharing should be encouraged. While Telcos do practice some form of sharing today, there is a need to assess deeper collaboration methods. Active sharing in the form of MORAN, MOCN, antenna sharing can be mixed among Telcos. However, all of these methods should be carefully evaluated to ensure no impact on quality. The 5G Task Force urges MCMC to work with both state governments and local councils to ensure that Street Furniture is made available and suitable for Telco use. The necessary specifications such as size, height, etc. should be considered. The 5G Task Force understands that some Street Furniture would require enhancements and thus, require collaborative efforts with Street Furniture providers, equipment vendors and local councils to customise solutions. A concessionary electricity use rate to be applied for Telcos. Public complaints will result in higher costs due to the need to provisions for aesthetic features on these structures. Align with the Regulatory Working Group on changes required such as Low Impact Facilities (LIF), to manage cost increases

### **Security Challenges of 5G Technology**

A few key security concerns are inevitable consequences of the improvements 5G provides. For example, with a much greater amount of data being relayed per unit time, it's more rewarding for thieves to attempt data exfiltration on 5G networks. Workers who have free reign over their devices can also download malware faster than before, which means businesses have no margin of error for irresponsible device use.

An increasing reliance on low-latency communications means that connection stability becomes non-negotiable. If URLLC is interrupted (on purpose or by accident), this could result in death in the context of surgery or remote driving. As increasingly more devices communicate with each other, companies can automate many key processes. Unfortunately, automation magnifies pre-existing organizational flaws. If an organization has "blind spots" that no one is accountable for fixing, automation removes the chance someone will identify a key issue while on the job in person.

Also, most companies adapting to 5G will need to acquire a substantial amount of new equipment. This presents a logistical challenge, as the sheer amount of equipment required will take a long time to set up. This can result in careless mistakes that are hard to catch after the fact, and these oversights can end up causing major problems down the road. In addition, many networks are currently making the transition from 4G to 5G. This means that the vulnerabilities that exist in 4G networks will carry over to 5G networks for as long as the transition period lasts.



**Figure 3 : 5G Security Challenges**

## CONCLUSION

Broadly looking at the user base in the 5G era, we need to consider a secured solution and action made for human users. The discussion above pertains to the benefits of 5G. These benefits are potential benefits. 5G technology is still, of course, a work in progress. Public policy measures can have an impact and be the solution on the development of the technology itself. Public policy can also affect the realization of the potential benefits discussed above by affecting the incentives to deploy the technology. Public policy that allows or incentivizes existing actors within the health care sector to resist change will reduce the actual benefits that are realized from 5G. Conversely, public policy that encourages or incentivizes organizational changes that are responsive to technological changes will help in achieving the large potential benefits discussed above. Although 5G is the new and will usher in entirely new models for how things get done, it must be built on a solid foundation of network security. Having a 5G state of mind might be the solution of how things may work properly. Many of the risks will lie in the scale and type of new 5G-enabled categories of infrastructure. IoT security is a known problem with known solutions. 5G will magnify whatever insecurity exists in processes, procedure and policies for IoT and protections must scale up in proportion. 5G will enable entirely new services, and the costs for securing these services must be accounted for. 5G will be expensive, the new services will be expensive and the security to make it all happen will also be expensive. Do not skimp on area to pay for the other; deploy 5G securely or do not deploy it at all. Pressure to rush headlong into 5G deployments will come from every direction. But smart deployments will go slowly, building the foundation in advance of the new infrastructure with endpoint management solutions powered by artificial intelligence that can monitor the expanding attack surface as no human can do alone.

The advent of 5G technology represents an important augmentation of the role of technology in the wider economy of Malaysia. Technologies will go from a significant enabling technology to one that is pervasive and transformative in many uses across the country if it is used as good as possible achieving the general purpose of technology. 5G will enable substantial advances to Malaysia to have a better connectivity, benefits the healthcare sectors and services, education and learning, home entertainment and retail in Malaysia and future Malaysians. However, public policy has an important role to play in unleashing the full potential of 5G technology. With standardization, and

the desire to make this technology widely available, to cultivate a 5G state of mind represents a lot of possibilities yet from threat actors, we must build the future on a familiar foundation of secure networks and best practices with care to make the best of the coming revolution.

