

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Col Padman Bhaskaran was commissioned to Royal Armoured Corps in 1982 and is currently the Commandant of the Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre. He was the top student of the MAF defence college course year 2013. He holds a master in management from University Malaya (2004) and Masters of Social Science in Defence Studies from University Kebangsaan Malaysia (2013). He has served two UN mission which includes Bosnia Herzegovina with MALCON 2 (1996) and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone as military observer (2001). He has held several notable appointments such as Directing Staff of the Malaysian Staff College, Chief of Staff of the 4th Mechanized Brigade, SO 1 Technical Armour Dte and Commandant of the Armour Trg Centre.

Ir Dr Yang Soo Siang is an Associate Professor at the University of Malaysia Sabah. He holds a doctoral degree in Control Engineering and is also a qualified Professional Engineer. In addition to full time involvements in academia and industry, Ir Dr Yang is also a commissioned Army officer (Volunteers) since 1st June 2001. He is currently serving as Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, Rejimen 507 Askar Wataniah. Aside from his professional commitments, he has also taken a keen interest in military history and geopolitical studies.

Col Assoc Prof Dr. Burhanuddin Jalal was born on January 1, 1963. His early education was at Sekolah Kebangsaan Chenderong Balai Teluk Intan Perak, Sekolah Izzuddin Shah in Ipoh Perak (1976-1978), Kolej Islam Klang(1979-1982). Holds a Bachelor's Degree (Honours) from National University of Malaysia majoring in Islamic Studies, Bachelor of Journalism Communication (Honours) from University of MARA Technology, Master Degree of Publication Studies from University of Malaya and Doctor of Philosophy from National University of Malaysia (Dakwah Management) in 2011. Joined as officer in Malaysia Armed Forces in 1988. In 2012-2014, appointed to serve as Senior Officer in Psychology Department, at Malaysian Army Headquarters, Ministry Defence of Malaysia and then join the National Defence University of Malaysia as Associate Professor in Faculty of Defence Studies and Management.

Mej Nor Azman bin Shahimi joined the Malaysian Army through the Royal Malay Regiment Corps since 2004 as an infantryman with numerous experience in airborne operation, air assault and aviation mission. His current appointment as an army aviator plays a significant role towards the development of the tactical and operational air capabilities suit through his experience and knowledge in training wise and academically. Awarded a Bachelor Degree (Honors) in Computer Science Majoring Networking with IPv6 certified through Malaysia Putra University (UPM) in 2003 and honored with The Best Cadet for 22nd Intake in Reserved Officer Training Unit by DYMM SPBYDA. He was elected as a Fellow Alumni of the honorary Kolej Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah (KOSASS), UPM in 2010.

Mej Nirmala Krishna was commissioned to the Royal Ordnance Corps on 27 October 2001. She has held various appointment at unit, logistic HQ and training centres. She is a graduate of Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College from NDUM. She is currently pursuing her studies in Masters of Management at INSPEKA-UM for a year.

Colonel Ramli H Nik (R), a former Defence Adviser at the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York (2001-2005), is currently a Senior Fellow with the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. A graduate of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK, and obtained his Master of Arts (MA) in Strategic Studies in “Defence Security Analysis” from the University of Lancaster UK. His latest publication is a monograph on Malaysia’s Contributions in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations since 1960, published by UPNM Press, October 2016.

Cdr Sugenderan a/l Nagalan RMN joined the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) through Cadet Scheme Intake-49 in 1999. He was commissioned on 10 June 2001. Throughout his career, he has served onboard various ships and shore establishments. He has graduated from Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College in 2017 and UNITAR International University in 2018. He holds a Diploma in Defence and Strategy Studies and Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA). He is specialised in Principle Warfare Officer (PWO). Currently, he serves as the Chief of Staff Future Operations at HQ Western Fleet Command.

Dr. Tharishini Krishnan did her first degree in International Relations in 2005 under the Public Service Department (JPA) scholarship and furthered her Masters in Strategy and Security Analyses in 2008 at the National University of Malaysia. After joining as an academic staff at the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), she went abroad to King’s College London in 2012 under the Academic Scheme of Public Institutions of Higher Education (SLAI) to pursue a PhD Degree on Contemporary India Research focusing on Malaysia-India maritime security cooperation at the Eastern Indian Ocean Region. In 2016- 2017, she was appointed as the felo of Joint Chair of Derby – UPNM. She is concurrently a senior lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, NDUM.

Lt Col Ir. Suthan Venkatachalam was commissioned to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps on 27 Nov 1999 and currently serves as the Deputy Director of Policy Research at Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS). He has held various appointments at unit, logistic HQ and training centre. He is a graduate of Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College and Australian Technical Staff College. He holds Masters in Defence Technology and Masters in Occupational Safety & Health. He is a qualified Professional Engineer, competent Safety & Health Officer and registered as National Industry Expert in Mechanical and Automotive Sector with Department of Skills Development, Malaysia. He was the top student of the MAF Staff College course year 2016.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (PKO)

Colonel Padman Bhaskaran
Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre
Email: bpadman2903@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The UN was formed to uphold global peace and security. The deployment of military component for PKO was a tool for the Security Council to implement the agreed mandate. Malaysia became an active TCC since the 1960 mission in Congo and has thus far deployed approximately 35,000 personnel covering 37 missions around the world. The contemporary missions have evolved to be multidimensional witnessing the military, police and civilian component merging to implement the brokered peace agreement and subsequently coordinate into the peace building phase with the legitimate government with the hope to ensure sustainable peace for the nation. The dynamics of contemporary PKO are very robust in nature where protection of civilians is mandated hence bringing additional specified task for Battalion. Issues of gender mainstreaming have also brought new perspective when the UN endorsed certain policy to bring balance on gender perspective. It is also in line with the action 4 peacekeeping has paved the way for new initiatives concerning 8 areas of paramount importance pushing TCC to adhere and implement changes in tandem with the UN PKO reforms. These initiatives can be an area for MAF to ponder and take remedial as improvement and enhance troop preparedness for future deployment. Holistically these improvements must be viewed for all levels as it involves matters of policy, operational readiness and other commitments especially in the area of training. Investment in training will certainly bring the best from our troops deployed for mission. Meanwhile, MPC has to keep abreast with changes to training syllabus as advocated by UN DPO. MAF has to keep pace with these changes in order to remain as the top 30 TCC within the UN military hierarchy list.

Keywords: *United Nations (UN), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), Troop Contributing Countries (TCC)*

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception on the 24th October 1945, the United Nations (UN) has deployed numerous peacekeeping missions, deemed as an effective tool in addressing conflicts to maintain world peace and security. For the past 70 years, UN peacekeeping missions have assisted in steering countries embroiled in conflicts to a desired sustainable peace. The UN has been instrumental in amalgamating the deployment of the military, the police, and the civilian components globally for peacekeeping operations (PKO) in implementing the mandates as stipulated in every UN Security Council Resolutions. Since 1948, the UN has had approximately 70 PKO and has substantially evolved, transforming from the traditional PKO consisting of only the military component to a modern, multidimensional PKO which enables dynamism approaches.

Our national commitment through the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), have been participating actively since 1960 during the United Nations Operation in Congo (UNOC) and had continuously supported the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) requirements for PKO. MAF has deployed approximately 35,000 troops to 37 PKO missions around the globe encompassing of contingents and individuals such as military observers and staff officers. Currently, there are approximately 850 officers and soldiers deployed in six PKO missions in support of the Security Council initiatives. Although the UN has been striving incessantly to improve on its effectiveness, contemporary issues cum challenges have inevitably increased taking cognizance of reports and analysis from former Special Representatives of Secretary-General (SRSG) and Force Commanders (FC). It is apparent that contemporary PKO are very robust whereby cross-cutting issues such as the protection of civilians (POC) has become paramount having featured in most PKO mandates by the Security Council Resolution. UN peacekeeping faces increasingly difficult and unpredictable challenges, including deliberate attacks against peacekeepers, complex mandates and uneven political support.

Therefore in developing the concept of operations (CONOPS), the FC has to undertake the POC requirement as a specified task. This pushes for a more robust peace operation effort to be undertaken by the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) especially at the operational and tactical level without prejudice and caveats [1]. Contemporary PKO relies very much on situation awareness and intelligence to allow for thorough analysis by the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) and Joint Operations Centre (JOC) to develop a viable Course of Action to meet the mission intent. From the spectrum of peace activities (see Figure 1) it is prudent that the military component collaborates effectively with the police and civilian components in providing adequate support in implementing and achieving peacekeeping end state. The military support can be extended into the peacebuilding phase with the aim to enhance the development of the rule of law and security sector reforms of the legitimate government. This paper will highlight the contemporary issues and challenges with regards to the nature of the current missions. It is to provide a better understanding and expectation for future deployment by the MAF especially the Army which is the major contributor.

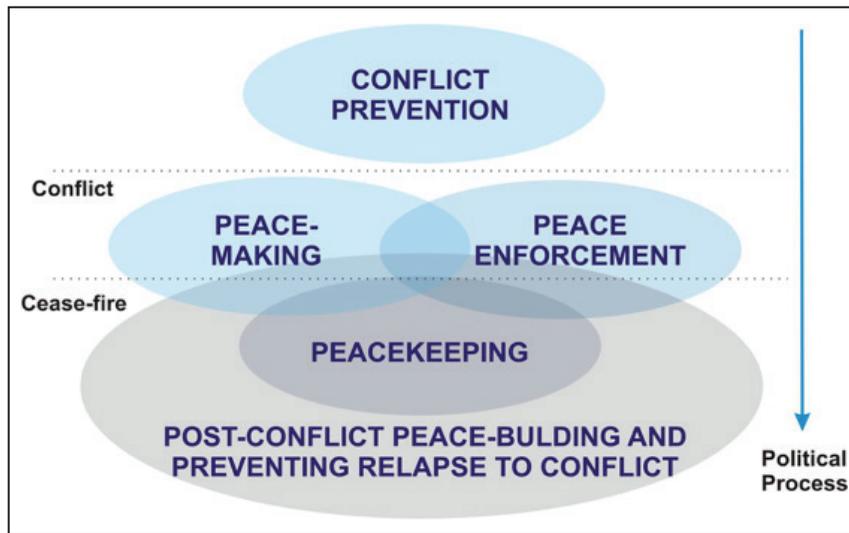


Figure 1 – Spectrum of Peace Activities [2]

PEACE ENFORCEMENT AND ROBUST PEACEKEEPING

As far as PKO is concern, it is important to understand that there are three UN principles which are inter-related and of paramount importance which are the consent of the conflicting parties, impartiality, non-use of force except in self-defence and the defence of the mandate.

a. Consent of the parties. PKO are deployed with the consent of the main parties to the conflict. This requires a commitment by the parties to a political process monitored by the UN. Their acceptance of a PKO provides the UN with the necessary freedom of action, both political and physical in order to carry out its mandated tasks. In the absence of such consent, a peace operation necessitates an enforcement action to force parties to accept the peace. At times, the fact that the main parties have given their consent to the deployment of a PKO does not necessarily imply or guarantee that there will also be consent at the local level, particularly if the main parties are internally divided or have weak command and control systems. The universality of consent becomes even less probable in volatile settings, characterized by the presence of armed groups not under the control of any of the parties, or by the presence of other spoilers.

b. Impartiality. Impartiality is crucial in maintaining the consent and cooperation of the main parties and this must not be confused with neutrality or inactivity. UN peacekeepers should be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but should not be neutral in the execution of their mandate. Just as a good referee is impartial, but will penalize violations regardless of the team. A PKO should not condone actions by the parties that violate the undertakings of the peace process whereby the international norms and principles are to be upheld. Nonetheless, since there is the need

to establish and maintain good relations with the parties, a PKO must avoid activities that might compromise its impartiality. A mission should ensure rigorous application of the principle of impartiality for fear or favor. Failure to do so may undermine the mission's credibility and legitimacy that could lead to a withdrawal of consent for its presence by one or more of the parties. Ultimately this could be detrimental for the troops in the mission.

c. Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. PKO are not an enforcement tool. However, they may use force at the tactical level, with the authorization of the Security Council, if acting in self-defence and defence of the mandate. In certain volatile situations, the Security Council has given UN PKO "robust" mandates authorizing them to "use all necessary means" to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack and also assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order. Although on the ground they may sometimes appear similar, robust peacekeeping should not be confused with peace enforcement, as elaborated under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Therefore in a nutshell:

1) Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict.

2) By contrast, peace enforcement does not require the consent of the main parties and may involve the use of military force at the strategic or international level, which is normally prohibited for the Member States under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter unless authorized by the Security Council.

Therefore any PKO should only use force as a measure of last resort. It should always be rectified in a precise, proportional and appropriate manner, within the principle of the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired effect, while sustaining its mission mandate. The use of force during a peace operation always has political implications and can often give rise to unpredictable circumstances. Judgments concerning its use of force need to be made at the appropriate level within a mission, based on a combination of factors including mission capability, public perceptions, humanitarian impact, force protection, safety and security of personnel, whilst most importantly is the effect that such action will have on national and local consent for the mission.

Nevertheless, the recent PKO deployments to South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa, and Haiti suggests that more and more missions have been mandated under peace enforcement especially involving the protection of civilians. Therefore if this is the future trend of the PKO, then MAF must take cognizance of this and start to develop knowledge, skill, and attitude for the robust nature of the mission. The troops wearing the blue helmet will most of time be conducting tasks that are more robust. It is imminent that the selection process will have to take into cognizance of this

factor which is also being emphasized through training policies from UN DPO. An ideal quantum of force of infantry, armour and all other arms and service must be looked at seriously in order to be effective to carry out primary tasks. Joint Force HQ must be wary about this for all future deployment.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS (POC)

Over the last two decades, the world has witnessed armed conflicts marked by systematic violence and mass atrocities committed against civilians which without hesitation have increasingly looked to the UN to prevent or stop such crimes. It is undeniable that mission all over had witnessed atrocities and abuse being targeted on civilians who ultimately become the innocent victims. Since 1999, UN has formalised a resolution to ensure POC becomes a formidable part of the mission mandate. According to the Security Council, POC becomes the most important objective of the vast majority of UN PKO. Therefore POC will be a task mandatory in missions forcing the peacekeepers to ensure its implementation. There are currently 9 missions with POC mandates. The POC tasks vary according to each field mission specific mandate. Older missions as UNIFIL (1978) and MONUC (1999) had their mandates altered to respond to political and crisis situations and to incorporate POC as a mandated task. Currently, more than 90 percent of peacekeepers are deployed in missions with such mandates. MAF is also involved in POC mandated mission in UNIFIL.

POC in a broader understanding also includes the protection from sexual abuse cum violence and child soldiers who are being exploited by the belligerents. The consequences are very serious and can vary according to the field mission. Ultimately failure to protect civilians puts at risk the credibility of the PKO and will reflect the good image of the UN. At strategic level this could lead to the diminishing of international support to the field missions bringing possible impact on political (renewal of mandate etc), at operational level possible undermining of the political relationship with the host government, difficulties related to the host government consent, lack of population support, perception of lack of impartiality, credibility and legitimacy in risk whilst at tactical level operational issues regarding animosity from local population, affecting information gathering, liaison, key leaders outreach and security (force protection issues related to base protection, patrolling, observation and other tactical tasks) [3]. Therefore the entire troop capabilities will have an impact on the desired end state with regards to POC. This will revolve back to training and preparation of the Battalion group prior to their deployment. The conduct of the task effectively and efficiently will require combat capabilities within the organisation for mission. There should not be any compromise to this as it could be detrimental in achieving the mandate through the operational orders and also protecting the troops themselves. The challenge on the use of force does not reside in lack of clarity or guidance; the issue is to conduct effective pre-deployment training for battalion key leaders who have the authority to use force as well as soldiers trained to adequately respond to the orders given. Another important aspect is to have skilled military leaders commanding units, subunits, platoons and squads prepared to respond to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguous (VUCA) situation.

In general, in the past field missions made ad hoc decisions to address POC challenges whenever they appear with the available mission resources and lack of a doctrinal approach. In the recent years, a number of positive developments have taken place especially so in the development of a doctrinal framework, robust mandates, efforts on training and efforts on equipping in the field missions to protect civilians [4]. For military units knowledge of the mission Rules of Engagement (ROE) is a vital document that has to be constantly reminded to the troops. Understanding and being trained to apply the ROEs is essential so that the soldiers are fully capable to perform the battalion operational tasks within the parameters of the legal framework. In practical terms, it requires extensive practical training on the ROEs. As such, it is prudent that the Force Integration Training (FIT) must take cognizance of these requirements so that the mission deployment and contribution will serve its purpose. Once again robust peacekeeping will be the way forward as far as mitigating problems and implementing the POC in support of the mandate.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Peace and security can only be achieved and sustained if all members of society are treated equally in terms of opportunities, protection, access to resources and services, and participation in decision making and other basic rights. Therefore, the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was a landmark in promoting greater attention to gender perspectives in the peace and security endeavors of the UN. The resolution calls for the incorporation of a gender perspective into PKO, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, in humanitarian activities, in planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and reconstruction efforts and even to establish women engagement team at the tactical level.

The DPO in collaboration with UN partners has developed Gender Resource Package for PKO to assist gender advisers and others at the mission level to mainstream gender perspectives in peacekeeping. Additional Security Council resolutions were endorsed to strengthen resolution 1325 that emphasized accountability for the implementation and women's engagement at all levels of decision-making [5]. These resolutions provide a framework for implementation of the WPS agenda and for monitoring results, progress to rectify gaps by all actors in peace and security missions. Currently, there are gender adviser positions in most contemporary PKO. These advisers assist the SRSG and senior mission staff to ensure gender mainstreaming takes place in all aspects of the mission mandate and work with newly emerging governments and with civil society actors to ensure gender mainstreaming implementation at national level. DPO has also integrated gender perspectives into the Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations as well as the Standard Training Modules for pre-deployment training of peacekeepers. In July 2003, DPO has issued directives for disciplinary matters for uniformed and civilian personnel serving in PKO that covers several forms of misconduct, such as sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

UN DPO has formalized a policy to be implemented from year 2020 whereby female UNMEoM and staff deployment shall be 15 percent of the total strength [6]. There is a proposal also that by the year 2025 the similar percentage will also apply for battalion deployment. In line of these new paradigms of concern and directives implementation, the MAF has programmed thematic courses conducted at the MPC and this training package is inclusive for the Malbatt FIT modules. The requirement of more women peacekeepers must be taken seriously for future deployment and could warrant for more female recruitment at all levels. Based on the current holding strength of female soldiers, this ultimately would be a challenge for the MAF and might see the same women soldiers be rotated for missions.

ACTION FOR PEACEKEEPING (A4P)

The UN Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) High-level Meeting on 25 September 2018 was chaired by the Secretary-General which brought together to demonstrate peacekeeping's successes, acknowledge PKO challenges, and spur the action needed by all peacekeeping stakeholders to enable UN missions to bring lasting peace to the countries in which are mandated by UN to serve [7]. Undeniably today it is accepted that political solutions are often absent, and missions seem to have mandates that lack focus and clear priorities. Complex threats in several environments are causing a rise in fatalities and injuries of peacekeepers for instance just recently in MALI in January 2019, and missions have sometimes lacked the personnel and equipment to meet these threats. Peacekeeping operations have also faced challenges in delivering on protection mandates and long-term sustainable peace [8]. Hence to respond to these challenges the A4P was launched to renew mutual political commitment to PKO. The Secretary-General has called on Member States to join collectively in developing a set of mutually-agreed principles and commitments to create PKO preparedness for the future.

These Declaration commitments are focused on a set of key priorities that build on both new and existing commitments. Implementation goals are centred on eight priority commitment areas covering politics, WPS, protection, safety and security, performance and accountability, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, partnerships, and conduct of peacekeepers during PKO [9]. These eight priority commitment areas are anchored in ongoing areas of work, including the Gender Parity Strategy, the WPS Agenda, Santos Cruz Action Plan, Management Reform, Strategic Force Generation, and many other strategies. A tracking system is in development so that progress can be systematically monitored and reviewed especially towards TCC.

MAF WAY FORWARD

The increasingly volatile environment into which PKO are deployed and the demanding tasks being mandated require immediate and serious consideration of security issues. In retrospect, effective security is about protecting UN personnel while enabling, not limiting, operational activity. Those involved need to take up this challenge to save

lives, restore peace, and better achieve the mandate of the UN and these challenges if not curtailed will transform and evolve over time to a more serious challenge. Some suggestion for the MAF to enhance its preparedness for future PKO deployment:

- a. Policy and diplomacy. The safety and security of MAF personnel must be understood as a collective responsibility that requires a shared approach to overcome the security situation and improving the mandating, resourcing, planning, and execution of peace operations. Regular situational awareness briefings during the mission should be incorporate as operational SOP. National cum MAF policy must be clear that there should be no caveat to be undertaken by the Battalion when deployed. MALBATT Commander should be responsible to the FC on all matters to ease decision making unless in a situation which is not covered in the operational orders or term of reference.
- b. Organizational Structure. Safety and security issues need to be approached holistically and should not be compromised. Within the MALBATT organizational structure it must be proportionally filled by the elements according to their expertise in meeting the mission mandate. Joint is encouraged but not to extend of taking unnecessary risk since situation at mission area is very unpredictable. An analysis of the current mission and future development must be taken into consideration when MAF decide on the actual organisation. Redundancy must be avoided and focus on achieving the given end state must be the priority.
- c. Selection of Personnel. The UN pre-requisites are high for any mission and taking cognizant of the organizational structure requirement it is paramount suitable personnel are selected to bring effective implementation of the task. Therefore the selection of personnel must be looked into in depth to fulfill the tasks at hand in meeting the end state of the mission.
- d. Resources and Capabilities. The gap between peace operations mandate which dictates the development of the Operational orders and ultimately the allocated resources continues to undermine staff safety and security. MAF should allocate adequate financial incentives to address any of these shortcomings. Capabilities must be in line to support the deployment requirements in fulfilling the essential task. Therefore prudent planning of the resources and capabilities will certainly contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the MALBATT Battalion deploying for mission. This must be pondered from the perspective on the duration of the mission.
- e. Legal. Legally, host states bear the primary responsibility for the security and safety of UN personnel and premises in the mission. Nonetheless, it's a known fact that the Battalion bears most of the real burden as far as security and safety in peace operations. If analyzed often missions are deployed because the host state is unable or unwilling to maintain security, and in most instances, such dependence on the host state can undermine the impartiality of the MAF. In this sense, it is essential to ensure

a shared understanding of security responsibilities between the troops and the host state, including through updating the UN model status of forces agreement (SOFA) or status of mission agreement (SOMA). Thorough understanding of the rules of engagement (ROE) and its interpretation is also vital. The commander should have a legal adviser within the Battalion organization to assist in decision making taking into account humanitarian and international law [10].

f. Training. The biggest challenge for any TCC is to send a well-trained Battalion for mission. MAF has been strict on this, which brought about the establishment of the Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre (MPC) as the centre of excellence for PKO training. The training is focused on individual and collective whereby the individual training is conducted in MPC covering core pre-deployment courses such as United Nations Military Experts on Mission (UNMEoM), United Nations Staff Officer Course (UNSOC) and United Nations Logistics Officer Course (UNLOC). It is imperative that the officers deployed must commensurate with the course attended. For instance, the UNSOC course is designed for officers to be deployed as UN Staff Officer at Mission HQ. This is important because the syllabus for the course are different and tailored for specific job functions.