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## **THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DISASTER RELIEF AND FIGHTING THE COVID-19**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions. The term may also be applied to any machine that exhibits traits associated with a human mind such as learning and problem-solving. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used in disaster risk management applications to predict the effect of upcoming disasters, plan for mitigation strategies, and determine who needs how much aid after a disaster strikes. The media is filled with unintended ethical concerns of AI algorithms, such as image recognition algorithms not recognizing persons of color or racist algorithmic predictions of whether offenders will recidivist. We know such unintended ethical consequences must play a role in DRM as well, yet there is surprisingly little research on exactly what the unintended consequences are and what we can do to mitigate them. The aim of this perspective is to call researchers working on fairness, accountability, and transparency to work with DRM and local experts-so we can ensure that disaster mitigation and relief is accountable, considers local values, and is not unintentionally biased.*

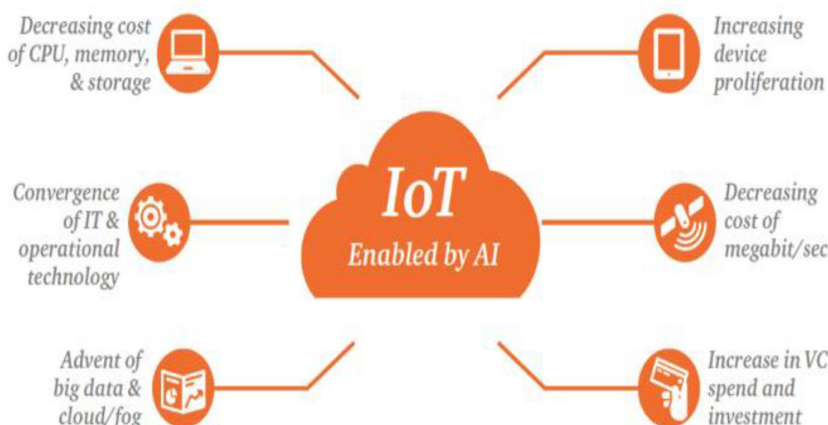
**Keywords:** *Disaster, Disaster Management, Internet of Things (IoT), Technology, COVID-19 Pandemic, Intelligent Healthcare*

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS AI?**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a computer or a robot controlled by a computer to do tasks usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment. It is also described as a brilliant computer program in the science and engineering of intelligent machines. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence. Another explanation for Artificial intelligence (AI) is its ability to imitate human intelligence processes by creating and applying algorithms built into a dynamic computing environment. As stated, AI is trying to make computers think and act like humans. Artificial intelligence has become necessary nowadays because today, the amount of data generated by both humans and machines far outpaces humans' ability to absorb, interpret, and make complex decisions based on that data. Artificial intelligence forms the basis for all computer learning and is the future of complex decision-making. It makes so many jobs automated and reduces human effort, and it has made everyone believe that there is more to come in the future.

In this modern era, the implementation and application of AI are so broad that they talk about how AI could revolutionize the world and change the future. AI solutions are already being applied in virtually every industry, with excellent results. Here are some areas of examples where AI has been used tremendously. For instance, in the healthcare field, AI applications are used to deliver personalized medicine, providing patients with reminders about when to take their medication and suggestions about which specific exercises they should perform. In the retail segment, AI technology is applied to handle stock management, design more effective store layouts, and provide personalized shopping recommendations. In manufacturing, AI solutions are used to forecast load and demand for factories, ensuring that they are run as efficiently as possible by helping to make better decisions about logistics and planning for materials ordering, as well as timetables for project completion. AI systems are being used in the banking sector to review

financial transactions to detect fraudulent activity, assess credit scores with greater accuracy, and automate tasks requiring manual data input and data management. AI technology is also applied to test new medicines, allowing organizations to bring them to the market sooner and analyze large and complex data sets that help discover new, more effective therapies and pharmaceutical drugs. Artificial intelligence has several applications in the military sector. Undoubtedly, the defense sector plays a vital role in any country. The countries build their weapons, test nuclear weapons and improve their accuracy and precision to improve their warfare. Significant uses of AI in defense are Logistics optimization, Automation tanks, Drone services, Target recognition, Development of action, Spies control, Simulation and Training Development Software, and Biometric Systems. Other than AI, Internet of Things (IoT) also helps develop military systems and related software. There is different existing software for defense development such as Command Management Information Systems (CMIS), Missile Defence Systems (MDS), Weapon Systems, Radar, Sonar and Command and Control, Battle Management and Communications (C2BMC).