The collective training is coordinated by JFHQ and the responsibilities are divided according to respective services in ensuring the conduct of single service training once the selection of the troops are finalized. Subsequently, the personnel will merge during the FIT and undergo 10 weeks pre-deployment training package set by the ITS/DPET of UN DPO. The entire flow chart is shown in Figure 2.

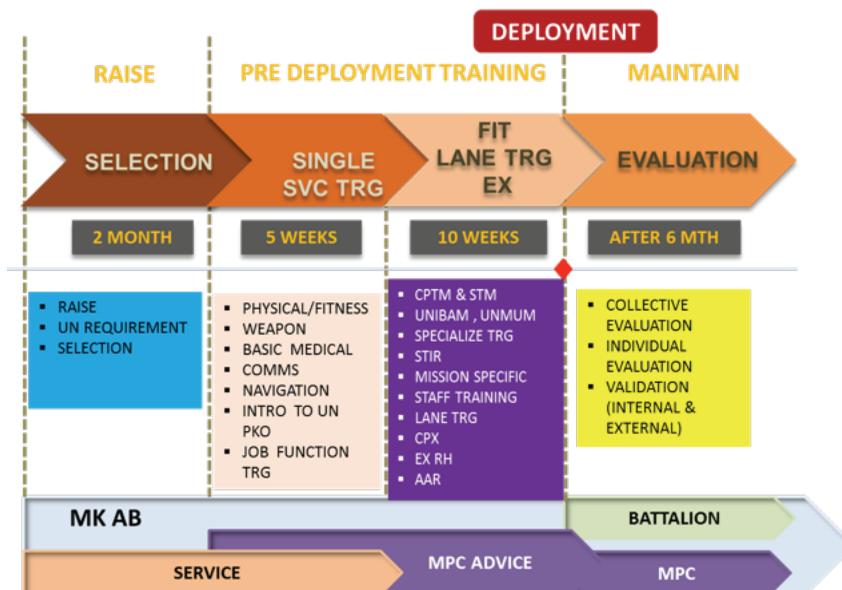


Figure 2 – Flow Chart Responsibility for Collective Training

MPC has collaborated closely with JFHQ in developing the training and evaluation for MALBAT. This package includes the specific training conducted by services in laying and strengthening the necessary fundamentals for the subsequent FIT phase. This training programme adheres to the UN standards and must be taken seriously in its systematic conduct in assuring and enhancing the security and safety of MALBATT personnel. Therefore all levels of command at the MAF must provide undivided support to the training needs to ease the mission deployment. The conduct of proper training will be the best welfare for the troops and respective families prior to the deployment. Internal and external validation has to be carried out to review the training relevancy. MALBATT must be prepared to be validated by the training cell/staff at mission HQ as it is a pre-requisite of the ITS cell of UNDPDPO. MAF is preparing to obtain training recognition for both UNMEoM and MALBATT training by the year 2019.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary challenges in the PKO paradigm have been looked into seriously by UN DPO. Measures have been taken to maintain the security and safety of peacekeepers in UN mission. MAF has to ponder on the actions to be taken in order to improve the preparedness of the MALBATT for future deployment in mitigating increased uncertainties towards security situation which can escalate within a short period. The A4P suggestions are to be looked at from the MAF point of view and be implemented to enhance MALBATT effectiveness and efficiency. Gender perspectives and future policy with regards to gender mainstreaming will have to be assessed from a positive way forward for MAF. Finally, the training standards for both individual and collective must never be compromised as lives are at stake.

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STRATEGIC INTEREST IN EASTERN EUROPE: PERSPECTIVES OF GREAT POWERS

Yang Soo Siang
Universiti Malaysia Sabah
Email: ssyang@ums.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The current geopolitical construct of Eastern Europe is undeniably a consequence of the Second World War. A new world order formed, taking over the old world hegemony. This paper highlights the present day interest of great powers in this region, particularly with respect to its economic and security construct. The review is presented in order to better appreciate the present day relevance of the East European region to the great powers. The end of the Cold War in 1991 had also reshaped the geopolitical construct of the region - opening up the region to global commerce and integration into the EU sphere of opportunities, hence subjecting the region to international exploitation. The extent of global powers' economic and security interests in Eastern Europe and relevant issues of international concerns are reviewed in this paper.

Keywords: *NATO, EU, global powers, security challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Post-Second World War, Europe was reinvented even before the conclusion of the war - the Cold War geopolitical construct of the continent was already determined in early 1945, by great powers of the time. The US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union had proven themselves as capable of casting great influence in global politics and military dominance fulfilling the roles of world powers - led by their respective leaders, these countries had deliberated the reorganization of postwar Europe during the Crimea Conference, accentuating the impending victory. The concession of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union was one of many significant outcomes of the meeting. Europe was divided into Soviet and Western spheres of political influence from then on - the Cold War began within the next few years [1]. The early years of the Post-Cold War period witnessed the rise of nationalist and populist forces in Eastern Europe - hence, political instability had adversely affected their capacity as trading partners. Meanwhile, Western Europe, through the expansion of the EU and NATO had fervently endeavoured to strengthen political and economic reforms in the region to facilitate the integration of Eastern European states into the EU [2].

US interest for a united Europe is primarily based on security concerns in the region. The strategic partnership with the whole of Europe is important for the US - in order to better manage security threats from outside of Europe's borders [3]. The US is actively preventing Eastern Europe from reverting to its Cold War patterns of nationalism and

parochialism, which, in effect could jeopardize European integration [4]. The US had heavily invested in Europe as a whole, towards this end. Recent years have witnessed a shift in the balance of power in the region again. After a period of passivity, Russia has re-emerged as a prominent global and regional actor [5]. The political uncertainty in the Ukraine is of particular importance during the last few years. The government that took office after the 2014 Euromaidan clashes in Kiev was deemed to be not interested in reforms nor on improving relations with the West [6] - an example of a former Soviet state reverting to the influence of the Cold War regime; negatively influencing other former Soviet states on matters concerning reforms. China is at present one of EU's largest trading partner. The EU market has also become of particular interest to modern China which has extensive commercial initiatives with the states in the region, particularly through Eastern European states - Beijing considers the Eastern European region as the gateway to enter the greater European market. Expansion of Chinese sphere of influence in this region is not surprising.

This paper reviews the extent of global powers' economic and security interests in Eastern Europe and looks at various issues that have significantly affected the nations involved. The significance of Eastern Europe in particular, to the European community as a whole is discussed; economic and security issues influencing the policies of powers interested in the region's political construct is also highlighted. Finally the paper concludes with a discussion accentuating future outlook and impact of East Europe's strategic relevance to global powers. The discussion presented in this paper shall focus mainly on the US, Russia and China's interest in Eastern Europe. The EU as a collective entity, projects significant influence in the international arena, therefore, the collective European's interest in Eastern Europe is also important and is equally highlighted.

GLOBAL POWERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Superpower: a country acknowledged to be globally dominant and of unequalled capability - able to lead and exercise influence on a global level besides the ability to lead other great powers. During the last World War, the US, the British Empire and the Soviet Union, known as the Big Three, were the first countries to be identified as superpowers - the terms was popularized in 1944 [7]. Academically, attempts were made to classify various empires of the old world as such, however, none had strictly fit the criteria - even the most powerful polity of the past could not compare to the level of global influence exerted by present day powers. The British Empire is viewed as the precursor model of the present day great powers - unrivalled in economy, military strength, and political influence most notably from the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution which begun on the island kingdom accelerated the Empire's socio-economic development and permitted its ambitious worldwide domination [8]. It was well ahead of other known nations, notably peaking in the 19th century - wielding global hegemony until the advent of the Great War. Participation in the Great War and the Second World War had somewhat exhausted if not weakened the Empire tremendously in the first half of the 20th century.

During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union were the only countries acknowledged as superpowers - dominant over many regions - politically and economically. Both nations had both military and economic clout to mount invasions in all four corners of the globe, on its own or by alliances that could include countries from any continents. With the end of the Cold War era, the US has undeniably taken up the role; the only world superpower remaining unchanged as of 2015 [9][10]. China's present role as a global power is a significant one [11]. Its remarkable recovery from decline began albeit slowly, amidst domestic struggles, after the Second World War. A decade after the end of the Cold War, China joined the ranks of the US and Russia in technological advancement, having sent its first astronaut into space. It is at present, the second largest economic power in terms of overall GDP - China's economic interest reaches all corners of the world, including Eastern Europe; its military modernization program accelerated (in particular its naval capability) in keeping up with the need to secure worldwide interest [12].

The focus of discussion in this paper is limited to strategic interests of great powers, namely the US, Russia, and China in Eastern Europe after the Cold War. These countries are categorized as great powers in acknowledgment of their current economic, and geopolitical influence, nuclear weapons capability and are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council [13].

RELEVANCE OF THE EU

The aftermath of the Second World War witnessed Eastern European states becoming part of the Soviet Communist bloc - Stalin's satellites states [14]. Post-Second World War definition of these states as Eastern Europe has become outdated since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 [15] and current understanding defines the region occupied by Eastern European states (which was known as the 'land between' or *Zwischenlaender*) as the region that is neither Western European nor Russian. It extends from Finland in the north to Greece in the south, the west facing Italy and Germany while the Ural Mountains and the Caucasus Mountains are at its eastern edges facing Russia. Currently, countries recognized as being part of the Eastern European region are as listed in [16]. The native population of the region are multicultural and multilingual - ethnic differences are expressed by a variations in regional languages. The fact is that Eastern Europe is a part of the European diaspora with significant historical connection since medieval times [17].

The EU has actively strengthened relations among states within the European continent as it strongly believes in the integration with Eastern European countries [18]. Special permanent EU representatives are assigned to these regions in order to project its role in supporting non-military activities to strengthen democracy, rule of law and economic development in the continent as a whole. Eastern Europe is important to the EU - security issues need to be collectively managed by all stakeholders in the region; the need is imperative as the collective impacts on the prosperity of European states in the region such as experience during the Cold War, cannot be ignored.

STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF GLOBAL POWERS

Post-Cold War, Russia is relentless in its effort to influence political and economic developments in Eastern Europe via its traditional commerce and economic ties with ethnic Russian communities in the respective countries. Therefore, in order to counter Russian influence, US and NATO has vigorously increased collaboration efforts with Eastern European countries - particularly Poland, Romania and the Baltics [19]. US participation in both the World Wars and the Cold War is deemed as a strategic move to ensure that its interest is secured. It is duly observed that the US only participates in costly military confrontation as a last resort, hence alliances such as that exercised through NATO is of great advantage for the US so that direct and costly confrontation with the Russians in the act of protecting its interest in Europe can be avoided.

Present day, China is actively expanding global interactions to the Western world - the trend indicates China's status as a major global actor. China has initiated active relations with Eastern Europe since 1956 in order to deter possible Soviet invasion of Poland at the time. The relationship faltered due to domestic instability in China. However, more than four decades later, China has revived its interest in the region with economic initiative implemented through the 16+1 Framework [20]. China has eyes for commercial opportunities in East Europe and thus, is keen to protect its interest in that region too.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Post-Cold War, Eastern Europe has progressively established itself in the international trade scene - cars, vehicle parts, video displays, computers, minerals, oil and gas. However, the 2009 financial crisis witnessed the decline in global trade activities which had incidentally affected EU integration efforts [21]. In addition, the Russian-Georgian war could not be averted. These issues had prompted the US to consider a semi-withdrawal strategy from key areas of the world. Nevertheless, having recovered from the crisis, East European countries or "emerging European countries" as they are now known are growing at twice the rate of other European states economy [22]. It is concluded that besides being driven by a young, educated workforce, the low oil prices and heavy inward investment is driving its economy forward [23]. The EU has invested heavily in East Europe because it sees the need to secure its own economic interest in the region. In addition, the European community gains the economic benefits from an equally stable East European economy. According to an EU report [24], having recovered from the 2009 financial crisis in 2014 "... the six Eastern Partners accounted together for nearly 2% of total extra-EU trade in goods, almost equivalent to Saudi Arabia, the EU's 11th most important trading partner". With improving economic stability in Eastern Europe, US interest is renewed. The US is a strong strategic partner to the EU. Thus, by initiating strategies to improve its eastern counterparts, US confidence in the region is regained for the benefit of the bigger European community.

The US and China are currently two of the largest EU trading partners. It is noted that the EU collectively represent a market of approximately 500 million consumers hence, post-Cold War China has actively initiated multiple trade initiatives with the EU and Eastern European states [25]. The 16+1 Framework is currently China's bilateral platform to handle economic development initiatives specifically for strengthening ties with Eastern European states [26]. The 16+1 Framework's objectives is to intensify and expand cooperation with 16 countries namely, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Macedonia. Focus areas includes investments, transport, finance, science, education, and culture within three priority areas of economic cooperation - infrastructure, high technologies, and green technologies.

Presently, although China is enthusiastic about involving all EU states in its economic development initiatives, only the Visegrád countries are actively participating - to date, China is the second biggest trading partner to the Visegrád countries [27]. The majority of EU states' responses are described as "tepid to non-existent due to the lack of a proper understanding of the Chinese vision and the lack of a unified and common strategy with regard to China, as if Brussels has simply does not care" [28]. Regardless, the economic cooperation initiatives are still relentlessly promoted in Eastern Europe as a part of the Silk Road Economic Development agenda - the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) [29]. In principle, the 16+1 Framework complements the BRI which was devised and backed by Beijing. Private corporations and all levels of the government inclusive of state-owned enterprises are involved - a strategy devised to integrate into the international economic system with the intention of eventually leading the system [30]. In fact, China is presently the world's second greatest economy, a contender with the US for the world's top economic power.

In addition to trading, China actively invest into numerous strategic industries and property markets in Europe - to accelerate the development of logistic facilities for distributing imports from China, as planned via the BRI. Investments is also notably extensive in industries related to the Balkans' rich natural resources - to secure propriety rights to current and future needs for energy resources [31]. Russia had reestablished itself as an important global player after more than a decade of passivity since the collapse of the Soviet Union [32]. Nevertheless, Moscow has never ceased to be an influence to Eastern Europe - politically and economically. Approximately four million Russian troops were stationed in East European states after the Second World War; Stalin's "satellite states" were designated to buffer its western borders. Predetermined trade partners among the East European satellites was established, barter agreements with the international business communities are common while conventional trading is restricted during the Cold War era [33].

Therefore, it is not surprising to observe that Russia is continuously discouraging former eastern bloc European states from integrating into the EU - more so towards Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia; Eastern European states which had made known

their intention to join the EU [34]. Through geoeconomic means, decisions are influenced by the Russian's to ensure dominance. Russian interest is not predominantly on economic interest in Eastern Europe - geoeconomic means are employed more for geopolitical gain. The energy sector is exploited by Russia as the main source of economic influence due to the fact that the majority ownership of oil and gas resources in East Europe are held by the Russian government, monopolizing the oil and gas market in the region by preventing competition and manipulating via governance loopholes [35]. Russia's soft power approach has continued after the 2009 financial crisis through a variety of other businesses [36]. Through this way, East European governments' decision on strategic issues are influenced by the Russians. Russia's influence and dominance over the Eastern European states are as strong as ever. Hence, the EU's intent to integrate the whole of Europe is being undermined with obvious impacts that could be detrimental to its own and US interests in the region.

SECURITY CHALLENGES

Russia has regained its standing as a global player during the last decade - Russian intervention is adamant in continuously disrupting permanent peace in the Ukraine while Georgia, Estonia, and Moldova has remained within its sphere of influence by having elected Russian influenced leaders [37]. Russia is seen to portray an aggressive stance in Europe in order to secure its interest in Europe, particularly in East Europe. European security and stability had been NATO's responsibility - the US is duty-bound to the alliance's 26 European members. Therefore, it is fundamentally vital for the US to ensure that NATO's military capability is able to fulfill its obligations. US security concerns in the regions occupied by Eastern Europe is clear - as discussed earlier, the EU is an important US strategic and trade partner thus the stability and security of Eastern Europe must be maintained in order to ensure the prosperity of the whole region. Considered buffer zones, Eastern European states technically separates NATO and Russia. Romania, for instance is one of the East European countries providing NATO's first line of defence against any possible Russian military incursion. Romania welcomes US military cooperation, considering the mutual benefit it brings towards its own military security - US commitment in Eastern Europe is inclusive of missile defenses covering the region. Since Turkey's relations with the US has soured, Romania's importance has increased [38]. Meanwhile, China's concern for security has increased notably in the European region [39]. Nevertheless, for the time being, Beijing has no obvious intention to be involved or provoke conflicts in the East European region - China may be a huge economic opportunity for Eastern Europe but their intentions are being viewed with mistrust [40], hence US security commitment in the region is more or less of advantage towards mitigating China's concern in terms of securing its interest.

Nevertheless, present day Russian military capabilities are not as impressive when compared to the military might of other global powers [41]. Its military institution remains plagued by domestic problems such as corruption, ethnic divisions and inequality, poor access to health care and a long-term shortage of military recruits [42].

Moreover, budgetary limitations has denied serious efforts to modernize its military capability to keep them relevant. However, serious attention on the challenges it poses to numerous US interests, is still necessary - the Russian security threat may no longer be as significant as would have been during the Cold War, but the US and its allies are prepared to react with aggression if necessary to protect their interest in the region.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that major powers interests in Eastern Europe are primarily hinged on economic factors. US interest as Europe's trading partner is better secured if the former Stalin's "satellite states" are stable politically and economically. Besides the US, China is the next largest trading partner to the EU. Eastern Europe is seen by Beijing as a platform for further expansion into the EU market and to secure proprietary rights to energy resources in the region. Russia's interest relates to energy security - oil and gas in addition to other natural resources. The European community, be it west or east, are masters of their own fate. A fully integrated EU entity is strong enough in terms of economic and military strength to repel interference or exploitation by any powers. The EU needs a new security architecture for neutral Eastern European countries to be actively committed to affect long term safeguard of the region's own economic and security interest, since for instance, the 2009 financial crisis showed inconsistent US commitments in the region and Russia's consistent intervention through geoeconomic means to influence the geopolitical construct of Eastern European states disrupts the integration of the European community. The fact remains that a strong and independent European community would possibly leverage the balance of power in the region; to position the collective community on an equal basis with global powers interested in the region.

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MILITARY INSTITUTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE QURAN AND PROPHETIC TRADITIONS (AS-SUNNAH)

Burhanuddin Jalal, Sayuti Ab Ghani, Amnah Saayah Ismail
National Defence University of Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The military is the backbone of the nation's defence system. The underlying philosophy of the establishment of military institution is to create a uniformed and systematic approach to both routine and irregular work activities and operations. According to the Islamic law, military institution is an essential element in protecting the sovereignty of the nation as well as maintaining peace and stability. This study elucidates the concept of military from the perspective of the al-Quran and prophetic traditions. In addition, a soldier's basic responsibilities from the Islamic viewpoints of are also described. This study employs library research method where texts and documents pertaining to the subject matter are analysed. From the analysis carried out, it is clear that Islam considers the establishment of military institutions as an important element in realising the mission and vision of a nation's defence system. The society and public as a whole should be made aware of the significance of the military establishment especially in the effort to inculcate Islamic values based on the al-Quran and as-Sunnah (prophetic traditions) in military institutions.

Keywords: *Military Institution, Al-Quran, As-Sunnah, Defence, Security*

INTRODUCTION

Islam views the military profession in high regards where those who are directly involved in military duties are accorded a high status within the society. This is evident when those who died defending the religion and nation are considered as martyr, an honour greater than any worldly accolade. The Prophet in one of his sayings narrated by Abu Daud said, "Whoever is killed protecting his wealth is a martyr, and whoever is killed protecting his family is a martyr, whoever is killed protecting his life is a martyr and whoever is killed protecting his religion is a martyr" [1].

Hence those who are honest and only seek the pleasures of Allah in striving and fighting in the path of Allah will be greatly rewarded as promised by Allah, "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment" [2].

DEFINITION OF MILITARY

According to Kamus Dewan, the military is defined as “troops comprising soldiers and other personnel trained for war to ensure peace and security”[3]. Ammus Permuter, meanwhile defined the military as a group of disciplined organised professionals entrusted by a nation to fight a war [4]. Fine S. E. described the military as a group of people selected on the government’s payroll trained in warfare to defend the religious faith and sovereignty of the nation [5]. Khalid Ahmad Syantut in his book *al-Muslimun wa Tarbiyah al-askariah*, stated that the military is a part of society and he further classified military personnel into two categories:

a. Voluntary enlisted personnel who chose the military as their profession. They are paid monthly wages and during peacetime they undergo training in various military disciplines. These military personnel are trained regularly and for a specified period at military training centres and academy so as to produce efficient and formidable armed forces.

b. Conscripted military personnel where 18 year old male citizens are mandated to undergo military training at various military training centres. Upon completion of the military training, they are required to serve in the armed forces for a specified period, usually from 1 to 3 years, after which they will re-enter the civilian life. However, from time to time they are required to attend military courses so as to refresh their military knowledge and skills [6].

During the pre-Islam period, especially in the Arab peninsula, the term ‘soldier’ was non-existent even though at that time there were clashes and war between the Arabic tribes and clans. However, from historical notes, there are groups of people who were specifically assigned and trained in armed warfare not only to defend their tribes but also to attack other tribes [7].

Bernard Lewis, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* explained that the Islamic military establishment was started during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and was dominated by the Muhajirin (righteous companions who migrated from Mecca to Medina) [8].

Hasbi Shiddiqy, in his book “*Ilmu pertahanan negara dan kemiliteran dalam Islam*” described the establishment of military institution during the early days of Islam. He explained that according to Islam, there are two categories of military personnel or soldiers: *Murtaziqah* and *Mutathowwiah*

a. *Murtaziqah* Military Personnel. A military group formed and funded by the government specifically tasked to defend the nation. These military personnel are paid by the government and in return they should be willing to go to war. In a hadith narrated by Ibnu Umar, he said “The prophet sent an expedition to Najd and I was

amongst the troop. They got a large number of camels as booty. Eleven or twelve camels came to the lot of every fighter and each one of them also got one extra camel? From this hadith, military troops during the time of the Prophet (pbuh) were rewarded when they were victorious in battle” [9].

b. Mutataowwiah Military Personnel. A group of military personnel formed voluntarily based on their awareness and willingness to defend the nation. Contrary to the Murtaziqah, the Mutataowwiah not only comprised of men but also women and children. The classification of the military provides evidence on the occurrence of battles and wars during the days of the Prophet’s (pbuh). It is the duty of Muslims not only to defend Islam but also at the same time to love one’s race and nation [10].

Allah the Almighty has commanded the Muslims to equip and fortify themselves so as to defend the religion, race and nation. In the Quran, Allah says, “And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged” [11]

From this verse, it is imperative that Muslims should at all times have a formidable armed forces to keep potential enemies at bay. It is clear that the military’s contribution to the religion, race and nation is enormous.

The strength and formidable force of Islam which originated fourteen centuries ago saw Islam being professed by the people of this country. It is therefore important for military personnel to discharge their religious duties such as performing daily prayers on time, consuming halal food and strive to be closer to Allah. The awareness of discharging religious duties and performing good deeds are mentioned by Allah in the al-Quran, “And say, “Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do” [12].

STUDIES ON MILITARY

There are very few studies conducted on the military from the Islamic aspects compared to other facets of Islam. Most of the studies on the military from the Islamic viewpoint are associated with the caliphate political system which include leadership and governance. Historical data showed that the concept of military in Islam in the early days is focused on defending the Islamic faith (jihad) which are associated with values such as justice, liberty and peace.

Abu Hassan Ali Al-Mawardi in his book al-Ahkam al Sultaniyyah discussed the subject of military from the leadership aspect. According to him, when a nation is facing a war or under some kind of emergency situation, the leader must be from the military

whereas when the nation is facing human resources crisis, a knowledgeable leader must be appointed [13].

In other books on governance jurisprudence (fiqh siyasah) the military is discussed from the context of holy war (jihad) or other types of war. In general, the military is considered as an important agency comprising professionals tasked with protecting the nation. In discussing issues related to the military from the Islamic perspective, it is essential to provide a clear definition and understanding of the term 'military'. A clear definition and understanding of the term provide a conducive platform to further discuss the subject of Islamic military during the times of the Prophet (pbuh) and the succeeding righteous caliphs (khulafak ar-Rasyidin) in a clear and dynamic manner[14].

The role and responsibilities of the military from the Islamic perspective are regarded as a manifestation of faith and jihad in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence and moral values. These role and responsibilities are discharged via a legitimate Islamic nation leadership. Hence in discharging military duties and action, rules and methods in accordance with the al-Quran, prophetic traditions (Sunnah) and laws agreed upon by collective agreement of the righteous companions must be adhered to. It is therefore clear from the Islamic aspect that the military is part of faith (iman), Islam and beneficence (ihsan), the three components essential in promulgating the word of Allah. Any military operation is considered as an act of propagating Islam to mankind, therefore every military personnel are also Islamic missionaries provided that they adhere to the role and responsibilities similar to military personnel during the days of the Prophet (pbuh) in the nation-state of Madinah. Ideris Endot described the responsibilities of the military from the Islamic perspective comprised of the following:

a. Preservation of faith. In Islam, the pillars of faith is the foundation of one's life, hence the believers are not bound and free from any subservience except to God Almighty. On the other hand, the non-believers are very much bound to the worldly values and interests. Ruba'i bin Amir who was sent to confront Rustam, a Persian military commander told Rustam that the Islamic military forces are determined to liberate humans from the restrictive worldly nature and any forms of slavery to an immensely wide sphere comprising both here and the hereafter. In another instance, a Persian commander asked Khalid al-Walid how his 100,000 strong troops were defeated by Khalid's 10,000 soldiers. Khalid al-Walid said, "*We love and looked forward to death, whereas you and your troops love life. You fought to live but we fought for death*". *The words of Ruba'i and Khalid al-Walid manifest the strength of their faith. Their strength in faith provides the impetus to their physical prowess in defending Islam*".

b. Islamic propagation. The Islamic military forces were able to extend their dominance geographically and being missionaries themselves, they were able to propagate Islamic teachings and values to people of the new territories. Their mission was not to conquer and widen the political boundaries but to liberate the people from false diety and elements of polytheism.

c. Fight against the enemies of Islam (jihad). The sword, contrary to popular beliefs is not a weapon of destruction or oppression according to the Islamic doctrine. Rather the sword act as an instrument to control and correct misdeeds and to uphold justice. It was reported that the Prophet (pbuh) once said, *“I was sent to mankind with this (referring to the al-Quran) and this (referring to the sword). I will ensure that people will follow the righteous path and use the sword to revert to the path if they go astray”* [15].

The great military commander, Uqbah bin Nafi’ shed a light on the objectives of jihad and the establishment of Islamic nation-states. After his conquest of northern Africa and upon reaching the verge of the Atlantic Ocean, he rode his horse to the sea until it was half submerged and looking towards the sky, he said, *“Great God! if my course were not stopped by this sea, I would still go on, to the unknown kingdoms of the West, preaching the unity of the holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship another gods than Allah”* These men were so committed to their cause of elevating the words of Allah through jihad as they firmly believed in the promises of Allah in the Quran, *“Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur’an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment”* [16].

Allah himself has laid down the principle of protecting and defending the world. This is evident when He said in the al-Quran, *“By Allah’s will they routed them; and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed. And did not Allah Check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: But Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds”* [17].

Muslims are required to be steadfast in fighting in the path of Allah (jihad) as evident in the Quran when Allah commanded, *“March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old and poor), strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah. This is better for you, if you but knew”* [18].

In this chapter particularly in verse 39, Allah warned the Muslims of the repercussions of not engaging in the struggle for Allah’s cause (jihad). He said, *“If you do not mobilise (as you are commanded), He will punish you grievously, and instead of you He will substitute another people, and you will in no way harm Him. God has full power over everything”* [19].

Ibn Kathir in his book of Quranic interpretation Mukhtasar Ibn Kathir, when commenting on the subject of jihad said that Allah has commanded the Muslims to join the Prophet (pbuh) in the battle of Thabuk to fight the Romans irrespective of whether they were wealthy or poor, young or old. From the annals of Islamic history, especially

during the times of the Prophet (pbuh), the righteous predecessors (Khulafa ar-Rasyidin) or even during the times of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, the Muslims showed very high commitment in fighting for the cause of Allah. Sadly the spirit of jihad has dwindled since then and the Muslims have become as what was described by the Prophet (pbuh), *“There will come a time when the nations will gather against you, just as people gather around a feast.’ A man said, ‘Will it be because we will be few at that time, Oh Messenger of Allah?’ He responded, ‘No, you will be numerous in those times, but you will be like the scum of the sea, and Allah will remove your fear from the hearts of your enemies, and He will place al-Wahn in your hearts’, It was asked, ‘What is al-Wahn?’, he responded, “Love of the Dunya, and hatred of death”*. [20],

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

It is inevitable for any struggle not to face challenges and obstacles. From the military standpoint, a solution in a conflict may be achieved either through peaceful means or brute force which means engaging in battles or war. There are only two end results in a battle or war, win or loss. Allah provides the guidelines in winning a battle when He said in the al-Quran, *“Say (O Muhammad SAW): “This is my way; I invite unto Allah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah i.e. to the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge. And Glorified and Exalted be Allah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah; those who worship others along with Allah or set up rivals or partners to Allah)”* [21].

Sayyid Qutb in his book of Quranic interpretation, *Fi zilalil quran, in discussing the preceding verse, outline three essential elements in a struggle:* [22]

- a. A clear underlying principles and objectives.** Both the underlying principles and objectives are determining factors in ensuring a continuous human existence. The Islamic faith is the backbone of the objectives which ensures that human beings are able to carry out their responsibilities successfully.
- b. Leader.** A leader’s ability to provide guidance to the community is crucial. Islam considers a good leader as one who rose from the Islamic community and having a close relation with Allah and this quality is translated in his everyday actions and behaviour.
- c. The followers.** Followers to a leader who aspire for success are those whose allegiance and loyalty are unquestionable under whatever circumstances. The followers are often characterised with traits such as strong faith, noble personality, very patient and willingness to sacrifice and fight for the cause of Allah. These characteristics are described in the Quran, *“O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred.*

And if there are among you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved because they are a people who do not understand” [23].

In the Malaysian context, the Malaysian Armed Forces having established in 1933 is one of the public service organisations tasked to defend the nation’s sovereignty. It’s vision is to be a credible armed forces with the objectives of protecting national sovereignty, integrity and national interest. The said objectives can be attained based on the following core foundations [24],

a. Preparedness, comprising the following aspects:

- 1) Meet all national security needs.
- 2) Be able to project a force beyond the perimeters of Malaysia’s land and maritime borders.
- 3) Enhance Readiness and Sustainability.
- 4) Ensure a Balanced Force.
- 5) Ensure effective C4ISR (Command, control, communication, computerization, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) through Network Centric.

b. War Fighting Capability

- 1) Integrate fighting capabilities of land, air and sea forces focusing on interoperability.
- 2) Integrate all land, sea, air and civil resource management systems.
- 3) Adopt cutting edge military technologies by utilising Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).
- 4) Continuously develop and improve standards of operations, logistics system and human resources through Total Quality philosophy.
- 5) Utilise to the optimum.

c. Quality Personnel

- 1) Develop competent and effective leadership with management skills.
- 2) Develop versatile, knowledgeable and competent military personnel.
- 3) Enhance quality and well-being of MAF community.
- 4) Develop strong physical, spiritual and moral courage.
- 5) Foster and adopt MAF values and work ethics. [25],

CONCLUSION

From various information gathered and retrieved, it is clear that the military organisation require personnel who are committed, highly disciplined and adhere to Islamic teachings not only in theory but also in practice. This is to ensure that the trust and responsibilities given in defending the nation are carried out efficiently and effectively. It is hopeful that the military organisation in Malaysia can develop and nurture professional military personnel based on Islamic principles in line with the purpose of Islamic law (Maqasid as-syariyyah) as explained by Yusuf al-Qaradhawiyy as follows :

- a. Protecting and preserving the faith and religion.** The main purpose of protecting and preserving the faith is to ensure that all commandments and prohibitions from Allah are abided within the scope permissible by Islamic law and jurisprudence.
- b. Protecting the intellect or mental faculty.** It is the duty of those in power (government) to ensure the intellect and mental faculty are protected both physically and spiritually.
- c. Protecting life.** Islam placed a high importance in protecting lives especially of human beings. Islamic law has various provisions such as qisas (retaliation of kind; an eye for an eye), takzir (punishment based on the judge's discretion) and hudud (mandated by Allah).
- d. Protecting the honour.** The purpose of protecting the honour is to ensure one's character and behaviour are admirable and commendable while at the same time refraining and preventing an individual from bad and destructive behaviours.
- e. Protecting property.** Properties and wealth of the people and the nation (strategic assets) are also vital from the Islamic law viewpoint. Public properties must be well managed and utilised justly for the benefit of the people. [25],

Based on the principles of Maqasid as-syariyyah (purpose of syariah law and jurisprudence), the military institution's function and existence are essential as the above five tenets are protected and guaranteed and in agreement with Islamic requirements.

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JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: RE-BRANDING A NATION

Mej Nor Azman bin Shahimi
881 Army Aviation Regiment
Email: azmanputd@icloud.com

ABSTRACT

The analysis concluded in this study looks at Japan's initiatives and strategies to rebrand itself after the devastating aftermath of the Second World War for the purpose of returning to regain normalcy through active participation in UN PKO. Detailed analyses of influencing factors between the emergence of the SDF (instrumental to Japan's involvement in UN PKO) at the end of Second World War (1945-1960), Cold War (1961-1989), and Post-Cold War period (1990 to present) are included, in particular on aspects of Japan's capability to conform to its pacifist stance, guided by Article 9 of its Constitution, while promoting active involvement in UN PKO via a peace building mechanism. The analytical framework for conducting the research work views military & economic security factors, internal peacekeeping challenges and relations with superpowers (such as the US and China) as changing factors influencing Japan's policy for increasing participation in UN PKO while domestic factors relevant to its political dynamics and style of leadership are considered to be intervening variables. The study concludes that Japan's policy on global affairs has always been UN-centric, remaining important up to the present time; first and foremost because the basic spirit of the UN Charter is in conformance to her Pacifist Constitution and of equivalent priority is the significance of UN as a symbol of US power and prestige - US influence weighs heavily on Japan's decisions to be involved in major global affairs. In addition, Japan intends to be a member of the UN Security Council's permanent seat - this motivation drives Japan's active participation in UN PKO for the purpose of attaining her ultimate goal of global recognition as a normal country and US support is considered decisive in this matter.

Keywords: *National Security Strategy (NSS), Self Defence Force (SDF), United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO)*

INTRODUCTION

Memories of atrocities committed by Imperial Japan during the Second World War still lingers - the long-standing and deep-seated distrust of Japan by the international community is still somewhat apparent. This paper summarizes the historical background, state interest, and international strategic environment that has influenced Japan's active participation [1] in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO). The investigation conducted elucidates Japan's intent to re-interpret Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, circumvented through interstate relations with the US and the UN. The

scope of this paper is focused on Japan's growing involvement in UN PKO from the period of the Cold War era to the Post-Cold War period. It is acknowledged that this research may not wholly represent Japan's overall views and opinions on its evolving relationship with the UN PKO.

END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: A TURNING POINT

After the Second World War, US led Allied troops occupied the defeated state of Japan; the process of rehabilitation was initiated by the US to reform the Japanese polity based on recommendations agreed upon prior to the end of the war. Leaders of the US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union devised the agenda to reform the defeated state which included demilitarizing, disarming and normalizing the Japanese economy.

The Imperial Japanese military regime was blamed [2] entirely for various atrocities committed. The war was an expensive endeavour for Japan in terms of financial costs and human lives, ending in her unconditional surrender. The events that unfolded in terms of Japan's occupation and rehabilitation during the years after Japan declared its unconditional surrender on the 15th August 1945 were significant in establishing Tokyo's current policy outlook. In the aftermath of the surrender, Japan's society was deeply troubled by memories of the country's devastation and shame. Any kind of post-war re-establishment of the military institution is considered suspicious even at present time. The concern was (and still is) characterized by their definition of the military which was mentally linked to the Imperial military regime that was blamed for the nation's predicament, not the development of a new military. Hence, Japan's Post-war Constitution restricted its para-military force for defence purposes only through Article 9 of the Constitution. In fact, Japan is not allowed to form or maintain any traditional military force or from using force internationally for any reason other than to embrace goals of peace and democracy, thus permitting only limited self-defence operation, known as the Self Defence Force (SDF) [3].

Therefore, the SDF needed to re-brand itself in order to be reshaped for conformance to publicly accepted norms and guarantee its legitimacy in the present world order. Compliance to the post-war Constitution is vital. This process has in effect, indirectly prepared the SDF for a bigger role in the UN. Thus, besides its primary role as a national defence force, the SDF has managed to establish itself as an instrument to promote Japan's interests in the global arena by virtue of its involvement in the UN PKO. The Japanese government has in fact been keenly engaged in defending the regulative legitimacy of the SDF in order to gain public confidence and acceptance in society.

The UN PKO: Platform for International Recognition

The UN PKO has proven its effectiveness in providing security, aid, and relief to conflict states in steering their early transition of intricate war to peace. It symbolizes the concern of international communities over maintaining the security and peace

worldwide. Preventing continuous fights and disengaging conflicts are the aim of UN PKO based on agreed principles [4] between the involved states. Possessing strengths that are unique, the UN not only provide the platform for burden sharing and legitimacy, it also includes the ability to deploy and sustain troops and police worldwide. In fact, the UN PKO integrates military and civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional UN mandates [5].

The significance of the UN and its positive contributions in world affairs signify its acceptance by the international community as a credible and influential global governance body. The UN's role in peacekeeping is especially important more so during the Post-Cold War years. UN PKO has changed in form and meaning - positively gaining vital experience and recognition towards the promotion of world peace since its inception.

Due to significant dynamics of contemporary geopolitical climate and on conflicts of ideology, the notion of security is constantly revised. Besides listing the meaning of security defined by different scholars, Alan Collins [6] highlighted that state security contains four basic elements; physical safety, autonomy, development, and rules. Furthermore he adds that traditionally, a state is an object to be secured - in this case, security is commonly achieved through military strength. However, Barry Buzan [7] presents a different point of view, stating that security is primarily about the fate of human collectivises and the specific reference object varies with the level of analysis. The security of human collectivises includes a range of existence conditions affected by political, economic, societal, environmental and military factors [8].

Stephen Walt [9] states that security studies can be explained as "the study of the threat, use, and control of military force" [10]. Thus, Buzan's points of view is based on neorealism but permits variations in the reference object while, Walt is essentially rooted in the realist tradition. Japan's position is considered to be in line with Walt's perspective of the realist tradition - national interest is the most important consideration for Japan's state survival in the region. In addition, Japan's interstate relations are viewed as linked to concepts related to the balance of power and on the literal basis of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Thus, the UN PKO is considered to be Japan's platform to regain its international standing in the interest of the nation and to enhance global influence while projecting its commitment towards world peace in order to regain acceptance and prestige by the international community.

Kurashina [11] is of the opinion that the Japanese peace building mechanism was conceptualized during three distinct periods of time - the period between the end of the Second World War and the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty (1945-1960), between the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty till the conclusion of the Cold War (1961-1989) and finally the Post-Cold War period (1990 to present). Tokyo was preoccupied by the controversial beginnings of the SDF during the first period. The continuous efforts to legitimize and improve on SDF organization duly prepared it to play an important role in support of Japan's interest toward PKO commitments.

Re-Branding the State

The Gulf War was viewed as the first Post-Cold War conflict which in some way, affected the global community deeply. Most importantly, implications of the conflict reflected the need for globalizing and institutionalizing peacekeeping efforts - which was then already a UN sanctioned approach for maintaining international peace and security. Japan had earnestly professed its readiness be a part of this effort - the Act on Cooperation with UN Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (the International Peace Cooperation Act) was enacted by Japan in June 1992 to reflect this commitment [12]. The Peacekeeping Law (a common abbreviated term used to refer to the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations - Act No. 79 of June 19, 1992) permitted SDF deployment of troops to related overseas missions [13].

Japan's International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, led by the Prime Minister manages the state's involvement in PKO and relevant activities [14]. In September 1992, under the Peacekeeping Law, the SDF was authorized for its first overseas deployment [15] and participation in UN missions – UNTAC [16]. The participation in Cambodia was the first of many for Japan's SDF. Japan wanted to be involved in at least two UN PKO simultaneously [17], subsequently participated in Angola, Mozambique (former Zaire) based missions. However, the Japanese public was not supportive since it was clear that Japan did not have direct interest in these conflicts.

It was then noted that Japan's contribution to PKO was solely concerned with leveraging international influence and reputation within the international community [18]; for nation-branding [19]. Nation-branding is recognized as instrumental for nations to compete in the international arena, advantageous for states that need to communicate or negotiate successfully [20]. Japan's role became more prominent in this way, consequently gaining global prestige and becoming influential in international peace and security issues - Tokyo's aim to reaffirm its position in the international arena [21] and to secure a place in relevant international institutions to achieve its international ambition is fulfilled, gradually seeking a stronger role, admitting its intent to secure permanent membership of the UN Security Council [22]– an ambition encouraged and supported by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1999 who held high regards for Japan's contributions to the UN [23].

Nevertheless, in the case of Japan, this approach jeopardizes the priorities of the UN PKO in terms of peace and security in the region - Japan's post-Cold War participation in Africa's southern region's PKO missions indicated Japan's tendency to engage in soft power projection through hard-power resources. Japan's contribution was deemed to be inadequate for the purpose of peace and security in the region [24] at the time. Hence, Japan's contemporary engagement in UN PKO seems to be cautious and hesitant due to its initial experience in the southern Africa region [25]. There are many new challenges and hence, Japan has no choice but to formulate approaches that portrays soft power

strategies. Tokyo's international public policies is a hybrid intermingling of realist components (i.e. giving priority to her national interest) and idealist components based on human-centred and peace-related principles of its post-Second World War constitution [26]. These principles serve as guidelines for the pacifist norms of the population and as basis for formulating self-restraining measures in relevant Japanese policy [27].