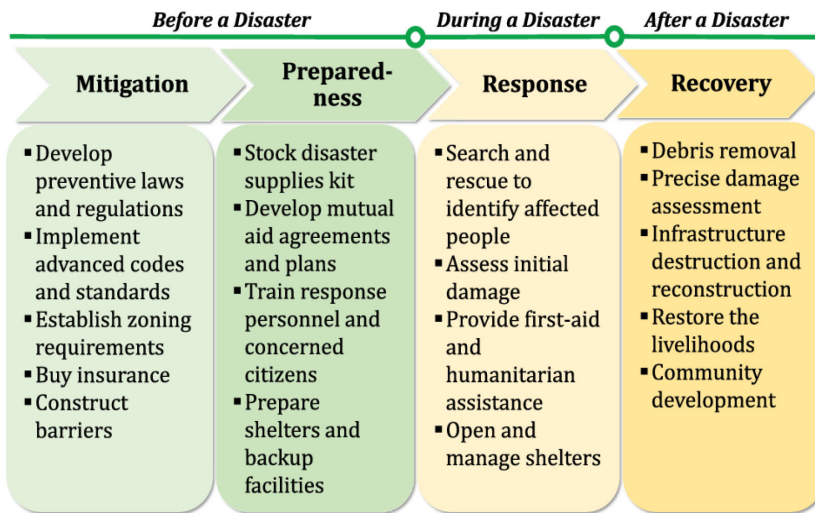
**Figure 1: AI and IOT – A Perfect Combination**

The use of AI helps sense threats better. This technology allows soldiers to become aware of threats faster and get advice about dealing with the threats. The army put smart sensors in air and ground vehicles. It also improves recruitments where the technology makes it easier to find suitable people ready to serve. It increases preparedness. Undoubtedly, training is an essential part of the military experience. The type of education that soldiers receive affects their performance and impacts everyone who works with them on particular missions. Artificial intelligence in the military would indicate that there is no chance of outdated textbook learners. They receive the syllabus information on tablets, and those gadgets instantly reflect the update to the material made by the distributors. Next, it will enhance cyber security by way of safeguarding the soldiers and communication networks. AI too facilitates transportation soldiers when they have to drive their vehicles over unfamiliar land or guide them to areas limited by roads or transportation. Research is underway to provide autonomous vehicles with AI so that military personnel can receive some travel assistance.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF AI IN DISASTER**

Natural disasters caused by climate change, extreme weather, aging, and poorly designed infrastructures, among other risks, represent a significant risk to human life and communities. A disaster is an event that leads to damage to the environment and society we live in, thus creating a massive impact on human life. There is a need for immediate response and a plan of action during any disaster. Crisis leads to the complexity of the situation and requires management to

save the life-preserving infrastructures and resources. There is a lack of research in such areas, and the data gathered after the disasters can help create a database, which can be of great help for further planning of disaster management. Artificial intelligence in such disasters is required and essential for analyzing the situations and coming out with solutions as preparation to face disasters. For instance, drones, robots, and sensors can provide intelligent and accurate information about affected landscapes and damaged buildings. This allows rescue workers to understand the topography of a landscape and the extent of damage to a building. It can find victims trapped in debris, enabling rescue workers to get to them quickly. National, state, and local governments and organizations are also grappling with updating disaster management practices to keep up. The internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning can help. These technologies can improve readiness and lessen the human and infrastructure costs of major events when they do occur. Disaster modeling is an important start and can help shape comprehensive programs to reduce disasters and respond to them effectively.