Nevertheless, the fact is that the Japanese government's stance on related security and defence policy shows that the national sentiment on peace related values remains strong [28]. The implication prevents deeper commitment with UN PKO due to strong anti-militarism from the Japanese public sentiment dominated by deep remorse [29] about the Second World War in addition to legal constraints. Nevertheless, Tokyo recognizes the nation's priority for commitments as reflected in the 2011 Diplomatic Bluebook [30].

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Japan has propagated its active involvement in the UN PKO while facing relevant challenges in her attempt to strictly conform to the nation's Pacifist Constitution since her acceptance as a member of the UN; her growing and rapid involvement demonstrated from just large financial contributions initially and later, extensive troop deployment particularly after the Cold War years are testimonials to this fact. In addition, the current state of Japan's position in international PKO is brought about due to leadership factors cannot be denied - the will and resolutions of past and present leaders to continue the effort in regaining the nation's standing in the global community. To this end, it is also worth highlighting the contributions of Japan's present and past leaders concerning its policies related to involvement in the UN PKO to-date. The individual leader's motives, beliefs, socio-cultural background, life experiences and idiosyncrasies shape their perception and worldview concerning reactions to opportunities and threats [31]. Therefore, understanding the personality of leaders dependent upon the constraints of the international system as well as domestic political dynamics is a significant approach to analyse foreign policy behaviour [32].

Shinzo Abe [33] is most remembered as the first Japanese prime minister to confidently define Japan's national interests and security strategy, challenging the post-Second World War taboo. It is clearly reflected in the slogan "proactive contribution to international peace" which is the basis stressed by the Abe administration's national security strategy [34]. The most important point to note in relation to the declaration was that the returning conservative Prime Minister was seeking a policy change to permit collective self-defence. Although Japan has participated in numerous UN PKO activities in a supporting role (i.e. monitoring elections in Angola and mobilizing engineering forces in Cambodia, the Golan Heights, East Timor and South Sudan), the public is still suspicious [35] of government initiatives to reinterpret and revise Article 9. Political analyst considers Abe a right wing nationalist and holds revisionist views on Japanese history [36]. Abe's nationalistic views are attributed to his emotional disgust toward allegations about his grandfather [37].

Japan's defence budget in 2017 had increased [38] to improve weapons and missile defence systems (USD46 billion [39]), thus, ending more than a decade of defence cuts. It is expected to continually boost its defence capability in order to allay fears of possible threats posed by North Korea and China. Based on this justification, Abe initiated [40] the revision of laws that had drastically restricted range of military activities Japan can be involved in. Through his mandate on National Security Strategy (NSS) [41], the constitutional amendment [42] allowed the SDF to defend themselves and protect allies if they are attacked (latest revision in 2015 [43]).

The Gulf War was the main catalyst which sparked the beginning of major efforts in ensuring SDF legitimacy. Japan's claim for immunity from any military involvement overseas at the time, had prompted a flood of bitter criticism from the international community supporting the cause. Realist highlighted the fact that Japan had increased efforts to regain its status on the global stage following the embarrassing circumstances during the Gulf War. Anti-militarism was rife in Japan after the Second World War but the advent of the Cold War had given Revisionists opportunities to promote their main agenda - to regain Japan's normal state status. The SDF is a mere tool for Japan to exploit as leverage on redeeming national pride and prestige in the global stage. Recognition as a normal state by the international community was viewed as the end state. The fact remains that Japanese leaders (whether Revisionists or not) can handle historical controversies well and able to convince neighbouring countries to recognize the sincerity of Japan's move towards reconciliation.

Japan's Post-Second World War foreign policy is well known for being UN-Centric. Despite its serious flaw in promoting unrealistic expectations to the Japanese society, the nation's past and present leadership had continually ensured that the interest of the country is secured by way of redefining and realigning relevant legislature to accommodate changing global geopolitical circumstances (Cold War era, 9/11 etc.) while continuously responding and improving on public sentiments. The Peacekeeping Law and the ATSMML related laws were debated and appropriately revised in subsequent years to meet global requirements of cooperation in PKO. These two laws includes critical political decisions and reflects the tenacity of government leaders to resolve long-standing dilemma over constraints on overseas SDF troops deployment as stipulated in Article 9. Furthermore, the changes affect public perception on the SDF and its role, breathing new life into the prestige and reputation of the profession of the SDF members.

Japan's approach is to remain multilateral in terms of defence posture - to rely on the US. By distancing itself from strict adherence to its Post-War Pacifism, Japan has actively participated in international PKO efforts in aid of the UN, aside from employing its military assets in disaster relief operations - thus demonstrating to the world, Japan's commitment toward global security for peace and stability.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

The increased participation of Japan in PKO in the region have simultaneously reaffirmed Japan's standing in the eyes of the global community [44]. Tokyo itself verified the advantage to Japan's international prestige and reputation as implication from her participation in UN PKO (Government of Japan Interim Report of the Study Group on Japan's Engagement in UN Peacekeeping Operations [45]) which is based on peace-related principles and policies [46]. Japan's need to enhance national security is hinged on causal factors from significant geopolitical shifts in East Asia. Change of US policy is also another causal factor. The fact that, Tokyo also has the responsibility to assist allied countries in maintaining international order added on to the need for Japan to respond accordingly; after all, Japan is an economic giant in the East Asia. Japan is a member of G7 [47]— it has obligation towards this end, particularly on sharing the burden of global engagement. Generally, the international community has benefited from Japan's involvement and significant contribution in disputes and humanitarian aid. It is argued that continuous engagements in peace motivated efforts, indicated Japan's capability to be in a position of influence in international affairs. In this way, the Japanese Government kept critics off from finding faults in Japanese geopolitical strategy.

Tokyo is eager to be part of the collaborative effort to function with allied states independently as a normal state. Involvement in PKO is a platform for Japan to impress upon the world its earnest effort to be relevant to international peace - the path for achieving Japan's aspiration to return to 'normalcy' within the context of international recognition; an important internal factor dominating the national agenda. Other internal factors that are associated with Japan's eagerness to participate in UN PKO such as anti-militarization sentiments of its people, the humiliation from not being able to assist its allies adequately during the Gulf War and its ambition to secure a permanent UN Security Council seat are inter-related.

With this perspective in mind, influences from external factors and challenges at domestic and international levels that had impacts on Japan's policy changes relating to her participation in the UN PKO are concomitant to the effects of changing global security and geopolitical landscapes. Japan has been at the forefront of a fair number of international disputes involving allied states. Such actions showed the world that Tokyo was willing to position itself in the midst of international affairs, contributing significantly to the solution of global issues.

Japan's initiatives had given the impression that it is asserting influence on an international scale. However, from a realist view, Japan's prominence in international affairs is due to its persistence in demonstrating their capability of fulfilling the role of a normal country - by willingly participating in global affairs and to revise corresponding policies for its own interest. Furthermore, participating in global affairs, in particular in PKO, increased Tokyo's opportunity to be appointed to the UN Security Council. From this perspective, Japan is seen to be taking advantage of conflicts for this reason but

withdrawing whenever the situations becomes unfavourable to its interest has invited negative criticism on Tokyo's intentions (ie. United Nations Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS). Nevertheless, Japan has clearly manoeuvred within the allowable limits of the current geopolitical framework.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Japan wants to ensure its engagement in international peace cooperation can show impact that mutually benefits her national interest while promoting peace and security within conflict/post-conflict affected regions. Japan's initial participation in the southern African region's UN PKO mission have resulted from domestic politics and legal constraints, along with her aspirations to secure a permanent seat at the UN Security Council; the endgame - prestigious global standing and recognition through soft power - portrayal of Japan's political values is a priority.

Japan's current adaptive strategy is shaped by all levels of global challenges; with security issues taking precedence - such as the Senkaku dispute or the North Korean threat. In addition, Japan is active in establishing cooperation with major powers and regional giants such as the US and China [48] – in effect acknowledging the importance of ties with other nations, most importantly powerful ones in its bid to stand as a normal state in the global arena. With the current global attention on Asia, Japan is on the right footing to reaffirm its global standing.

Japan's Foreign Policy is "UN-centric" and has remained important for Japan to-date for two important reasons. The first reason is that Japan's post-Second World War Constitution strictly prohibits the establishment of a traditional military force, which is in line with the basic spirit of the UN Charter which highlights peaceful means for responding to disputes. The second reason is concerned with the significance of UN as a symbol of US power and prestige as viewed by the majority of Japanese during the earlier period of the post-war era. A further political rationale relates to Japan's aspiration to secure a permanent seat in the UN Security Council's permanent seat- Tokyo is confident that by actively contributing to the UN PKO, its chances of success would be positively increased.

Basically, the Korean War had prompted the formation of the new Japanese armed forces. Due to US commitment to the Korean War, the Occupational Force needed to immediately divert the majority of its human resource to support the war. To fill in the shortage of manpower for handling security commitments in Japan, a special legislation was passed resulting in the formation of the SDF. Nevertheless, the establishment of the SDF was without the consensus of the general population (due to anti-militarization sentiments), hence had questionable legitimacy - the SDF was marginalized by the society it was supposed to protect.

Societal acceptance was sought after for the SDF to be fully functional for the purpose of national defence. However, its lack of recognition as a legitimate organisation (from the public viewpoint, the SDF's existence is contradictory to its post-war Constitution) prevented Japan from meeting normative beliefs in its social environment - prompting the government to constantly re-interpret the Constitution and civilianised military aspects of the SDF. Consequently, extreme localisation to gain legitimacy and acceptance had resulted in the initial constabulary nature of the SDF.

The significant growth of Japan's involvement in the UN PKO was recognised through its financial contribution and SDF troop deployment in the 1990s. The role of leaders were contributing rationales. Through PKO participation, the Japanese Government have tirelessly engaged in transforming the SDF, so as not marginalised the agency as a profession and a social institution. Particularly after the Cold War, Tokyo realised the significance of the SDF as 'the saving grace' for the nation's appalling war time persona. SDF visibility in international PKO was exploited by Japan's past and current leaders to re-brand the nation as a peace-loving and caring state. Through this way, Japan is able to redeem itself and return to normalcy; and not be forever considered as an outcast of the international society.

Specific analysis on the challenges and issues experienced by Japan's involvement in international affairs through the SDF concluded that US and UN influence has always been dominant, but the net effect proved beneficial to Tokyo's prominence on the world stage - the impact on domestic sentiments regarding the re-interpretation of Article 9 to accommodate requirements of US-Japan Security Treaty is appraised within this framework. Released from the constraints of dominant political ideology of the 1955 regime, the public had become less critical of government move to re-interpret national defence policy and practice. Continuous participation of SDF in PKO since UNTAC was an important factor that had a convincing effect on the people of Japan that the SDF can responsibly carry out their duties within the limitations of the constitution and in the best interest of the nation. The realities of the rapidly evolving regional and international geopolitical environment added to the consensus that the SDF has become a necessity for Japan to protect its security interests.

Japan is motivated by its determination to return to the global scene from the ruins of war. Although utterly humiliated, occupied and her rehabilitated socio-political structure completely dictated by the victorious Allied forces, the Japanese government adapted necessarily to the consequences of their war time predecessors. The determination to return to normalcy is reflected by Japan's willingness to remain in the shadow of the US during the Cold War era - her national agenda critically influenced by the UN via its post-war Constitution which is in line with the basic spirit of the UN Charter highlighting peaceful means for responding to disputes. The significance of the US in the UN further explains Tokyo's UN-centric agenda; the UN was a symbol of US power and prestige during the early post-war era.

The conclusion of the Cold War era witnessed the evolution of Japan's policy via continuous re-interpretation of its Pacifist Constitution - primarily to allow the enhancement to its defence capability necessary for addressing the rapidly changing global geopolitical environment. Aside from intensifying its self defence capability (assets and personnel), changes in its legislation allowed Japan to legitimise the SDF, which was originally established to augment the civilian police force in the 1950s. In essence, the SDF have matured over the years - evolving in form and function, from a paramilitary organisation to become a professional armed forces. In strict compliance to the limitations of its constitution, Japan did not engage in the full range of PKO. Restrictive influences from domestic anti-militarist norms were against the deployment of the SDF for combat related operations. Nevertheless, the SDF took the opportunity to gain experience on peacekeeping norms - such as related to use of force and flexibility in operational requirements.

Despite initial hesitation, the UN PKO endeavour has positively contributed to the promotion of Japan's national agenda by conveniently providing a platform for it to further legitimize its pursuit of returning to normalcy. Japan benefited from the re-establishment of a respectable defence force to address its own domestic security concerns and incidentally as a forward base in the Asia Pacific region for its closest ally, the US. Concurrently, the SDF is conveniently engaged to promote Japan's effort to contribute towards international peacekeeping - therefore further re-branding the nation as a responsible global partner concerned with the peaceful resolution of conflicts and a champion of international prosperity. A further political rationale relates to Tokyo's aspiration to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council's - an achievement that shall confirm Tokyo's recognition as a normal country and ultimately ensuring that its self-interest is secured in the international arena.

It is clear that the role and capability of the SDF had significantly evolved with the needs of the nation to be recognized as a normal country. Nevertheless, Tokyo's dilemma has always been synonymous to conflicting demands from one extreme end of the spectrum to the other, i.e. securing the interest of the nation, conformance to the limitations of the pacifist Constitution, addressing security needs of changing international geopolitical climate, strong domestic sentiments towards anti-remilitarization, demands of the US and the international community. Leaders' role is seen to be crucial in this sense. Government leaders have been observed to be reactive to US pressure initially but later (post 9/11) had prioritised international or UN sanctioned environments. It can be generalised that no matter who the leader may be, the need to demonstrate Japan's continuous commitment to global peace and prosperity has been constantly portrayed. Japan's commitment towards this end demonstrates its leader's acknowledgment that maintaining and enhancing the peace and prosperity of the region are core consideration to securing its own national interest. Regional geopolitical changes had also witnessed Tokyo's enhanced commitment towards strengthening relations with neighbouring states. Security threats from the North Korea and economic rivalry with China were major motivating factors.

Subsequently, domestic support and consensus towards the government's initiative to re-interpret the constitution (for the redefining SDF's role) has improved positively, as the general population are convinced that the redefinition is vital in the interest of the nation. SDF involvement in international humanitarian aspects of PKO (more precisely, peace building) and in domestic or international disaster relief operations have compounded the nation's positive impression of the organisation's aspiration towards realising a better force.

In short, enhancing and legitimising the SDF for involvement in UN PKO positively benefits Japan's realists' interest. Tokyo had exploited the changing security demands following the conclusion of the Cold War era - re-interpreting the constitution for the purpose of re-militarizing the nation via the SDF which it used as a legitimate platform for involvement in global affairs. The event of 9/11 was also another catalyst prompting Japan's government to respond towards reaffirming its defence capability while at the same time toeing the limitations of Article 9. The deployment of the SDF, as a channel for involvement in global affairs through humanitarian and peace building activities is a strategy conveniently accepted and supported by its own society and the international community. In return, Japan is able to portray itself as a normal country by attaining international recognition as a global player and contributor towards peace and prosperity - shedding the Second World War ultra-nationalistic image that most of its people despise.

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THE ROHINGYA PLIGHT: THE ROLE OF STATE ACTORS AND NON-STATES ACTORS

Mej Nirmala Krishna
Army Academy
Email:nimmy7514@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The unrest in Rakhine state, Myanmar involving the Government and the Rohingya ethnic has drawn the attention of the international community. The trend of violence against the Rohingya involves mass killing, abuse of human rights and some evidence of ethnic cleansing, hence it calls for state and non-state actor to react in order to find lasting solution to address the ongoing unrest. This study examines the missions and initiatives by the state as well as non-state actors to pressure the Myanmar's government to stop the violations towards the Rohingya. The international organizations such as UN, ASEAN and OIC have aligned for humanitarian mission particularly to the Rakhine state. This study also suggests the possible solution to at least lessen the burden of the Rohingya in Myanmar as well as the Rohingya refugees at the neighbouring states. The long-term solution for the crisis is needed for keeping the balance and stability in the region.

Keywords: *unrest, international community, mass killing, human rights, abuse of human rights, ethnic cleansing, state actor, non-state actor, humanitarian mission, refugees, crime against humanity, genocide, atrocities and internal displaced group Rohingya.*

INTRODUCTION

Burma or Myanmar is a country of ethnic diversity [1]. However, since the last 3 decades the land of diversity has been threatening some ethnics especially the Rohingya as "Illegals" [2] in their own land. Myanmar led by the civilian government has attracted both positive and negative attention lately. Firstly, it's positive because it is in transition towards true democracy after a long period of governance under a military junta. Secondly, it's negative due to the history of abuses and human rights violation against ethnic minorities especially the Rohingya. Currently, the situation in Myanmar has a new narration of atrocities which is taking place in the northern Rakhine state that has drawn concern of the state and non-state actors. Therefore, there is an urgent need for state and non-state actors to act accordingly to protect the most persecuted population, to call for humanitarian aids and to stop all sort of systematic suppression against the Rohingya. The current violence against the Rohingya which forced nearly 800,000 to flee the country indicates there are increase numbers of the crime against humanity. However, the efforts by state and non-state actors have yet to bring tangible results.

The United Nations describes the Rohingya ethnic minority in Arakan as one of the most persecuted people on surface of the earth [3]. David Goggins described the acts of Myanmar Government as genocide, outright genocide, hidden genocide, slow-burning genocide, persecution, ethnic cleansing and others based on intensity of the campaigns against Rohingya by the government personnel and armed forces at any given time and event over the past half-a century. The atrocities by the government forces have often risen to a level that some experts have described it crime against humanity.

David Goggins also has indicated that the Rohingya were persecuted systematically in Myanmar. They (the Junta Government) managed to control information on such violence from reaching the international community. Hence, Myanmar did not receive widespread pressure from any state and non-state actors until 2012. However, the unacceptable act by Myanmar Buddhist killing Muslim pilgrims Southern Arakan city of Taungoke has drawn negative attention of state and non-state actors. According to Tan Sri Dr. Syed Hamid Albar, until 1962, the anti-Rohingya and Islam sentiments in Myanmar did not surface, but now it has led to ethnic cleansing [4]. Nancy Clark, a freelance political writer in her recent article mentioned that the Rohingya is the most heavily abused and persecuted ethnic group in the world [5]. At early stage the Rohingya crisis and abuses were confined to Rakhine state, however, since 1982, this human rights issue has created a regional dimension. The plight of Rohingya are debated and deliberated at various bilateral and multilateral platforms, including ASEAN Summit, OIC Council of Foreign Ministers Conference and United Nations General Assembly.

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Laureate receiver who was the icon for human rights and true democracy advocate, however, till today failed to bring a balanced solution to the crisis. The denial syndrome was ultimate propaganda for her and the Government. None of her ruling party's policies or efforts are inclusive to reflect the nature of equality. So far, the Nobel Prize winner has never addressed the Rohingya issue in any domestic or international platforms. Perhaps, as a Buddhist leader leading Buddhist majority party, speaking up for the Rohingya Muslims Myanmar would possibly viewed as going against the Buddhist majority, which can be considered as political suicidal. Aung San Suu Kyi has become politically ambitious in retaining her position, therefore the situation of Rohingya worsened [6].

The Rohingya are minority group in Rakhine state, formally known as Arakan. There were around 1 million of them living in the Buddhist majority Rakhine state that shares border with Bangladesh in the northeast. The Bay of Bengal in west and in the east a mountain range excludes Rakhine from the rest of other states in Myanmar [7]. As mentioned earlier in the paper, Burma or Myanmar, is an ethnicity rich nation. The Barmans are majority ethnic group, while the minority constitutes 40% of the population. The Buddhist fear that the Rohingya Muslims might control the economic sector that might put the Buddhist population's economic opportunities at stake. Therefore, through various religious entities and military rule, the central and state government enacted repressive laws to suppress Rohingya, as listed below:

- a. The 1982 Citizenship Law: In 1982, General Ne Win passed a law that made majority of Rohingya as stateless. Under this law, the Rohingya has been denied all basic citizenship rights and created an identity crisis for them. The Rohingya has to proof that there are born in Myanmar to obtain at least a second class citizenship status [8].
- b. Forced Displacement: The “Naga Min” operation in 1978 till 2010, the Government has taken a divide and rule approach by creating an isolated area for the Rohingya and relocate them. The area which has no economic activities and with great survival challenges. Therefore, such forced transfer of population has concentrated Rohingya in Northern Rakhine [9].
- c. Forced Labour: The Government especially the security forces have forced Rohingya from the Internal Displacement Camps (as young as 10 years old) into manual labour to develop areas of interest to the security forces without any compensation. Thus, many families faced difficulty supporting them financially [10].
- d. Religious Persecution: Since 1982, there is tremendous support for the Buddhist radical group in racial and religious persecution of Rohingya [11].

With such suppressive socio-political landscape in place, lately, the Rohingya conflict have become a disturbing issue in contemporary Myanmar society and regionally. Recurring incidence of the ethnic based conflict in Northern Rakhine has created a multiple pressure on Myanmar. Going back in October 2016, several military missions were considered systematically orchestrated for specific purpose against the Rohingya. This organized intolerance and violence is irreparable. Therefore, it needs high sincerity, commitment, patience, tolerance, and kindness from all concerned parties especially the state and non-state actors. In general, contextualizing this tensions are purely demands of socio-political gap and religious misunderstanding. The plight of the Rohingya continues to be urgent and more must be said. More thought must be given and most importantly swifter action by state and non-state actors are crucial in addressing the crisis constructively.

The situation of Rohingya continues to deteriorate. It is therefore, sagacious to understand the causes of the crisis and extended role of state and non-states actors in finding an amicable solution to this crisis besides promoting human security agenda. On the surface, the state and non-state actors may seem to have similar aspirations, goals and objectives to address this humanitarian crisis. However tangible outcome has yet to be seen.

HISTORY OF ROHINGYA CRISIS

Rohingya refers to the Muslims minority resided in Rakhine state located at western Coast of Myanmar. It was also known as Arakan. Figure 1 shows the capital of Rakhine

state which known as Sittwe. The Buddhists are the majority while the Muslims or Rohingya are the minority group with the number of 800,000 that resides in this region before persecution and alienation by the state.