**Figure 2: Applications of Artificial Intelligent for Disaster Management**

Artificial intelligence promotes the advancement of technology and triggers development by reducing human life risk during crises. The first AI gave an accurate output as per algorithms set in the database of the technology. It is crucial to gather data based on the various disasters experienced previously so that analysis and effective development are done to reduce the impact of disasters. It involves time and cost to test the vulnerabilities. The second one saved life: AI is built with the algorithm, and too much technicality is involved. Disaster impacts both human and animal life, so the programming in AI technologies needs to be accurate to predict any upcoming disaster. At the same time, it is crucial to save lives and reduce the loss of lives during catastrophes. Thirdly, Environment protection: artificial intelligence is built to support the ecosystem, and covering the scale of protection of the whole environment during a disaster is difficult. The area impacted by disaster needs to be analyzed before taking any corrective actions and addressing the loss of the infrastructure. The challenge comes to protect and redevelop everything that has been affected post-disaster, which requires advanced skilled artificial intelligence. Fourth, False data: real-time information can save lives, but if the data flow is complex, any false information can be deadly. The incorrect information has negative consequences related to disaster responsiveness

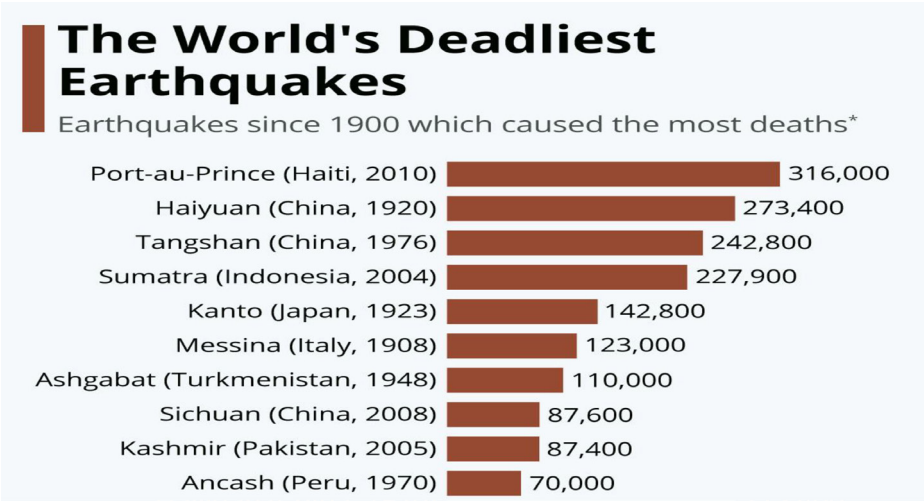
and preparedness. Data collection from various sources includes intentional and unintentional inaccurate data represented by the crowd. A few examples of the implementation of AI during a disaster are explained below:

### Nepal Earthquake

In April 2015, an earthquake hit Nepal, causing massive property damage. The 7.8 magnitude quake occurred near Tanjung. Barely 72 hours after the first wave hit, over 3,000 volunteers were mobilized via standard task force. Stef is one of the digital humanitarian network's member organizations. The volunteers were pooled from over 90 countries and were soon on the ground, ready to help victims and survivors. The volunteers were able to assemble because they were tagged in crisis-related photographs and tweets. AIDR used tagged tweets to identify and categorize needs based on urgency, infrastructure damage, and resource deployment. This allowed rescuers and volunteers to work efficiently as a unit to help affected victims.

### Chile Earthquake

With respect to the Chile earthquake, in September 2015, Chile was hit with a massive earthquake with the magnitude 8.3. It occurred about 29 miles from the city of Illapel. Quick response from emergency responders was able to swiftly evacuate thousands of people out of the identified danger zones, preventing further loss of life. What's more, minutes after the quake, disaster warning sirens rang throughout the impacted areas up to the nearby coast. Mobile phones in the area were targeted with warning messages of a potential tsunami following the quake's aftermath. Residents in all the designated coastal regions were immediately asked to evacuate these dangerous areas.