Figure 1: The Map of Burma/Myanmar

Historically, the ethnic clash between Buddhists and Rohingya already started after the post-colonial era of British in Myanmar 1948. This ethnic instability continued until 1978 “Dragon King Operation” has been carried out by the army, policemen and immigration personnel to identify the illegal immigrants in Myanmar. Main purpose of this operation was to torture the Muslims and asked them to leave the state by force. This situation led to flee of 200,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh across the Naf river border. According to Yunus, this operation started in Akyab at the biggest Muslim village known as Sakkifara. It involved the mass arrest of Muslims regardless of their gender and age. They have been tortured, raped and killed. This brutal act threatened the Muslims at the other areas that caused them to leave their home headed to the border of Bangladesh [12].

In 1982 when General Ne Win ruled the state, the Citizenship Law has been introduced that recognized 135 official minority groups in Myanmar excluding the Rohingya. Human Right Watch claimed such treatment to the Rohingya as a crime against humanity. The implementation of Citizenship Law brought many difficulties for Rohingya. They lost all their rights. This law recognize Myanmar’s national languages but not Rohingya’s. Consequently, Rohingya faced very limited access to education and opportunity to learn a national language. Same thing happened in 1992 when another series of torture occurred

that forced them to leave their home. They received worst treatment by Myanmar army when the mass killing took place and women have been raped as well as other religious persecution. This human right violation somehow approved by certain quarters with administration powers and apparently it's totally against the human right doctrine. Referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948), Article 5 mentioned that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

The clashes between The Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya reached its outburst in 2012 that resulted in destruction of property such as homes, shops and mosques. The Rohingya were placed at Internal Displaced Person Camp (IDP) where there got very limited access to daily basic needs and systematically being tortured [13].

The policies of the state government have formalized the displacement of Rohingya. Those whose homes and property were destroyed in massive violence were allowed to live on in IDP camps. At the camp, they were treated unevenly without proper basic of human needs include foods. Approximately, about 10,000 people choose to leave their country than suffered their live at the camp. Some of them fled to the neighbouring country by the boats and some of them did not survived along these journeys and some of them became the victims of human trafficking. It shows that this minority group of Muslims really suffered in order to survive yet the government of Myanmar stand firm with their policies not to recognize Rohingya's right of citizenship.

The number of Rohingya fled to Bangladesh has increase since the past four years until now. According to the report by Humanitarian Situation Report No.16 dated 24 December 2017, 655, 000 refugees arrived and at least 58% of them are children. They were recognized as refugee but some of them labelled as "undocumented Myanmar" which refers to the group that not being provided marriage certificate by the authority and has been denied for registration at birth. One might think how worst a person can be treated other than this? They were stateless and did not recognized by any state and the sad part is they do not even have self-identification.

It has been identified as human right abuse against Rohingya which include denial of citizenship, forced displacement, forced labour, religious prosecution, marriage restriction as well as population control [14]. As mentioned before, the denial for citizenship emerged after the implementation of Citizenship Law. As a result of this, the Rohingya remain unemployed and their kids have no access to education. On the other hand, the force displacement took place when the Government of Myanmar started with the Operation of Dragon King. Forced displacement led to forced labour. It has been further explained that males' kids were forced to work as young as ten years old by Myanmar army. This situation left no choice to the poor family because they need to work in order to survive. The other form of human right abuse is religious persecution. During the riot, many religious places and properties have been destroyed. Under the reign of Ne Wei, he was planning to have a pure Buddhist State Administration.

Another form of human right abuse faced by the Rohingya is marriage restriction and population control [15]. This is clearly against the basic concept of human right. Until now, there are numbers of Rohingya that do not register for their marriages. The state authority also controls the population of Rohingya by allowing the couple to have two children only. Some of them risk their life when they are having more than two and they did not go for registration at birth. Later, those children will face major difficulties in life since they have no identification and not being regarded as the local Myanmar.

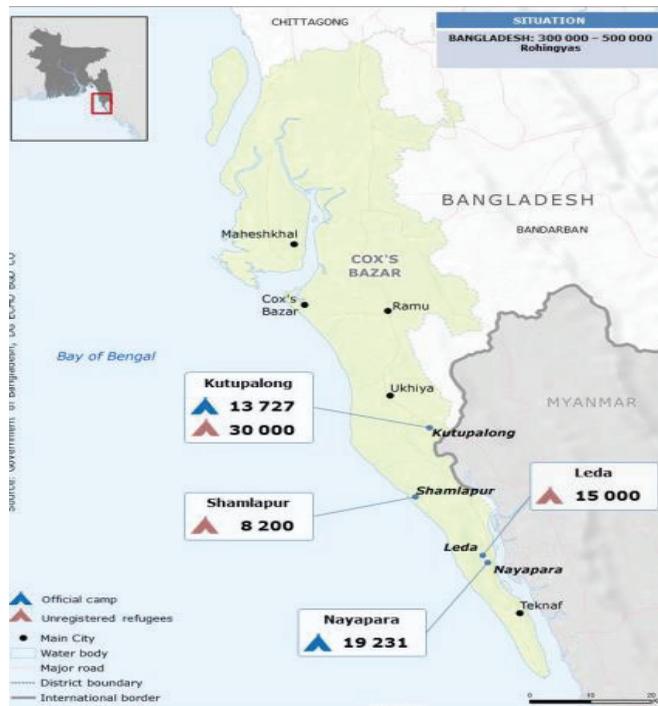


Figure 2 : Rohingya Camps in Bangladesh [16]

The violence and tension do not stop there when recently, in October last year, the northern Rakhine state has been attacked and led to the security clearance operation and about 43,000 people fled to Bangladesh. Figure 2 shows the distribution of Myanmar refugee camp in Bangladesh. In relation to that, the Government of Bangladesh has launched the National Strategy for Undocumented Myanmar Nationals in order to recognize human needs.

The Dailystar of Bangladesh exposed the reality at Unregistered Myanmar Refugee camp in Leda, Teknaf. It has been reported that many of them worked at the Cox's Bazaar town as day labourers. Abu Morshed Chawdhury, President of Cox's Bazaar Civil society expressed his concern about the increase number of Myanmar immigrant to Bangladesh. According to him, the raising population of Myanmar refugee give negative impact to the society. He mentioned "they (Rohingya) are getting involved in crimes".

The mass fled by the Rohingya to Bangladesh resulted in overcrowded at the refugee camp. They also faced insufficient basic needs such as food and water while the children have very limited access to education. During the end of 2016, some group of Rohingya fled to Thailand as a transit to get to Malaysia for their shelter. The data from UNHCR in Figure 3 shows the number of Rohingya refugee movement in three countries (2012-2016) as the highest number of refugee is Malaysia with 112,500 refugees followed by Bangladesh and India.

This long tension between these two ethnics remain unsettled since few decades ago. It has brought much attention throughout the world. The serious role of all stakeholders that involve in this issue should be taken into consideration. The Government of Myanmar should play their vital role in order to overcome this crisis. The harsh and injustice treatment that used by them will not be able to lessen the clash of the Buddhists and the Muslims of Myanmar. In addition, Non-Governmental Organization also should come forward and show their support in order to overcome and put an end to the long tensions between these two ethnics. We will look at the role and participation of the state and non-state actors further on the next chapter.

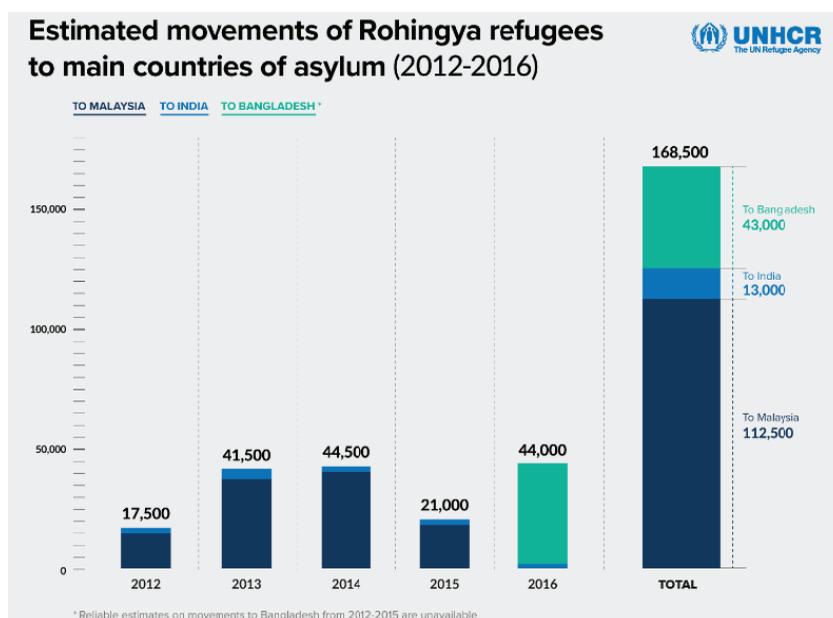


Figure 3: Movements of Rohingya Refugees (2012-2016) [17]

INVOLVEMENT OF STATE AND NON STATE ACTORS IN ROHINGYA CRISIS

The restoration of democracy in Myanmar had expected to bring new hopes to the Muslim-Buddhist conflict. However, the international community witnessed another greater and never-ending riot involve raping, denial of rights, state-supported killing and destruction of properties against the Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar. The escalation of

the violence in 2012 captured attention of the whole world. One might be asking what happened to the state function in this country. The transformation during the former President Thein Sein showed the growing and spreading of anti-Muslim feeling around the country, let alone to give the solution to the conflict. Approval for force displacement by the state towards Rohingya added more difficulties for this defenceless group to survive.

The international community is concerned and condemns the violation of human rights in Myanmar. Myanmar current State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi had received various criticisms from the activists and international community due to her silence upon military's action and human rights violation in Rakhine. According to Lee, there are several factors that lead to silence of that Noble Peace Prize winner which include her view on minority group of Rohingya that only made up 4 to 5 percent of the Myanmar's population [18]. Fisher in BBC News article reported that Suu Kyi is always been a pragmatic politician when she put herself with powerful Buddhist nationalist groups [19]. Her silence also influenced by political gain. Hence, she constantly maintains her commitment that the state will find solution for this current conflict and will not let the violence continue. However, different situation emerged after the election took place in 2015 where the NLD were supporting the military oppression towards the Rohingya, and in fact it occurs till today. The military coercion continues without any intervention by the central Government. Nevertheless, after being pressured by international community, Government of Myanmar has taken some temporary measures and welcome the international community including NGOs to extend assistance in managing this issue but their role are limited. With regard to this, The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was established on September 5, 2016 commanded by the State Counsellor of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi. This commission chaired by former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan and aimed to analyse the current state of affairs in Rakhine and find the root causes of the violence, displacement and eventually contribute to the improvement as well as well-being of that particular state. The Interim Report and Recommendations of the Commission mentioned that there were various issues that complicate their work such as [20]:

- a. The attack on Border Guard Police in Maungdaw on 9 October 2016 which led to violence and destruction of the private property in northern Rakhine where 90 percent of the population are Muslims.
- b. The decision of national parliament to dissolve the commission owing to its international component.
- c. Due to the violent attack happened in Maungdaw, the state government has introduced another commission to investigate more on this incident. Nevertheless, the formation of this commission led to public confusion between those two commissions.

- d. The authority of the military forces.
- e. The situation became more complex with the intervention of many local and international actors after the recent violence in northern Rakhine state.

It is important to note that Myanmar is traditionally reluctant with the intervention of other state actors and non-state actors in her domestic affairs. They keep claiming that the situation in Myanmar was a domestic affairs and there was no issue of human rights violation. This fabricated news will not shut the eyes of activists and international community. In response to the accusations that the government intentionally targeted the Muslim population, they claimed that there is no policy in that state that allowed the violence against Muslim or any other religious groups [21]. Despite such statement, obviously, Myanmar is building a pure Buddhist state by isolating those Rohingya and by allowing significant number of Rohingya fleeing across the borders to other neighbouring countries. As the situation got worst, other neighbouring countries in the region started to take necessary measures since the internally displaced group are moving towards the adjacent Asian countries like Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia.

The plight of Rohingya has galvanised Muslim in south-east Asia. Bound by non-interference principle, ASEAN's response on Rohingya conflict has been very limited. Malaysia and Indonesia are among ASEAN members that took proactive action to address the issue of human rights violation in Rakhine. Historically, the issue of Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar has first appeared in 2009 during 14th ASEAN Summit under Thailand Chairmanship. The term of "illegal migrants in Indian Ocean" has been used to refer to Rohingya by the chairman [22]. However, this issue has not been addressed constructively as there was no follow up to take up this issue. As one of the most affected countries, Malaysia has been very vocal and urged Myanmar to address the issue effectively.

The situation in Rakhine state is now a major humanitarian issue rather than internal political issue. Myanmar could no longer put the Rohingya issue off the agenda from international community when this issue became a global concern. Arakan Rohingya National Organization (2012) reported that OIC offices in New York, Geneva and Brussels has initiated an international intervention on this issue. However, no positive outcome has emerged and the action of the Myanmar government that tried to exclude the intervention from international community seems to be unprofessional when the turmoil within the country spreading around the world.

The effort and concern of UN to find the solution for this issue did not stop there. Concerning on the attack on 9 October, UN human right envoy, Yanghee Lee had paid a visit to Myanmar to investigate the report of abuse against the Rohingya. Lee, upon her visit stated that UN with international community will remain vigilant towards monitoring human right situation in Myanmar.

The OIC Envoy for Myanmar, Tan Sri Dr. Syed Hamid Albar told Reuters that the international community should respond efficiently because observation is futile at this stage. He stressed that the world should learn a lesson from ethnic cleansing in Cambodia and Rwanda. Since the outbreak of the Muslim-Buddhist tension in 2012, OIC with its 57 members has launched major international campaign that aimed to end the long stand conflict in Myanmar. Besides that, the former OIC-Secretary General, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu expressed the concern urged OIC to assist the Muslim minorities and communities outside the member states in order to protect their dignity, religious identity, and culture.

OIC also seek for UN intervention to prevent genocide. Previously, former UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar's human right issues, Tomas Ojea Quintana urged Myanmar government to investigate and take certain action toward NaSaka (comprised of customs, military, immigration and police personnel) for attacks and human right abuses against Rohingya. According to him, UN has received many allegations pertaining to the oppression by NaSaka include torture and murder of the Rohingya [23].

On July 2013, Thein Sein, the President of Myanmar has issued a notification of abolishing the NaSaka security force due to human rights violation against Muslim Rohingya. This abolition expected to decrease the violence in that state. However, the expected scenario is yet to be seen. According to the interview conducted by UN with the Rohingyas who fled to Bangladesh since October 2016, they claimed that security forces have committed mass killing and gang rape against Rohingya. Obviously, there is no end to oppression towards Rohingya in Myanmar.

On October 2015, Myanmar's government has rejected the proposal from OIC to set up a liaison office citing that it will lead to public displeasure. In regard with this, thousands of Buddhist monks and citizens protested in two big cities, Yangon and Mandalay. Kipgen mentioned that the monks claimed that they did not want the presence of OIC in their country because OIC only serve the interest of Muslims instead of providing humanitarian assistance to all that affected in that conflict [24]. They view OIC not more than a religious conspiracy towards their country. It has been reported that the government has officially announced that OIC would not be allowed to set up an office due to the concern that it will rouse public unrest in that state. This unclear statement gives some perception that the government was supporting the Buddhist Nationalist group. The government at this stage did not allow the interference of international community despite of the claimed that they welcome the assistance of international community in order to find the solution for the conflict.

In January 2017, Malaysia has called for greater intervention of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) by hosting an emergency OIC Foreign Ministers meeting, The Council of Foreign Ministers on the Situation of the Muslim Minority Rohingya in Myanmar. The extraordinary session started with Senior Officials Meeting attended by Senior Officials of member states. This meeting rounded on the draft resolution and joint

communiqué that show the unity of OIC members to solve the Rohingya's conflict in Myanmar (New Straits Times, 2017).

On top of that, this extraordinary session also discussed the step forward in delivering humanitarian assistance to Rakhine and addressed the root causes to the violence. The session also emphasized on the situation of displaced Rohingya populations and possible ways to bring them back to their homes "in safety and dignity". The outcome of this conference targeted to lessen the burden of Rohingya and more importantly, to give them identity that can be recognized by others so that they can continue their life with equal rights and opportunities as other ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Based on the concept of "Strategy Theory", under certain circumstances, war can be justified but not for the war that involve coercion and violation of human rights. According to Micheal Lacey war can be just provided that the legitimate state recognized by the citizens and the nature of the war itself must not neglect the basic rights of the parties that involved [25]. By right, when at war, two parties must not include the other non-combatants such as the kids and elderly people. The situation in Rakhine state is totally different when the attack eventually destroyed the personal properties and killed hundreds of lives.

The devastated scenario in Myanmar shows that justice during this unrest could be exercised effortlessly unless with the cooperation of both parties in sense that they need to come into agreement about the rules. The most important part in Strategy Theory is the role of the state or legitimate authority in order to ensure that both parties will respect their basic rights. In reality, the Strategy Theory seems unlikely to be materialized due to the nature of the unrest itself. Conflict of Rohingya proved that justice for the minority is almost impossible. Hence, the role of state and non-state actors is important to provide long term solutions for the conflict.

The state and the non-state actors has moved forward to lend a hand in finding long-term solution for the conflict while Myanmar government expected to consider the engagement at the international level. Apparently, many international organizations collaborate with one another to give humanitarian assistance to Rakhine state. Basic needs such as food and water has been supplied to IDP camp in Rakhine. Meanwhile, Myanmar government should respond to the concern of the international community with positive and constructive manner. Cooperation from the government and all stakeholders are really crucial in order to help the vulnerable ethnic of Rohingya to survive.

The Role of Malaysia

As mentioned earlier, Malaysia is taking a proactive action to defend the basic human rights of the Rohingya. On 5 December 2016, the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak led a solidarity rally against Myanmar's ethnic cleansing with the support of thousands of Malaysian Civil society as well as Rohingyas in Kuala Lumpur [26].

During the ASEAN Foreign Minister Retreat meeting held in Yangon, former Malaysian Foreign Minister, Anifah Aman stressed that Malaysia could not tolerate the loss of life, mass killing and violation of human rights in Myanmar [27]. However, it is important to note that Malaysia is not a signatory to UN's 1951 Refugee Convention. Hence, Rohingya refugees in this country considered as illegal immigrants but with freedom of movement. On the other hand, with the worsen situation, they are forced to flee to Malaysia to get asylum. As a result of the discussion, Myanmar allowed some significant humanitarian access to the affected Rohingya at certain places. Rohingya is not the only group of refugee in Malaysia since Malaysia also accepted Syrian, Yemeni as well as Iraqis. UNHCR believes that Malaysia has all the amenities to help the refugees.

On the other hand, several non-governmental organisation has organised an International Conference on Rohingya (ICR) which was held in Putrajaya. This conference aimed to analyse Rohingya's issue and its impact on geopolitics as well as to propose short-term and long-term strategic solutions. Those initiatives were taken to show the concern on the conflict and readiness of the international community to cooperate in finding solution toward this long standing conflict.

The Role of Indonesia

Indonesia, on the other hand, took different approach when its Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi had a session with State Counsellor Aun Sang Suu Kyi on 6 December 2016 at Naypyidaw. According to *The Jakarta Post* (2016), "Retno also conveyed her hopes that the Myanmar government would continue to uphold human rights for all the people of Rakhine, including the Muslim minority, as well as the importance of allowing access to humanitarian aid" [28]. In addition to that, Indonesia has helped the Rohingya by providing support to Myanmar with the building of medical facilities and schools in Rakhine state.

Country like Bangladesh is absolutely in need of help in order to deal with the fled refugee from Myanmar's border. Indonesia has asked cooperation from Bangladesh for the settlement of this issue. As a world's largest Muslim-majority nation, Indonesia is ready to cooperate to restore the regional peace and stability. Myanmar's government also seeks an advice from Indonesia prior to her success in dealing with Muslim and Christian conflict in the eastern province of Maluku. Like Malaysia, Indonesia is helping the Rohingya refugee with the support from Indonesian government including providing them with temporary evacuation sites. Aceh provincial government with the cooperation from a group of NGO, Dompot Dhuafa, promotes the principle of humanity in helping the Rohingya. Dompot Dhuafa is very committed in providing basic needs (foods, medicine and education) of refugee at the camp [29].

The Role of ASEAN

In addition to that, the role of non-state actors is very crucial in maintaining regional peace and harmony. Since the Rohingya plight has become the major issue that could threaten the regional stability, Malaysia, as the Chairman of ASEAN 2015, has brought this issue to the summit for regional attention. ASEAN members are expected to provide lasting solution. ASEAN's approach to Myanmar can be regarded as constructive engagement, providing support to the regime to advance democracy and human rights. ASEAN's mission to Myanmar should include Bangladesh because of increase in numbers of Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh.

These groups of stateless Rohingya will continue to seek asylum in their neighbouring countries in order to survive. Therefore, ASEAN community must continue pressuring Myanmar to consider the Rohingya as citizen and not regard them as "Bengali". In this context, the citizenship issue is the most crucial thing that must be addressed accordingly so that the Rohingya refugee will be granted their basic rights. Without legal identification, Rohingya remain as illegal immigrants in other countries. In addition to that, Human Right Watch proposed the ASEAN member states to use Bali Process as the platform to seek for the regional consensus to protect the violation of rights toward Rohingya. Bali process, which known as an international forum that deals with the issues relating to forced displacement, human trafficking, people smuggling and other social issues. Rohingya plight could be one of the agenda in that forum.

The Role of United Nations (UN)

The UN, together with other international organization has taken some actions in promoting and protecting the rights of Rohingya. In regard with citizenship issue, UN 2012 Rakhine Response Plan mentioned that the official announcement of nationality verification has increased tension among the Buddhist in Myanmar. Hence, it triggered more inter-communal violence and displacement. UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar has been appointed to protect their rights and prevent the violations through fact-finding mission. However, the government of Myanmar did not grant a full access to investigate the case of military and security forces violence towards Rohingya. Therefore, an independent expert review is needed to stop the abusive practices in Myanmar. In addition, the long term plan to be developed with the consent of the affected minority groups to ensure economic and social sustainability

Yanghee LEE, in her statement during the 35th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva expressed her concern towards never ending violation and abuse towards Muslims minority in Myanmar. She reported that the mob by extreme Buddhist nationalists has threatened the Muslims and worried that the government is not able to control the situation. Previously, she highlighted the limitation in the investigative mechanism by the government in accessing the Rakhine situation. However, there were no changes made to address the issue.

Human Rights Council has invited the UN special rapporteur to cooperate with the government of Myanmar to develop work plan and time frame to solve this issue. However, to date, there was no significant development has been made. Clearly, there are some challenges in any democratic transition but there are some ways to overcome them through cooperation between international community and the state. Even though the UN is not successful in its plan on Myanmar, the supreme international body must be able to reach and help the affected Rohingya in Myanmar with close collaboration with other international organizations such as ASEAN and OIC. Recently, her sixth visit to Myanmar led to the protests by the extreme Buddhists. It has been claimed that they believe Yanghee is being bias with the situation and denied the claimed of abusive security forces and army. On the other hand, Myanmar government has openly announced that they will not give the access for the fact-finding mission by the UN in order to investigate the violation of rights by the army.

Generally, the call for international community to solve the Rohingya issue is considered as failed. As mentioned earlier, many actions has been taken by the international community and it end up to be just another ordinary cooperation that does not meet the objectives which to stop violence towards Rohingya in Rakhine State. The diplomatic way to solve the issue also failed, let alone the informal ways to settle the issue. As a result, international community need to put more effort in promoting the peace and stability. Hence, the role of agents of peaceful change at international level is very crucial. The agents can be found at any level, from state and non-state actors. The agents of peaceful change can act as partners or mediators in peace building process [30]. Collaboration and cooperation at the international level would form a powerful coalition that might pressure the government of Myanmar and eventually end the violation and abuse of human rights among the Rohingya.

According to Arakan Rohingya Union, as a nongovernmental body that fight for rights of Rohingya, they seek coordination of international NGOs and the government to address the nationality issue. Arakan Rohingya Union is recognized by all the member states of OIC. The main mission of this group is to reclaim their citizenship as well as political and human rights. This type of non-profit group can be an agent for peaceful change which coordinates the government and other non-state actors at the international level.

Recently, most of the armed conflict around the world involved religious dimension. Myanmar as Buddhist majority nation, would strive to build a Buddhist nation, however, the act of eliminating the Muslim minority will not help to build a better nation. The clash of religious perspective could be solved through promoting a religious understanding among the citizens and learn from the lessons of the past. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as it seems to be. For the newly transformed nation, there are lot of challenges must be faced. However, it should not be a big issue if the government welcome the hands of others to lessen the burden and also to stop the violation. Understanding and respect of each other religion would decrease the tension among these two groups.

This will give some recommendations and actions to be taken by respective parties to ensure the peace and stability in this region. The intervention among the international community is highly needed in promoting the peace. Until now, there is no specific mission that managed to overcome the continuous abuse and killing of Rohingya.

The central question asked by the international community is how serious the Myanmar government want to solve their own version of “holocaust”. In regard to that, the government also denied all the allegation of human rights abuses stating that certain action will be taken by the government in order to clear the air. At this stage, the government of Myanmar are not being able to tackle the issue efficiently which need the intervention from non-state actors.

CONCLUSION

International community highly concerned about the situation in Myanmar generally and in Rakhine state particularly and played their part constructively. UN, ASEAN and OIC are among the leading non-state actors that played big role in solving the long standing ethnic clash in Myanmar. To date, all the efforts and missions by the international communities seem to be insufficient to stop the violence against Rohingya. The report of abuses by the local NGOs and other UN institutions has been denied by the government. In addition, recently, the Government of Myanmar blocked the access of UN Special Rapporteur to investigate further on the abusive report by the Rohingya. According to the interview sessions conducted by the UN agencies with the Rohingya refugees, they clearly mentioned that the security and military forces brutally abuse the Rohingya. Unfortunately, despite of the cooperation among the state and non-state actors to stop the violence in Rakhine state, the abuses against Rohingya still continued. Officials and Human Rights advocates should be more vigilant about the objective and strategy of the Myanmar Government.

Therefore, state and non-state actors should coordinate and align with one another especially on the issue at the border such as human trafficking as well as other crimes against the boat people. These state actors could cooperate and agree upon the search and rescue missions in order to fulfil the humanitarian needs of Rohingya that seek for asylum. In maintaining regional peace and stability, ASEAN will be continuously working hand in hand among its members to restore the stability in Myanmar and the region as a whole.

On other perspective, the role of NGOs in this issue also considered as crucial. The International Non-Governmental Organisations could create a bridge to remove the huge gap between the international communities and the perspectives of majority Burmese in that particular country. This is due to the nature of these non-profit organisations that work in communities and welcome the support from different level of people. People around the world could join the campaign and spread the awareness of protecting human rights of the Rohingya people. Among the INGOs that fight for the Rohingya’s right is

Arakan Rohingya Union, Human Rights Watch and Humanity Malaysia. The effort by the INGOs could improve the socio-economic status of Rohingya as the minority group in the state.

The pressure from the INGOs is expected to reach the global support and could communicate with Myanmar Government especially on the Citizenship policy which is much complicated that one could understand. In relation to this, the government also need to be more transparent in order to provide solutions for this conflict. For the betterment, INGOs and the government of Myanmar should work closely to investigate the report even though has been denied by the government.

Myanmar remains as a rumour driven society as too much controversial issues of that state has been publicised. It is known that the anti-Muslim propaganda has turn to be one of the nationalists' agenda of the state. The extreme Buddhist nationalists cannot tolerate with Muslim Rohingya which they called as Bengali. It has been claimed that they fear the voice of the Muslim will be heard. After the boat crisis in May 2015, the Myanmar Times reported that the Buddhists marched as protest to the decision made by the government to offer shelter for the boat people that being rescued by the navy. The largest protest reported held in Sittwe which involved a thousand of people and led by a hundred of monks. They were carrying signs such as "NO INGO, NO UN" and "INGO/ NGO Respect the Truth".

The above mentioned situation is among the challenges faced by state and non-state actors in resolving this conflict. It is difficult for all parties to find amicable solutions to end this atrocity. However, the continuous support and engagement with the state actors would help the negotiations of the peace process in Myanmar. If we observe every event and conflict in Rakhine state, they shared similar pattern which involve extreme human rights violation and massive force with the interference of military. It has been claimed that this lead to the spread of rumours about tension in Rakhine. It is true that this issue cannot be solved overnight. The state can play its part by granting access for INGOs and other respective non-state actors to investigate further on the case of human rights abuse.

The causes of this long tension between Muslim and Buddhist in Rakhine lies in the history of these two ethnics which make it impossible to solve it in a short time period. Other than religion, the cultural and political gaps are among the factors of this long standing crisis. Hence, there is no easy solution for this issue unless the Government of Myanmar review some of their policies and plans. First of all, they should review the citizenship policy in that country which refers to the policy of systematic discrimination and persecution of Rohingya population in Myanmar. This action will create a huge impact to the problem of displacement of people and refugees. Other than that, Myanmar should also support and welcome the assistance from international community especially to increase the socio-economic status of Rohingya in Myanmar. In this regard, the non-state actors will actively play their part in providing humanitarian assistance and foods particularly for their basic needs as well as education.

Further initiatives and engagements among state actors and international community at higher level are expected to bring some changes to the minority population of Rohingya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In a nut shell and taking into consideration the recent development in Myanmar and in finding lasting solution to the Rohingya conflict, it is recommended that several initiatives to be carried out. The initiatives proposed are:

- a. State and Non- State actors to continue formal and informal engagements to build trust and goodwill with key Ministers and community leaders in Myanmar;
- b. State and Non- State actors to fund cross religion activities and interfaith programs with key representatives of both Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar;
- c. State actors especially the contact group should participate in the infrastructure and economic development in the Rakhine State;
- d. State and Non State actors to urge Myanmar to open up to allow coordination and dispatch immediate humanitarian life-saving aid especially medical and nutrition supply to the affected areas; and
- e. State actors to work closely with other members of the International Community and INGOs to influence the Union and State Government of Myanmar to take action against the perpetrators of intolerance and those involve in hate speeches through social and main stream media.
- f. With regards to ASEAN, the Rohingya issue should always remain in the international agenda to put pressure on the Myanmar Government to find a just and amicable solution. Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei should play an active role in addressing the Rohingya's crisis to make the Rohingya status as an ASEAN agenda.

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INDONESIA-MALAYSIA'S STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Colonel Ramli H Nik (R)

Department of Strategic Studies: National Defence University Malaysia

Email:ramlinik@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the early contribution towards the peacekeeping operations in the conflict areas or region from the Southeast Asian Countries in order to observe and maintain cease fire. Both Indonesia and Malaysia participated in deployment of their military forces for peacekeeping operations. The paper will then highlight on Indonesia-Malaysia's contribution in enhancing international peace and security from two major aspects: Firstly the contribution of Indonesia and Malaysia in the early development of peacekeeping operations and have continued until the present time with unequivocal commitment and support. Secondly, both countries have served as non-permanent members in the UN Security Council, with majority support from the Member-States in the UN General Assembly, thereby important regional issues are well addressed with concrete actions. In conclusion, both Indonesia and Malaysia adopted a bold commitment towards international peace and security as a responsible Member-States of the UN.

Keywords: *Commitment, peacekeeping operations, member-states, non-permanent member, UN Security Council*

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) has played a very significant role in promoting international peace and security, especially the functions of the UN Security Council and Department of Peacekeeping Operations which are mutually supporting. The mechanism of peacekeeping operations is a new term which was developed by the UN, in order to observe and maintain cease fire in the conflict areas as stated in the Articles VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations [1]. This paper attempts to highlight on Indonesia-Malaysia's strategic contribution in enhancing international peace and security from two major aspects. Firstly the contribution of Indonesia and Malaysia in the early development of peacekeeping operations and have continued until the present time with unequivocal commitment and support. Secondly, both countries have served as non-permanent members in the UN Security Council, with majority support from the Member-States in the UN General Assembly, thereby important regional issues are well addressed with concrete actions. In conclusion, the paper will impress upon that both Indonesia and Malaysia pursued with bold commitment towards peacekeeping operations in enhancing international peace and security.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The outcome of the crisis in Suez Canal in October 1956, the United Nations created the first Peacekeeping Operations Force, as a new form of peace mechanism that is setting up its first military force, with speed and firmness. This historic development was made possible mainly through the vision, resourcefulness and determination of the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld and Mr. Lester Pearson, who was at the time Secretary for External Affairs of Canada [2]. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was established on 15 November 1956, with the mandate of the Force was to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities, including the withdrawal of the armed forces of France, Israel and the United Kingdom from Egyptian territory.

In supporting towards international peace and security, the Garuda Contingent (troops from Indonesia) made a first strategic deployment in November 1956 as part of the United Nations Emergency Force. The contingent was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hartoyo [3] and the deployment remained from November 1956 to September 1957. From the regional perspective the deployment of the Garuda Contingent in the early period of peacekeeping operation, is an honour given by the international community, the fact that the Indonesian military forces had attained the required standard and proficiency. The deployment of the military forces in the UNEF is shown in Figure 1.

Similar recognition was given to Malaya then, in July 1960 with the UN Security Council Resolution 143 (1960), when the Malayan military force was elected to participate in the United Nations Force in the Congo (ONUC), located in the central part of African continent. The mandate of ONUC was to facilitate the withdrawal of Belgian troops, maintain law and order, help to establish and legitimize the post-colonial government of Congo (later became Zaire and presently known as Democratic Republic of Congo). As a commitment towards international peace and security, a contingent of 1,947 military personnel known as the Malayan Special Force (MSF) to the Congo, was dispatched on the 4th October 1960. The first MSF commander was Brigadier Abdul Hamid Bin Bidin [4]. As emphasized by the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, that the new nation should visibly demonstrate its faith in the United Nations by responding positively to its peacekeeping role at the international level. This is indeed an honour to a newly independent nation of Malaya and testimony of our credibility in promoting peace and stability [5].

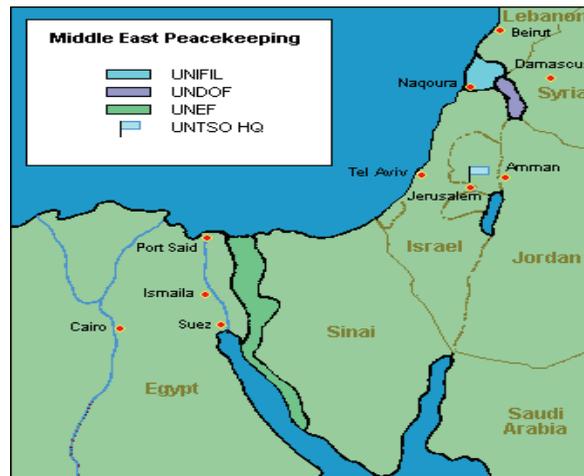


Figure 1: The Deployment United Nations Emergency Force in 1956
(Source: The United Nations DPKO's Deployment Map)

Further, in supporting peacekeeping operation concept, Indonesia sent two contingents to Congo. The first contingent consisted of 1,074 troops and was led by Colonel Prijatna (later replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Solichin); this contingent served from September 1960 to May 1961. The second contingent to Congo consisted of 3,457 troops and was led by Brigadier General Kemal Idris and the contingent served from 1962 to 1963 and saw one casualty.[6]

Today, both Indonesia and Malaysia play key roles in sending their troops to the UN peacekeeping missions in the various part of the globe. In order to ensure smooth administration of the peacekeepers for deployment from initial notification until the end of the mission in accordance to the DPKO's policy and instruction, especially, the requirement of coordination and speed of deployment of the Malaysian contingents including the military or police observers to the mission areas, in accordance with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations procedures at the UN Headquarter, the Malaysian Armed Forces approved the appointment of the military adviser at the Malaysian Permanent Mission to the UN in January 1996.[7] Following suit, Indonesia then established its defence adviser at the Permanent Mission at New York in supporting a special relation's strategic requirement. Thus, both the two ASEAN members have their military advisers dedicated for the peacekeeping duties at the Permanent Missions, but also joined the military community of 45 member-states at the UN in New York with military advisers or police advisers.

The other major commitment of Indonesia and Malaysia was the Peacekeeping Summit in New York in early October 2015 attended by head of states to enhance the United Nations Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) and Rapid Deployment Capabilities. The countries across the globe pledged their commitments to international peacekeeping operations. Among others China, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal,

Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States have committed to future troops deployments.

In supporting the United Nations Standby Force Arrangement (UNSAS) Malaysia has made a pledge at the United Nations Peacekeeping Summit in New York, to provide an infantry battle group, together with an engineering unit available for rapid deployment for peacekeeping missions. This commitment is supported by three major acknowledgements [8]. The MAF's peacekeeping capability and training have attained the standard as required by the UN Training Evaluation Service and at par with other peacekeeping centres, and have the ability to operate in any environment either in temperate or tropical zones. The composition of MAF UNSAS is consisted of: a Battalion Strength (about 900 personnel), 50 Observers, 50 Staff Officers, 25 Logistic Staffs, 50 Police Officers, and 20 Election Commission Officers at (90 days notice for the Battalion & 21 days for the others).

The Government of Indonesia also has agreed to contribute 4000 military peacekeepers, including female peacekeepers, and has established a Peacekeeping Training Centre, which serves as a national and regional hub for integrated peacekeeping training. Further, Indonesia continued to support the Council's deliberation on this agenda and will remain resolute to work with the UN Security Council, member-states and all actors to empower women or females as the agent for change and peace.

ROLES IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Both Indonesia and Malaysia contributed at the strategic level of the UN, but at time they were at odd. On 1 January 1965, when Malaysia was elected to serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in recognition of MSF's commitment in ONUC from 1960 to 1963, which was another high level achievement for Malaysia, but this selection/achievement created an upset to Jakarta.



Figure 2: The United Nations Security Council Chamber
(Source: www./search?q=United+Nations+security+council&rlz=1C2GCEA)

In the same year, the Republic of Indonesia, while was pursuing a policy of confrontation against the newly formed Federation of Malaysia, withdrew as a member of the UN and its related agencies. However, before the opening of the UN General Assembly Session in September 1966, Indonesia rejoined the United Nations.[9]

With a strong track record of capability of promoting international peace and security in our foreign policy, in the voting for the UN Security Council Seat 1989/1990, Malaysia received 143 votes out of 170 member states of the UN for its second term as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council.[10] As a member of the UN Security Council in that period, it was most timely for Malaysia to participate in the peacekeeping operations with the flare up in Namibia. This was followed by bidding for another round of a non-permanent member of UN Security Council for the third time in year 1999/2000 Malaysia received a good support of 174 votes out of 192 votes of the UN member states[11]. In the selection of the UNSC non-permanent Member for the fourth term 2015/2016, Malaysia attained 187 votes from the 193 member States of the UN with one abstention in the three voting sessions, Indonesia led the ASEAN members in supporting Malaysia to attain the UN Security Council seat. [12]

Meanwhile, Indonesia has been elected four times as non-permanent member to the UN Security Council. Indonesia was first elected as for the period of 1974/1975. It was elected for the second time in 1995 to 1996, and for the third time in 2007 to 2008, when Indonesia secured 158 votes out of 192 member states which have the right to vote in the UN General Assembly. In June 2018, Indonesia was elected once again with 144 votes out of 192 member states during the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. Earlier, Indonesian Ambassador to the UN Dian Triansyah Djani said many countries had declared their support for the country's attempt to become the council's non-permanent member for the 2019 to 2020 period.[13].

This is a testimony of Indonesia and Malaysia good standing in the international community especially in the area of promoting global peace and security, where both countries occupied the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council lapsed of two years of each other for four times. Therefore, major commitments are pursued by Indonesia and Malaysia to further exert their influence at the international arena on important issues like the conflict between Israel and Palestine. As a case in point, in December 2016, at the last month as a Member of the UNSC, Malaysia firmly nailed down its commitment towards peaceful resolution of the conflict through the concept of moderation, the protection of civilians, and the rule laws. This unequivocal commitment is well demonstrated when 14 Members (including Malaysia) of UNSC, with one abstention (US) adopted the UN Resolution Condemning Israel over its Settlement Policy that is Demanding Israel's Halt Settlement in Palestinian Territory on 23 December 2016 in New York.[14] Indeed, this is the first victory since 1979, where the US refrained from vetoing a resolution condemning its closest ally in the Middle East. Thus, in January 2019 to December 2020, Indonesia as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council will contribute very meaningful resolutions towards international peace and security.[15]

Indonesia contributes to the regional efforts in countering terrorism through, inter alia, its role as the lead state in the establishment of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism. Also, Jakarta is expected to pursue aggressively on the sensitive aspects of the United Nations Security Council reforms, with democratic approach to attain effective support from other members of the Security Council.

CONCLUSION

It is very clear, both member-states of Indonesia and Malaysia have contributed tremendously in peacekeeping operations since its formulation in the late 1950s. This is indeed a challenge to the both member-states, because it required military proficiency and credible standard the fact that military contingents and observers are deployed in global areas irrespective of weather and terrain. Equally important, as members of the UN Security Council, both countries have the experience and dedication on handling sensitive issues to ensure correct and concrete actions are taken. So far, Indonesia and Malaysia have played their roles successfully in the UN Security Council by adopting/supporting a wise and achievable security resolution for implementation.

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THE SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT: MANAGING MALAYSIA-CHINA MARITIME RELATIONSHIP

Sugenderan Nagalan^{1*}, Tharishini Krishnan²

1 Department of Future Operations, HQ Western Fleet Command

*2 Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University Malaysia,
Kuala Lumpur*

**E-mail: sugenderan3194@navy.mil.my*

ABSTRACT

A critical issue that strongly influences Malaysia's maritime security is the issue related to the South China Sea (SCS) conflict. China is perceived to be a strong maritime power in Asia and the continuous aggression at this water creates a situation that, if not managed prudently, could spiral into trouble. The conflict in SCS is not a new phenomenon and academics and policy makers are aware about it, especially the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) which is an important entity in safeguarding Malaysian waters. The puzzle is how China's assertiveness posture will implicate the RMN operations and what are Malaysia's approaches in managing this conflict. The Chinese contention at the SCS is viewed seriously and this paper is significant in terms of the recent trends and developments in the SCS such as China's new approach in sending white ships and other new military developments and Malaysia's position vis-à-vis this dispute. Policy makers should continuously revise and update its managing mechanism in line with the issue in SCS especially at the evolving regional environment at the SCS.

Keywords: *South China Sea; Malaysia-China Maritime Relationship; Nine Dash Lines; United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); Maritime Silk Road (MSR); String of Pearls, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*

INTRODUCTION

The significance of the maritime domain in Malaysia can be understood by overviewing the length of Malaysia's coastline, which covers an area of 4,490 km. In terms of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), it covers an area of 598,540 sq. km as compared to the total land area of 332,556 sq. km [1]. A 640 km stretch of the South China Sea (SCS) separates Peninsular Malaysia from the state of Sabah and Sarawak. Apart from these geographical factors, the importance is further strengthened by the fact that Malaysia's economic well-being is highly depended upon the use of the sea; the offshore petroleum industry, shipping and fishing. In addition to this, SCS sits astride the world's major east-west trade routes, which connect the Pacific and the Indian Oceans.

On the other hand, if one observes the history of Malaysia, it had attracted many colonial powers via maritime reaping the richness and resources in Malaysia, which later led to the extension of their imperial power in Asia. In the present day, these forms

of domination are projected in many different ways. All these aspects have transformed Malaysia into a maritime nation [2]. Thus, the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) strategic role has been to safeguard and exercise sovereignty and jurisdiction over the EEZ and continental shelves up to 200 nautical miles (nm) off the Malaysian coast. Adding on to these trajectories has been the number of maritime threats such as piracy, illegal immigration, smuggling, drug trafficking, separatist movements, and terrorism.