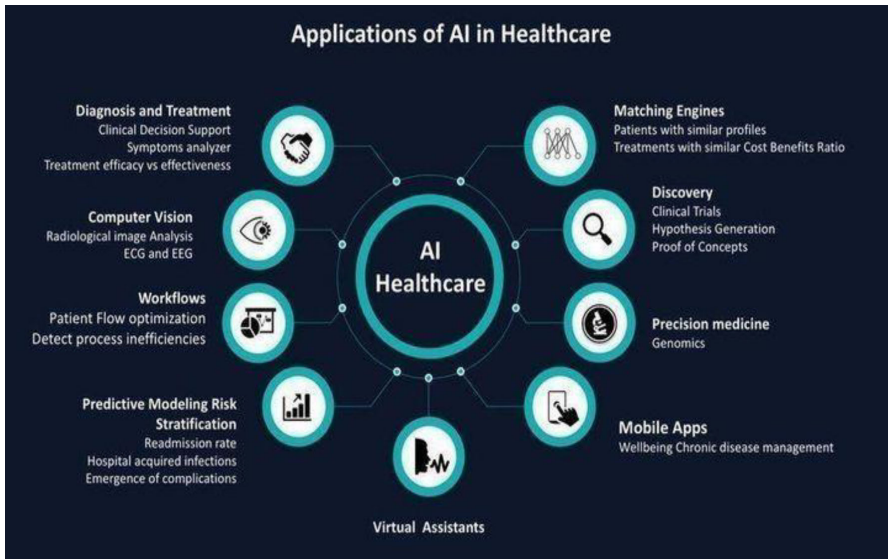


**Figure 3: The World's Deadliest Earthquake**

### THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN FIGHTING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Covid-19 may be considered the first influenza pandemic to be disseminated in our hyper-connected world. It has proven to be a phenomenon that significantly and rapidly impacts many layers of our society. Despite the many containment measures adopted to limit covid transmissions, such as the closing of borders and the introduction of periods of lockdown, we are witnessing as many as 116 million confirmed cases and more than 2 million deaths in 235 different countries, as reported by the World Organization Health (WHO). Serious concerns about healthcare systems' capacity have arisen due to the unprecedented demand for health services, especially in disadvantaged states. AI can be defined in terms of stages of observation and action. In a pandemic, AI is applied in two main areas: medical research and social context. Therefore, to study AI used during a pandemic, we need to focus on four areas: disease detection (diagnosis),

social dynamics observation (predictions), medical actions (treatments), and social management (tracing). Concerning covid-19, the SARS COV-2 virus has been found to attack the lungs, causing pneumonia-related issues frequently; therefore, the principal diagnostic tool consists of medical imaging for this kind of disease.



**Figure 4: Applications of AI in Healthcare**

In this context, AI has found widespread applicability in the diagnostic task due to the well-known capabilities of, in particular, dl models to work in the field of image segmentation and recognition. In addition to the measured accuracy of the applied strategies, the diagnosis' timing is also essential in this phase of a pandemic. Early diagnoses allow efficient planning of patient sorting, reducing the pressure on medical structures, and managing hospitalizations. In this context, AI can be applied to rapid examinations, such as lung ultrasonography (LUS) images or blood counts, obtain an estimation of the degree of severity of the disease, and thereby organize more efficient admissions to ICUs. Moreover, the availability of such information supports the design of AI methodologies to integrate different types of data. Clinical symptoms and laboratory analyses will lead to reliable and effective diagnoses. The availability of many "big data" sources about human-to-human interactions will efficiently track the infection and improve the decision-making process. Healthcare and government institutions use machine learning-enabled chatbots for contactless screening of covid-19 symptoms and answering general questions. One example is clevy.io, a French start-up and AWS customer, which has launched a chatbot to make it easier for people to find official government communications about Covid-19. Powered by real-time information from the French government and the World Health Organization, the chatbot assesses known symptoms and answers questions about government policies. With almost 3 million messages sent to date, this chatbot can answer questions on everything from exercise to an evaluation of covid-19 risks without further straining the resources of healthcare and government institutions.