However, the major factor that strongly influences Malaysia's maritime security as well as the policy today and in the near future is the issue related to the SCS conflict. Hence, this paper will focus on the SCS conflict and the implication towards Malaysia's maritime security. The entire Southeast Asia (SEA) region is besieged with the overlapping EEZ territorial claims, which involves the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and, more significantly, China. Presently, the potential exists for the current inter-ASEAN division and rivalries to evolve into open conflict is most probable if the contention IN the SCS is verified as natural gas and petroleum reserves. But, in this regard, the greatest threat to such claims is China, with its rapidly expanding military, large population and resultant hunger for the natural bounty of the region [3].

As Malaysia continues to face the rising China, the RMN as an important role player would have to continue shape better maritime policies and strategy to safeguard the interest as well as its claims at the SCS. The 'Strategi Pertahanan Maritim' (SPM) [4], which was formulated based on the National Defence Policy (NDP) will continue to foresee future assessment in line with the issues at the SCS and as an overall approach to safeguard the maritime strategic areas in the country.

SETTING THE CASE

For Malaysia, due to the increasing use of the sea and its resources, the potential aspects that challenges Malaysia's security might stem from the threat arising from claiming nations especially, China. Malaysia is certainly concerned about China's seriousness in claiming the Spratly Islands and they are dealing with regional implication of these challenges through a number of means called military, economic and diplomatic. Malaysia's dependence on natural economic resources and trade transactions through the SCS will have a major impact on Malaysia's security in terms of military, economic and politics. This aspect describe that Malaysia has extensive maritime interests in SCS. These have grown substantially over the years because of changes in economic and environmental circumstances as well as increase emphasis on sovereignty and strategic matters.

In the case of SCS, Malaysia's contiguity with six of the ten ASEAN states (Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines) faces various forms of maritime vulnerabilities from the powerfully China. Malaysia faces direct threat especially as it involves sovereignty issue. This is true because China, Taiwan and Vietnam claim the

entire area [5], while the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei claim some parts. All except Brunei occupy islets to support their sovereignty claims (Figure 1.1).

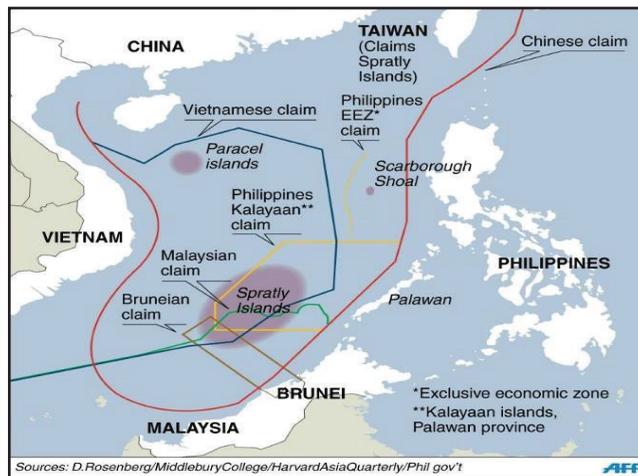


Figure 1.1: South China Sea Disputed Area [6]

The recent spate of events in SCS like the increasing numbers of Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) patrols, controversial implementation of the Hainan fishing rule, oath taking ceremony at James Shoal and many other incidents have renewed tension between China and some other claimant states over the disputed territories in the SCS in recent years [7]. This event has resulted in widespread concerns about the enhancement of Chinese assertiveness in strengthening their claims. But this event differs from a conservative approach to the SCS dispute in the early to mid-2000s, China has become increasingly uncompromising when handling the dispute [8].

China's maritime enforcement agencies continuous presence in SCS has caused great dissatisfaction amongst the other claimant states including Malaysia. Previously, China has had skirmishes with other claimant countries such as Vietnam in 1975 at Paracel Islands and recently with the Philippines in 2012 at 2nd Thomas Shoal [9]. China coercive actions create resentment to other claimants' and this could possibly affect Malaysia in the similar way.

Due to assertive Chinese posturing over the issue, Malaysia remains apprehensive of China because of its huge size, galloping economy and massive armed forces. This situation has caused the defence planners to perceive that Malaysia's security is threatened and subsequently will implicate the maritime relationship between Malaysia and China especially because it is pertaining to sovereignty and strategic matters. Many countries in recent years have published their defence policy documents periodically in the form of a Defence White Paper, in trying to fulfil the global trend for transparency and accountability [10]. In order to express RMN's intent towards this end, the SPM was published in 2009. At the moment, the SPM is the key strategic document aimed

to address this concern. The policy should be assessed time to time in order to address the growing Chinese maritime activities in the SCS and seek proper management of the issue.

CHINA AND MALAYSIA INTEREST IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Historical and Geographical Perspective

In the early 21st century, China emerged and moved towards a modern nation in East Asia and the rest of the world. The modernisation and economic growth in China has drastically led China to become a modern empire and undeniably super power. Historically, SCS were named after China. The PLA has declared “indisputable sovereignty” over SCS to reiterate China’s claim to the entire area of SCS based on past history [11]. The overwhelming claim has impacted and threaten the sovereignty of the littoral states. The intention of China to dominate SCS has greatly impacted Malaysia’s EEZ and in the long run will affect the sovereignty especially in terms of the maritime borders and Malaysia’s claims at the SCS.

Geography is another aspect. The SCS is geographically a well-defined sea that is located in one of the most important strategic locality in the world. It stretches in a south-easterly to north-easterly direction and has a surface area estimated to be of 1,148,500 square miles that makes it the world’s largest sea. There are eight distinct “archipelagos,” [12] comprising islands, cay, reefs, atolls and sand banks within the sea. There are the Pratas, Paracel, Macclessfield Bank, Spratly, Natuna, Anambas, Tambelan and Badas groups. The Natuna, Badas, Anambas and Tambelan groups belongs to Indonesia. On the other hand, the ownership of the Pratas, Paracels, Macclessfield Bank and Spratlys is still questionable and remains a controversial issue amongst the claimants [13].



Figure 1.2: South China Sea [14]

The Spratly Islands is the biggest archipelago as compared with other archipelagos in the SCS. Its maritime area covers 800,000 kilometres square with about 38 per cent of the whole area of the SCS [15]. It consists of some 230 islets, reefs and quays, and is located in the southern part of the SCS and is one of the largest continental shelves in the world. Most of the islands in Spratly area are small, rocky, and reefs. It is not suitable for people to live. The total land area around the Spratly Islands is estimated to be less than three square miles [16]. The Spratly is a widely dispersed and is situated more than 650 nm from Taiwan, 400 nm from the Chinese province of Hainan and about 200 nm from Vietnam. Additionally, regions of the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia are even closer in proximity. In short, the Spratly Islands comprise the following Fiery Cross, Cuarteron Reef, Amboyna Cay, Mariveles Reef, Swallow Reef, Ardasier Reef and Commodore Reef [17].



Figure 1.3: Spratly Islands [18]

Each of the periphery nations of the Spratly's have made territorial claims based on various reasons, such as its continuous continental shelf, historical claim and distance or proximity to its states. Defining what the Spratly Islands actually is rather complicated, depending on one's source, the group can consist of anywhere between dozens to hundreds of geographic features. These factors have had a significant impact upon the inability of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and bilateral or multilateral diplomatic efforts to resolve much of anything since the simplest step – defining Spratly Island is a major hurdle. In addition, the militaries of China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam in the area has obviously contributed further complexity to the scenario.

The conflict within the area arises primarily from natural resource interests especially fishing rights and the possible existence of extensive hydrocarbon deposits. This proximity can hardly support human habitation in and of themselves and the only vegetation that can be found are sparse growths of mangroves, shrubs and stunted trees. The largest island in the area is only 12 square miles in size. Generally speaking, the above-surface geographic features within these areas are of virtually no economic value [19].

China's Claim

China's case for ownership of the SCS is based on historical claims – China claims to have dominated the SCS since the 'Han Dynasty' (206-220 AD) [20]. China's claims are also based on the fact that the Chinese people were the first to find and occupied the islands in the SCS dating back hundreds of years ago in accordance with the definition set out in UNCLOS 1982, namely through effective occupied [21].

To support its claim, the Chinese used a map that was created two thousand years ago. The map shows the Spratly Islands as part of China's territory. In addition, the discovery by some of the artefacts on the islands in the Spratly by a British survey ship also indicates the presence of Chinese fishermen from Hainan province in 1867. British have argued that it was a Chinese citizen that has worked a lot of fishing grounds in the area for some time [22]. In 1947, China produced a map (Figure 1.4) that includes its sovereignty claim over SCS by marking the 11 dash lines by the Nationalist government of Republic of China [23]. After the establishment of PRC in 1949, the Chinese government reproduced a new map which removed two dash lines within the Gulf of Tonkin calling it the nine dash lines map in order to improve the Sino-Vietnam relationship (Figure 1.5) [24].

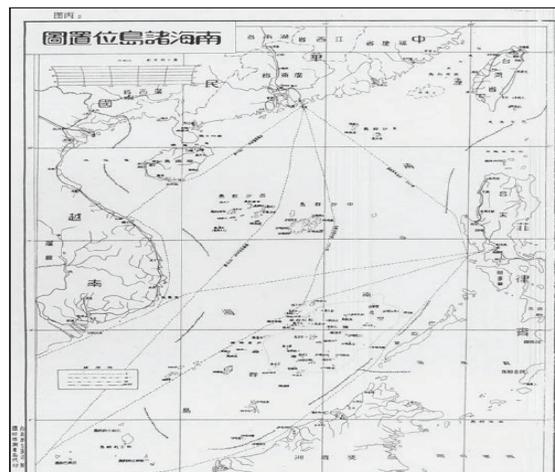


Figure 1.4: China Nine Dash Line Map in 1947 [25]



Figure 1.5: China’s Dashed Line Map from Notes Verbales of 2009 [26]

The nine dash lines have also been documented by China in the doctrine of so-called “jiudianxian” [27]. China views the area within the nine dash lines as a critical national interest and the government of China will continue to stand and pursue its claim [28]. Their claims extend in a southward loop to just off the coasts of Vietnam, the Philippines, and skirting the Sabah-Sarawak coastline by an average distance of only 35 nautical miles [29]. China also reinforced its demands on the Spratly Islands with a new marine law declaration known as The Law of the PRC and its Territorial Waters and Their Contiguous Areas in February 1992. This declaration clearly shows that the islands are located within the territory of its sovereignty [30].

To date, China has been developing the Paracel Island area [31] and has occupied seven islands and reefs (Cuarteron, Gaven, Fiery Cross, Subi, Hughes, Johnson, and Mischief reefs) in the Spratly Island area [32]. For example, on Woody Island on Paracel Island, this island was developed into a small town. The island has an airport, museum and other basic amenities. Most of the settlements in this island are mainly from fishermen, military personnel and a small number of tourists. Furthermore, Chinese government stated that the land reclamation and facility construction activities are mainly for the purpose to improve the living and working condition of those stationed on the outposts, in addition to the safety of navigation and research undertakings. However, observers view it as a prelude to the construction of expanded Chinese facilities and fortifications at those strategic locations in the SCS that enables regular use of military forces and maritime enforcement agencies to assert and defend its maritime territorial claims [33].

Malaysia’s Claim

Malaysia’s claim to some parts of the Spratly Islands is based on the continental shelf provisions under the 1982 UNCLOS. The provisions in UNCLOS describe in detail the legal and sovereign rights of a country that can be carried out for the purpose of exploring and exploiting the resources of continental shelf [34]. Malaysia has made a claim to the at the SCS parallel to this establishment.

In addition, Malaysia’s claim of the southern part of Spratly Islands was based on the occupation of an area ‘terra-nullius’ [35]. Subsequently, the Malaysian government has created an artificial island to show presence and settlements in the area. As a general rule, the existences of some military control posts are considered as effects of occupation. However, despite the effective method of deploying troops, it is all dependent on the duration of the presence and exploration that makes provisions to inhabit the area. Furthermore, Malaysia could use the provisions of the continental shelf under UNCLOS 1982 to support the demands of the resources of the sea.

Malaysia currently occupies the Spratly Islands especially Pulau Layang-Layang (Swallow Reef), Terumbu Ubi (Ardasier Reef), Terumbu Mantanani (Mariveles Reef), Terumbu Siput (Erica Reef) and Terumbu Perahu (Barque Canada Reef) with the deployment of navy personnel. From 1991 to 2003, Malaysia has developed Terumbu Layang-Layang into research and scientific marine study; tourist resort, airfield with the length 1,367 meters and aircraft hangar to strengthen its claim. At present Malaysia is unlikely to develop the other islands except for Pulau Layang-Layang because of its limited build-up area and will maintain sea patrol in its claimant area while continue to encourage fishing, scientific research and maritime developments [36].

Economic Perspectives

Strategically SCS connects the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean for waterways in trade, especially the oil and gas trade plying at the SLOCs of SCS. The SCS is also important to littoral states as a means of seaways for international trade connections and resources in economic activities. Figure 3.1 shows the trade routes through SCS for major crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). The dominant control upon SCS will provide China to become a stronger maritime economy and sea power.

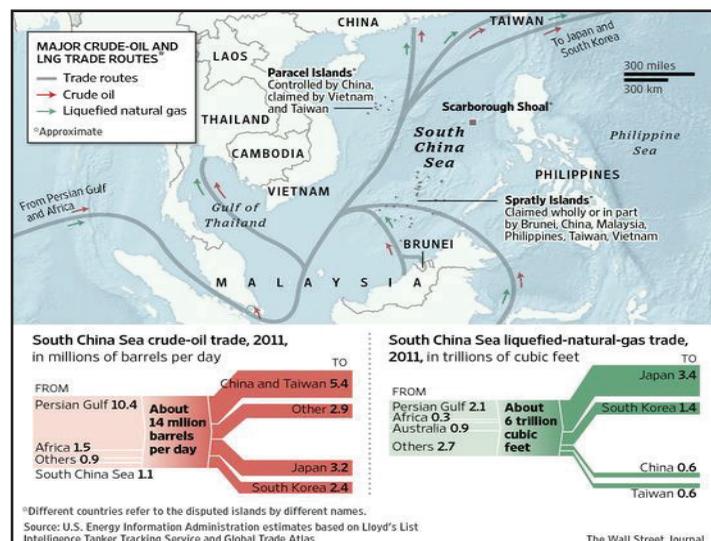


Figure 1.6: Major Crude Oil and LNG Trade Routes in SCS [38]

In order to secure this position, China has adopted the concept of “String of Pearls” and the recent “One Belt One Road” initiative to link China’s economic to the global community as far as the Far East and Europe and the rest of the world through a network of shipping routes and strategic maritime routes.

String of Pearls

The term “string of pearls” derived from Booz Allen Hamilton’s study [39]. China has never formally used this term. However, the concept of “string of pearls” is often seen by the US and its allies as a military initiative, with the aim of providing access to the Chinese navy with the formation of a series of military and economic nodes. The string stretches from the coast of China through the coastal states of SCS, the Straits of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf [40] as per in Figure 3.2.



Figure 1.7: Route of Oil SLOC in ‘String of Pearl Strategy’ [41]

Belt and Road Initiative

One Belt and One Road (OBOR) is a grand strategy introduced by President Xi Jinping in 2013. “One Belt” refers to the construction of a railway link connecting China and Europe via roads across Kazakhstan, Turkey, Russia, Belarus and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. While “One Road” refers to port construction along the sea route that passes Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and other countries to Venice in Italy. These two roads were the main trade routes of the world before the 15th Century known as the Silk Road, a route used by European merchants to trade with China, before the Ottoman Turks dominated the Mediterranean Sea. It is named Silk Road because the main items imported from China are silk and tea. Therefore, the name “One Belt” is officially called the “Silk Road Economic Belt” (SREB) while “One Road” is called “The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (MSR).

The purpose of MSR's concept was to increase maritime cooperation between China and the Asian countries. Somewhat, the concept of MSR is parallel to the land-based Silk Road which connects between China and the Central Asian states. As mentioned, the concept of "string of pearls" was never admitted by the China, but, the MSR concept clearly specifies their strategic goals in an official manner [42]. While justifying its investment, China stressed that its participation in the development of the regional maritime infrastructure is motivated by the economic and with obvious benefits for the host country.



Figure 1.8: Route of "Maritime Silk Road" [43]

Malaysia's Economic Interest

As stipulated in UNCLOS 1982 that was ratified by Malaysia in 1996, Malaysia now has 12 nm territorial waters with a 200 nm EEZ. In relation to this, economy interest is predominant for Malaysia as it forms a foundation for the continuity survival and independence of the country. Malaysia's economic well-being is closely related to its ability to produce and sell its product to the world market – in this case is the oil and natural gas resources. Several Malaysia's oil fields and platforms are located within the Chinese's nine dash lines and they represent a major contributor to the Malaysian economy. Malaysia is the second largest country in SEA after Indonesia to produce oil and natural gas. Other than that, Malaysia is also the third country in the world of exporting LNG. The oil and gas sector is one-third of the Malaysia's annual revenue [44].

Hence, issue such as a fair world-trading regime and uninterrupted SLOCs are important in the SCS and this is closely related to Malaysia's primary interest. SCS is the route for trade and shipping where one third of world trade passes [45]. SCS is one of the main routes for trading and shipping from west to east and vice versa. This route is also important to Malaysia which is categorizes it as a maritime nation - Malaysia has shown a significant development in her economy hence, almost 95 per cent of Malaysia's trades are seaborne [46].

Malaysia takes a diplomatic approach in preserving its sovereignty and national security, as well as demands on Spratly Island [47]. Economy is the most emphasised component in Malaysia's "play-it-safe" approach. Malaysia has partnered and signed agreements with companies from outside the country such as PETRONAS which continues to work with multinationals like Shell, Murphy Oil, Conoco Philips and ExxonMobil to explore SCS. For instance is the international consortium discovery of natural gas in the block of exploration SK320, about 90 miles from the coast of Sarawak in July 2014 [48].

Malaysia has also sought to set aside the differences with other countries demanding for the realization of economic benefits through the Joint Development Agreements (JDA). For example, in 2009, Malaysia and Brunei successfully resolved the issue of maritime boundaries and land disputes between the two countries through Exchange of Letter. In the agreement, both sides agreed to jointly develop two blocks of oil and gas. This agreement is an example of Malaysia's willingness to waive the dispute for economic pragmatism. Malaysia and China has never adopted such effect before [49], and even though some of the exploration platforms are located within the claimed nine dash lines area, China does not act aggressively against the Malaysian survey vessels, tender ships or seismic vessels as they act against Philippine and Vietnam vessels. Perhaps this is because Malaysia is a major energy supplier to the China. These include agreements made between the two countries for the supply of LNG by PETRONAS for 25 years which began in 2009 [50].

CHINA MILITARY SUPREMACY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

SCS is an area of high strategic significance, astride many key SLOC and important chokepoints, which naturally have military implication towards China. Thus, People Liberation of Army – Navy (PLA-N) plays an important role in China's defence strategy especially its naval power. In general, the country has three long term strategic stages set to address the current security challenges in SCS. At the first stage, from 2000 to 2010, China was establishing control of waters within the first island chain that links Okinawa Prefecture, Taiwan and the Philippines. In the second stage which began in 2010 and which is seen to continue till 2020, China aims at establishing sea control within the second island chain connecting the island chain of Ogasawara, Guam and Indonesia. While the final stage will start from 2020 to 2040, China would end the US military domination in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Figure 1.6 shows the First Line Chain and Second Line Chain [51].



Figure 1.9: First Line Chain and Second Line Chain [52]

Figure 2.0 shows that China's Military Expenditures from 1989 to 2013 shows a sharp increase from 2002 (USD 40 billion) to 2013 (USD 188 billion). Furthermore, China's active defense strategy is also demonstrated by the increase of their military capabilities such as highly developed submarines, integrated air defense systems and the development of the Land-based Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile [53]. According to the US Defense Department report, China is pursuing aggressively the construction of helipads, runways, jetties, radars on some of the islands in the disputed Spratly Islands. These constructions have also reclaimed more than 2,900 acres since December 2013 [54]. Also in 2011, the PLA completed the construction of a significant naval base at Yulin, located on the southernmost tip of Hainan Island. The base is large enough to house a combination of attack and ballistic submarines and sophisticated surface combatants, including aircrafts carriers [55].

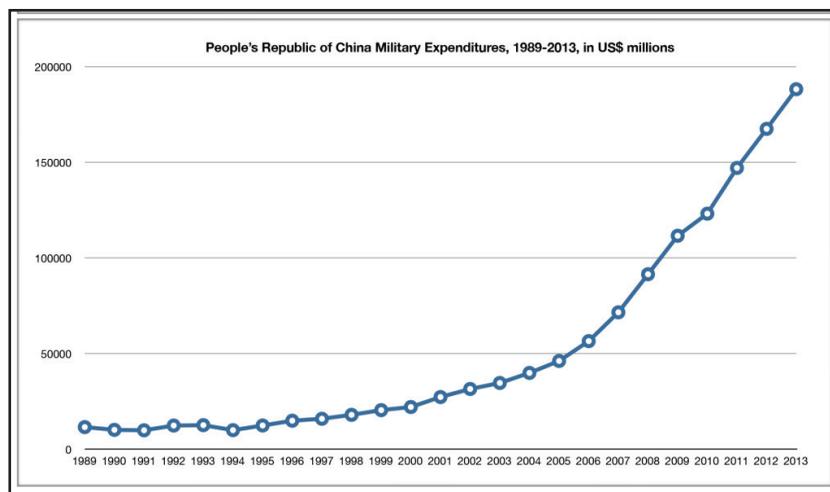


Figure 2.0: China Military Expenditure in USD from 1989 to 2013 [56]

Land reclamation activities and infrastructure construction by China in the strategic area of SCS are seen as the starting point for developing their active defence strategy. It allows China to regularly use military forces and maritime enforcement agencies to emphasize and preserve its maritime territorial claims. The Chinese government stated that all of these projects are solely for improving the standard of living and working condition for the people who placed on the outposts, and whom conducting safety of navigation and research activities. However, most analysts believed that China is working to improve de facto control by enhancing military and civilian facilities at SCS. The airfields, berthing areas and resupplying facilities will allow China to maintain the CCG and PLA-N operations in SCS with full flexibility and persistency. This in turn will increase China's ability to detect and challenge activities committed by opponents, especially the US, claimant states or third parties with an interest in SCS. It will also expand the capabilities of CCG and PLA operations and reduce the time or duration to deploy them [57].