## INTELLIGENT HEALTHCARE

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, EU-backed artificial intelligence has been used to analyze over 20,000 ct scans, helping to save lives. The hospitals involved in the pilot project are providing feedback on the technology, and this will help facilitate a better understanding of how AI can be used in medicine. The EU has already announced additional funding for new medical technologies, digital tools, and artificial intelligence. This will assist Europe's response

to the current pandemic and help pave the way towards recovery, and better prepare the union for future crises. It also expedites the research and treatment. Healthcare providers and researchers are faced with an exponentially increasing volume of information about covid-19, which makes it difficult to derive insights that can inform treatment. In response, AWS launched covid-19 search, a new search website powered by machine learning that can help researchers to quickly and easily search for research papers and documents and answer questions like “when is the salivary viral load highest for covid-19?” Built on the Allen Institute for AI’s covid-19 open research dataset of more than 128,000 research papers and other materials, this machine learning solution can extract relevant medical information from unstructured texts and delivers robust natural-language query capabilities, helping to accelerate the pace of discovery. In the field of medical imaging, meanwhile, researchers are using machine learning to help recognize patterns in images, enhancing the ability of radiologists to indicate the probability of disease and diagnose it earlier.

UC San Diego Health has engineered a new method to diagnose pneumonia earlier, a condition associated with severe covid-19. This early detection helps doctors quickly triage patients to the appropriate level of care even before a covid-19 diagnosis is confirmed. Trained with 22,000 notations by human radiologists, the machine learning algorithm overlays x-rays with color-coded maps that indicate pneumonia probability. With credits donated from the AWS diagnostic development initiative, these methods have been deployed to every chest x-ray and CT scan throughout UC San Diego Health in a clinical research study. Machine learning can also help accelerate the discovery of drugs to help treat covid-19. A UK AI company turned its platform toward understanding the body’s response to the coronavirus in the UK. They launched an investigation using their AI drug discovery platform to identify approved drugs that could inhibit the progression of the novel coronavirus. They used machine learning to help derive contextual relationships between genes, diseases, and drugs, leading to a small number of drug compounds.

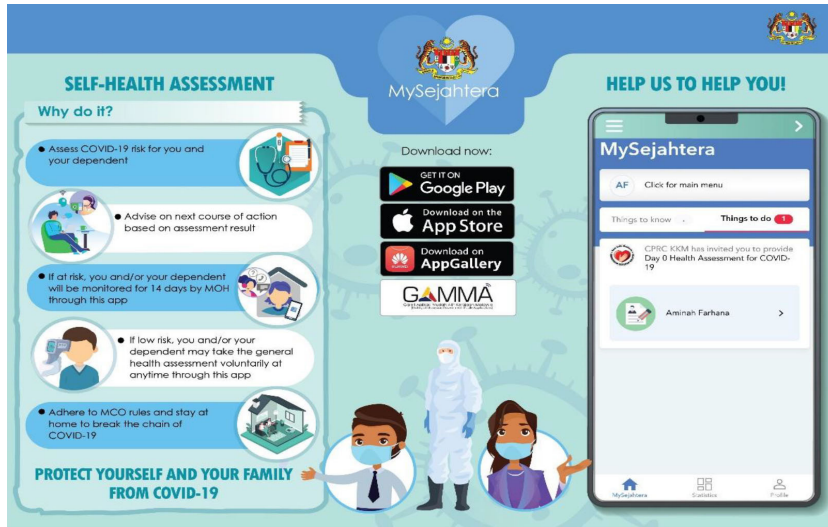
## **AI AND IMPLEMENTATIONS IN MALAYSIA**

Malaysia is also not left behind in using AI during the pandemic. In March 2020, just three months after Covid-19 first reached Malaysia, the government released a mobile application to help check and control the spread of the disease. With the My Sejahtera application, citizens can monitor their health status and receive the latest updates on the pandemic status. The application categorizes citizens based on their risk level of contracting Covid-19 and informs them of the next steps to take. For instance, those under surveillance will have to quarantine themselves at home for 14 days, while those at high risk must get tested at designated hospitals. My Sejahtera also serves as a contact tracing app. Citizens scan a QR code before entering a premise or any public place, and the system logs where they have visited in the last 14 days. Users can also register family members who do not have a smartphone. The app supports teleconsultations so that patients can speak with a doctor without leaving their homes. This helps them to stay safe and eases the demands on healthcare services. Citizens can also plan safer routes with the app’s hotspot tracker. The system taps the machine learning capabilities to identify possible sources of infection for each confirmed case and maps them geographically. Dr. Mahesh Appannan, Senior Principal Assistant Director of the Disease Control Division at Malaysia’s Ministry of Health, told Gov Insider that AI is also functional in search and rescue operations.

Meanwhile, Malaysian emergency response authorities use cloud computing platforms to improve the search and rescue (SAR) operations. Working together with TM ONE, the emergency

response agencies use the Search and Rescue Operation Coordination System (SAROCS) to support the planning, execution, management, and coordination of SAR activities during an emergency. In SAR operations, comprehensive and timely information is critical. The cloud-based SAROCS enables data from multiple devices and systems to be integrated onto a single platform, allowing various SAR agencies to access crucial data to facilitate an operation remotely. The solution is equipped with a mobile application, allowing users to connect to a secure Internet connection

and access the central system database, providing on-the-go information. For example, it can provide tracking information to the Rescue Coordination Centre to facilitate the SAR coordinator's deployment monitoring of search and rescue units. When SAROCS is hosted in the cloud, the search and rescue units will benefit from advanced analytics and artificial intelligence-assisted capabilities powered by the cloud to facilitate an operation successfully. For example, they can simulate or forecast oceanography and meteorological data to improve their understanding of search area conditions, particularly in SAR operations.



**Figure 5: MySejahtera Application**

## CHALLENGES FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence has various challenges as a machine could not possess all the human qualities with several merits mentioned above. Artificial intelligence has drawbacks too. No matter how perfect the system established, there are always problems that need to be fixed. The first issue is the cost: there is a considerable cost for developing artificial intelligence, which requires a few skills, advanced technologies, powerful companies, expertise and sound knowledge, and various forms of testing. Furthermore, astronomical expenses do not stop there as repair and maintenance can cost thousands of dollars. Artificial-based software programs require frequent upgrades to serve the requirements of the changing environment as the machine needs to become more brilliant, efficient and effective day by day. Second of all, AI cannot replace humans. Machines are more efficient than humans, but machines are not able to replace humans. However, it is practically impossible to replace humans with AI. Simply put, you cannot build human intelligence in a device because human intelligence is a gift from God. Thus, no matter how brilliant the engine is, it can never replace human beings. Thirdly, AI does not improve with experience.

One of the critical properties of logical human power is its ability to develop with experience and age. However, the same cannot be true for AIs as they cannot grow like that because they are machines. They start to wear and tear with time, and appliances cannot alter their response toward the changing environments. The primary principle on which AIs are built is the repetitive nature of work where the input cannot be changed. Whenever there is a change in information, AIs need to be reassessed, retrained, and rebuilt. Also, machines cannot differentiate between right and wrong because they cannot understand the concept of ethics or legality. Fourth, the lack of creativity- AI is not built for creative pieces of work, so it is clear that imagination or creativity is not for artificial intelligence because they are machines. AI can help you design something special, but it still can't compete with the human brain.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to understand AI and gather data from various sources to create a database for the disasters that covers all possibilities or impacts to be most beneficial. Most artificial intelligence systems can learn and analyze, and it will help the government and relief agencies to improve their performance during a crisis. It is crucial for the disaster community to understand and deploy the technology for crisis management. In the case when artificial intelligence is designed and developed with highly advanced technology such that its performance is as per human expectancy, the data could be easily analyzed, and various activities such as weather forecast, contingent plans, or environment scanning can be done. AI technology or robots developed for a constructive purpose will play an essential role in the future; it will also prove to be a helpful resource during various natural calamities and disasters. The only requirement is skilled expertise and technology for efficient development. Therefore, AI is no longer a technology of the distant future. It is already around us, and it is already a part of us.

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#### Journals /Serials

Henderson, D.A., The looming threat of bioterrorism, *Sci.*,283: 1279-1283, 1999.

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