China's assertiveness continued with the PLA-N actively making her presence in SCS by conducting drills and exercises. In 2009 and June 2011, the PLA-N had a three days joint exercise with the Maritime Police and China's Marine Surveillance (CMS) aimed to boost the PLA-N capabilities in supporting the maritime enforcement agencies operations. The PLA-N also had a series of naval exercises with its air and submarine assets, search and rescue exercise and logistic training. In July 2010, the PLA-N executed a major life firing drills involving various branch of PLA-N, mainly from South Sea Fleet, while in summer 2011, the PLA-N conducted an amphibious exercise that focuses on capturing the island that has been occupied by the enemy [58].

The CCG or "white ship concept" is utilised by China to assert their sovereignty over in the SCS [59]. China shift to this new concept to offer a less militaristic behaviour to the disputant states and other regional powers in the SCS. In addition, this concept is to demonstrate that the dispute falls in the lens of domestic civilian jurisdiction, laws and regulations. CCG is viewed as one step lesser than military roles in terms of limited war fighting capabilities. The way China employed its CCG in regard to the SCS conflict projects as blunt instruments for state to assert power and thus cause more concern than optimism. The aggressive tactic applied through CCG make blurred or misjudgement between the task of "law enforcement" and "national defence" during peacetime [60].

Nowadays, the CCGs have adopted military tasking such as coordinating intelligence and as a command and control platform to Chinese fishing, maritime militia and PLAN vessels [61]. Recent joint exercises between the CCG and China's military services highlight efforts at honing interoperability. Furthermore, the arbitral tribunal ruling under the UNCLOS in July 2016 found that CCG had breached several articles governing safety and navigation at sea [62]. In short, deploying non-military assets such as of the CCG allows China to show their administrative control over the disputed area. China has tried to demilitarize the extension of its sovereign protection to strengthen its legal claims against other claiming parties. CCG operations at SCS can now be seen more widely, more organized, and seemingly firmer [63].

MALAYSIA'S MARITIME VULNERABILITY

The concept of nation-state's sovereignty is an established concept adhered by all nations in the world. Malaysia as an independent state shall use all means to govern continental shelf from the Malaysian coastline and the claimed islands and atolls in the Spratly Island in accordance with UNCLOS 1982 in order to be free from external threat. Malaysia is endowed with recognised sea regime and airspace over the SCS by the international law. Any attempt to remove or occupy any part of the regime will be resisted by all means to the extent of the use of military.

When Chinese ships intrudes Malaysia's waters, Malaysian defence are usually expelled to shadow out the Chinese ships without aggressive action. Malaysia has also adopted a "minus-one approach", sending less than one ship against the Chinese vessel when approaching them, with the aim of reducing the risk of unwanted incident becoming more serious. Malaysia chooses the safe way for the following reasons. First, the capability of RMN is limited. The size of the RMN is small, an old fleet with a total of 44 ships and two submarines to protect the country's vast waters. This has not taken into account other routine activities such as repairs, ship's maintenance tests and some other patrols. Secondly, the Chinese intrusion is just treated the same as one of the many other non-traditional maritime threats such as invasion of neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

SOUTH CHINA SEA: MANAGING MALAYSIA-CHINA RELATIONSHIP

The hottest issue in particular in SEA is the issue of SCS. This issue could trigger a war between the US and China if it was not properly addressed. Malaysia is amongst the countries that are tucked between the two countries on the issue. Malaysia maintain its non-alignment stance and attempts to avoid any intervention from the US and China. The firmness shown by China against Malaysia in SCS dispute issue does not force Malaysia to act firmly in claiming its rights at the SCS. In addition, Malaysia is relatively small and still at infant state to confront China heads on. At present, the relationship of Malaysia and China can be said to be modest and things could be discussed diplomatically. These vulnerabilities lead Malaysia to manage its maritime relationship with China by maintaining the status quo, abiding to international norm and law and regional cooperation as a platform.

MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

In essence, Malaysia aspires to exist as a sovereign and independent nation that is free from encumbrances of external influences including China. In addition, Malaysia is interested in promoting and preserving the prosperity, security and welfare of the society. These are Malaysia's fundamental goals, which will remain unchanged because they influence and affect Malaysia's continuous existence as a stable nation.

Malaysia closely connected with China in the situation at the Spratlys. In the current situation, it is observed that Malaysia-China relations could be classified as cordial and softer stance towards Malaysia. The reasons that make China to behave as such could be referred back to early 1970 when Malaysia was among the first country to recognised China. During Tun Razak's regime, Malaysia's foreign policy towards China experiences some changes from Tunku's regime. Malaysia strictly observed the "One China" principle as defined by Beijing and regard Beijing's dispute with Taiwan as a domestic issue of Chinese, Malaysian government established diplomatic relations with China [64]. Malaysia under Mahathir and Najib also maintains Razak's stance toward Taiwan and strongly supported the Mainland China [65]. Even the new government – Pakatan Harapan continues to express its strong friendship with the Chinese under Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

China has adopted selective foreign policy options in the Spratly and depends on bilateral relations with the claimants. While against the Malaysia, China adopts a friendly attitude [66]. Beijing chooses to stay clear of the area claimed by Malaysia and initially avoided to introduce forces into the Malaysia's controlled area. In other words, China continues to tolerate the occupation by claimant countries in the Spratly, which according to China fall well within its historic-line claim. Arguably, this benign policy towards selected ASEAN countries fits in well with China's policy to seek appeasement with ASEAN whom China believes can help with its ambitious economic programmes. This was asserted during Chinese President Xi Jinping visit to some ASEAN countries in 2013 [67].

ABIDING TO INTERNATIONAL NORM AND LAW

Although Malaysia maintained a strong will to preserve the nation's sovereignty, but precedence has been set whereby Malaysia as a small nation is willing to resolve the issue through an arbitrator whilst maintaining regional peace. The resolution of Sipadan-Ligitan and Pulau Batu Putih issue through the ICJ set precedence for the final resolution of sovereignty of disputed territories through diplomacy.

In the SCS issue, Malaysia will act similarly to Philippines. The Philippines has submitted a notification and statement of claims against China and requested for the Tribunal to declare that the nine-dash lines map is illegal. Finally, the PCA issued its decision in favour of the Philippines in the seizure of several small islands in the SCS by China on 12 July 2016. Tribunal orders contain a lot of things, but basically it rejected China's claim over some small islands off the coast of the Philippines in accordance with the agreement signed by China itself in 1980 under the laws of international waters. Any claims brought through historical elements were rejected outright by the legislation in force since 1980 [68].

The decision of the PCA is a milestone on the development of the law of the sea particularly on dispute resolution to promote peaceful use of the sea. Malaysia may

benefit from the said ruling as the PCA has invalidated the nine-dashed lines claim put forward by China that affected waters off Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. Despite Chinese rejection, this ruling provides leverage to Malaysia to begin talks with China. Malaysia's position has been consistent that disputes should be resolved by the countries concerned through peaceful means in accordance with the relevant principles of international law including UNCLOS [69].

REGIONAL COOPERATION AS A PLATFORM

Malaysia has been able to pursue cooperation with regional states through several ways called diplomatic forum and bilateral cooperation. From the diplomatic forum perspectives, Malaysia has been able to engage regional states in various manners. For a start, the common interests among ASEAN members to engage in positive diplomatic relations with regards to the SCS issues can be illustrated by the agreement in the ASEAN's first communiqué called the Declaration on Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the SCS on 4 November 2002 in an attempt to minimize the risk of conflict [70]. To further strengthen the implementation of the DOC, specifically to guide the implementation of possible joint cooperative activities, measures and actions, ASEAN Member States and China adopted the Guideline for the Implementation of the DOC at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) + 1 Session held in Bali on 21 July 2011 [71]. Since the adoption of the guidelines, a number of seminars and workshops have been organised.

Nevertheless, the efforts to turn it into a formal and binding code have been difficult, partly because of China's anxiety at ASEAN's attempts to develop a common approach. As an important document between ASEAN Member States and China, the DOC has not actually fulfilled its mission in building greater trust between the country demanding and preventing the dispute from rising. It merely plays a role to impose moral barriers on the relevant parties. Subsequently, efforts taken to initiate the COC for all parties involved to address the weaknesses of the DOC as they discuss and negotiate COCs. However, discussions between Beijing and ASEAN are required to decide on the final version, which may include binding crisis management mechanisms, prevention of attacking weapons and navigation freedom [72].

In the development of COC, Malaysia is seen to be more flexible in addressing the issue of the SCS by having direct discussions with China, developing jointly overlapping territories, conservation of the environment and so on. On the tolerance of Malaysia, China is more flexible and easier to deal with Malaysia in the issue of overlapping claims of the SCS than Vietnam and Philippines. The most interesting point is that China has never made a formal protest on oil exploration activities by Malaysia in the SCS.

From the bilateral perspective, Malaysia has actively engaged the regional states through various means. While bilateral forums continue to be used, Malaysia has emphasized on bilateral military cooperation and exercise with China called the "Peace and Friendship 2015" or Exercise AMAN-YOUYI. This exercise deepens the

comprehensive strategic partnership between Malaysia and China to pragmatic changes of defence and improves the military capacities in response to security threat and safeguarding regional maritime security.

Other than this, other exercises have been established with SEA littoral state such as MALAPURA (Malaysia-Singapore), MALPHIL/PHIMAL (Malaysia-Philippines), HORNBILL (Malaysia-Brunei), MALTHAI (Thailand-Malaysia), and MALINDO (Malaysia-Indonesia). The ASEAN members embraced and developed the military cooperation from bilateral to multilateral concept in order to enhance each nation security as well the SCS.

CONCLUSION

Security around Malaysia would directly be affected by a conflict in the SCS, as it would undoubtedly threaten the sovereignty of the country. However, Malaysia will have to deal with China in the case of SCS through multilateral approach rather than the Beijing's preferred bilateral approach because it involves the whole of SEA. Besides that, Malaysia's ability to defend the security in Malaysian EEZ is best through political means, as it does not have the capacity in terms of armed forces to counter the China.

China and Malaysia has claim from two different perspectives. China's claim is driven from historical standings. China regards the entire SCS as its special safeguard based on historical rights. Whereby, Malaysia's claim on the other hand is based on a conviction under UNCLOS that the islands are located on a continental shelf, both in the declared EEZ, required for its safety and proximity to the mainland. Apart from that, there are two interdependent aspects must be taken into account in this disputes; economic and military strategic. The dominant behavior of China in SCS is true by observing its maritime strategy through military and economy effort. China is in need of energy in the SCS and this directly threatens the sovereignty of the littoral states. China well understood that national security without good economy support is useless although they are very good and strong in economy and military. In relation to that, so called 'String of Pearls and "Maritime Silk Road" is perceived to help boost China's economy to grow and develop as economy power.

But China is unlikely to take violent action in the region in the future as it fears it will affect its position in the SCS, claims over the SCS and economy of China. Since the issue of SCS is attractive, Malaysia has emphasized diplomatic approach to ensuring that the SCS is stable and safe. Malaysia pursues cooperation with regional states and powers through international organizations, forums, training, exercises and bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

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**“NO PERMANENT FRIEND OR ENEMY, ONLY PERMANENT INTEREST”:
MALAYSIA-CHINA RELATIONS
(FROM TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN TO MAHATHIR 2.0)**

Lt Col Ir. Suthan Venkatachalam
Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security, Ministry of Defence Malaysia
Email: suthan6617@mod.gov.my

ABSTRACT

Malaysia-China relations are mostly concentrated on trade. China is currently Malaysia's largest trading partner, whereas Malaysia is the largest trading partner of China among ASEAN countries. Nonetheless, the relationship between both countries is beyond economic matters. Malaysia has portrayed positive posture and excellent approach in managing the rise of China as a global power. The evolution in their relations and areas of cooperation are largely influenced by Malaysian foreign policy posture. Both countries maintain friendly relations despite any political issues and change in policy in order to safeguard the interests of each country towards one another. Finally, Malaysia will continue to practice 'hedging' in its behaviour vis-à-vis with major powers like China.

Keywords: *hedging, soft power, AFTA, BRI*

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia and China have been enjoying cordial relations for the past 40 years. Being the first ASEAN country to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1974, Malaysia's relation towards China can be categorized into two major periods which are; during the cold war and post-cold war, where this relationship evolved from mutual hostility to close and cordial partnership. During Tunku Abdul Rahman's stewardship, Malaysia's foreign policies were formulated towards pro-Western and anti-Communist posture with close links to Britain. The turning point in Malaysia-China relationship began in the 1970s where Malaysia announced a shift in its foreign policy from Pro West and Anti-Communist to Non-Alignment. Since then, the foreign policies formed under different leadership are seen as continuation of the same principle and interest but with different approaches.

DISCUSSION

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The relationship between Malaysia and China has evolved since the Malacca Sultanate. During the 15th century China was one of the most powerful countries in the world where it had the capability to organize naval expeditions as its force projection to other regions

of the world. From the many expeditions sent by the Chinese emperor, the expedition led by Zheng He or Cheng Ho was considered as an important foreign relation projection for the Chinese. During this time the diplomatic and political relation between China and the Malacca Malay Sultanate was established because the Malacca Sultanate had to depend on the Chinese to protect them from being attacked by the Siamese kings who threatened to conquer their southern neighbours [1]. This can be considered as the catalyst in the bilateral relations between Malaysia and China.

MALAYSIA-CHINA RELATIONS UNDER DIFFERENT PRIME MINISTERS

Malaysia's relationship with China has evolved with time in accordance with its different Premierships at helm. Since independence till today this cordial relationship has changed and produced opportunities, challenges and threats towards Malaysia.

Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957-1960)

The era of post-independence from 1957 to 1963, under Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's foreign policies were formulated towards pro-Western and anti-Communist posture with close links to Britain. During the era of Tunku, regionalism was established through ASA, MAPHILINDO and eventually ASEAN in 1967. In terms of security, Malaysia relied on Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) where Britain provided mutual assistance in defending Malaysia from external threat.

Tunku's cold attitude towards China can be seen through refusal to recognize China and blamed China for trying to expand communism to Malaysia in order to overthrow the government. To make matters worse, China's suppression of Tibetan revolt in 1959 received criticism from Malaysia where it was voiced out through UN General Assembly. The hostile relationship continued when Malaysia condemned China's action during the China-India border war in 1962 [2]. Besides that Malaysia's actions towards China also contribute to the tense relationship such as publication from PRC was banned, travel restrictions to China and Bank of China branches were ordered to be closed.

Changes in Malaysia's Security Outlook (1960-1970)

Accordingly, between 1960-1970 Malaysia's security and foreign policy had to be revamped to self-reliance & regionalism [3]. When the British withdrew from the Suez Canal in 1967 and subsequently from Malaysia and Singapore in 1971, and further in 1969, the US reduced ground troops in Southeast Asia as stipulated in President Nixon's Guam Doctrine led to Malaysia coping with its own security problems and the relationship with China.

Tun Abdul Razak (1970-1976)

As the second Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak adopted a foreign policy on neutrality (non-alignment) which was to enhance peace among the region. During his era, Malaysia began her normalization and rapprochement with China. Evidently, Tun Razak’s historic visit to China in 1974 was the start of the Malaysia and China relations. Initially, Malaysia’s foreign policy focused on solving issues related to domestic security and geostrategic issues. However, after the racial riots in 1969, Tun Razak saw it was necessary to enlist the support of China to resolve several issues related to the citizenship of the Chinese in Malaysia. Additionally, winning the Chinese support was crucial for Barisan Nasional as Malaysia has a large number of Chinese populations. Hence by offering of an olive branch in establishing diplomatic relations with China would also mean making peace with Chinese both inside and outside Malaysia and it proved to be fruitful for Barisan Nasional, as it won the 1974 General Election with large majority [4].

In addition, it provided an opportunity for Malaysia to weaken activities of the Communist Party of Malaya through diplomatic ties with China where Chairman Mao and Premier Chao assured that China will not interfere with Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Besides that, Malaysia also realised that China had a legitimate role to play in Southeast Asia security after the changes in Malaysia’s security outlook due to incidents such as withdrawal of British forces from Malaysia and reduction of the US ground troops in Southeast Asia. Thus in 1971, at the UN General Assembly, Malaysia voted for Albanian resolution, allowing seating of China and expulsion of Taiwan and established “One China, One Formosa” policy not “Two China” policy [5]. On the other hand, the establishment of ZOPFAN in 1971 provided a platform to prevent interference by outside Powers in ASEAN [6].

Tun Hussein Onn Administrative (1976-1981)

Malaysia’s third Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn’s foreign policy was seen as more to maintain the policies initiated by his predecessor. During his era, the Southeast Asia region was facing the collision of two major powers that were influenced by the communist ideology of Soviet Union and China. The fall of Saigon and the invasion of Vietnam into Cambodia sparked the fear that the communist ideology would stream down South [7]. Therefore, Malaysia already with her internal problem of the CPM took a step further by requesting China to sever its ties with the CPM. China responded that it was impossible to affect party to party relations. Furthermore, China did not want the CPM to fall to the Soviet Union for its support. Hence, China’s reluctance prompts Malaysia to bar her citizen from visiting China because Malaysia was afraid that the Chinese would turn the citizen into becoming the sympathiser to the struggle of the CPM. This further tarnished the Malaysia-China relations.

Tun Mahathir Mohammad – Mahathir 1.0 (1981-2003)

Significant changes in Malaysia Foreign Policy (MFP) took place during Tun Mahathir's era where the emphasis was on economics. The drastic changes in MFP were the introduction of 'Look East Policy' and 'Buy British Last' policy in order to reduce dependency on the West [8]. Tun Mahathir's leadership showed a variety of new initiatives to improve relations with others countries in order to spur the economy. During his tenure as the Prime Minister 'Economic Pragmatism' was the central theme for Malaysia-China relations where he visited China in late 1985 with a large business delegation and signed numerous MOUs aimed at facilitating bilateral trade & investments [9]. Tun Mahathir viewed China as Malaysia's indispensable partner because of China's increasing vital role in regional and global affairs in terms of economic and security due to its continuous economic growth and veto power in the UN Security Council.

Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003-2009)

Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi continued Malaysia's established foreign policy and diplomatic relations. A month prior to becoming the prime minister, he visited China and declared the year 2004 as Malaysia-China Friendship Year in honour to commemorate the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties [10]. Seven months after being appointed as Prime Minister, he has led another delegation to China to celebrate the 30th years of relation with China which proved how high Malaysia regarded this diplomatic relations. The concept of Islam Hadhari that was introduced by Tun Abdullah further opened the eyes of the world that Malaysia is an example of a country that is tolerant and progressive Islamic country.

Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak (2009 – May 2018)

Dato' Seri Mohd Najib as the sixth prime minister continued the foreign policy and international relations that had been established and envisaged to enhance national economy growth towards achieving Vision 2020. As his predecessor, China was his first foreign destination after assuming his premiership in April 2009 and followed by another visit to China in June 2009 which eventually marked 35 years of diplomatic relations between the countries. In that event, Dato' Seri Mohd Najib told his China counterpart that he would 'dig more wells' to ensure that "the flow of water would be forever bountiful that we can both share for the mutual benefit of the countries' [11].

He was seen to be more aggressive in his stand towards engaging China where he signed the Joint Action Plan on Strategic Cooperation in 2009 which focuses on the key areas under the national interest [12]. Through this cooperation, the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) received a huge boost where both Malaysia and China enhanced bilateral investment and financial cooperation by creating industrial parks in Qinzhou and Kuantan respectively; establishing Bank Negara Malaysia representative office in Beijing and renewal bilateral currency swap deal for RM 90 billion [13]. On the

other hand, China also reciprocated with the ‘Panda diplomacy’ by sending two giant pandas to Malaysia.

In May 2017, Najib attended the BRI summit in Beijing at the invitation of President Xi Jinping which was eventually attended by 28 heads of other countries as well. BRI is a long term plan of the Middle Kingdom by enhancing its supply chain management through establishment of transport routes connecting major sea ports in the Southeast Asia region and towards creating an efficient network of land and air passages in Asia, Europe and Africa. The BRI is poised to improve the Malaysian economy through a more comprehensive connectivity and cooperation among its members.

Tun Mahathir Mohammad – Mahathir 2.0 (May 2018 - Present)

Following the watershed May 9 of 14th General Election, Tun Mahathir made a volte-face to the premiership at the age of 93. In his second incarnation as Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir is unlikely to make any significant changes to the Malaysian foreign policy that was set during his first administration (Mahathir 1.0). However the return of Mahathir 2.0 has paved way for Malaysia to take firmer stance against external powers’ dominance in ASEAN that will rescind regional solidarity and stability. Mahathir 2.0’s foreign policy will pursue multilateralism by giving importance to regionalism and maintaining equidistance with major powers. He also wants to expand the role of Malaysia in international stage and regain the status as the ‘Asian Tiger’ unlike his predecessor Najib who has a softer stance against major powers especially China in the face of its assertiveness in South China Sea.

During the 11th Malaysia Plan Mid-Term Review, Tun Mahathir emphasised that Malaysia will maintain its neutrality in line with ZOPFAN doctrine embraced by the region with regards to the on-going tension between China and US at the South China Sea. He also stressed that Malaysia will adhere to the principle of ‘collective security’ to safeguard freedom of navigation within the region [14].

The return of Mahathir 2.0 saw the renunciation of three China-backed mega projects due to unreasonable cost that will eventually lead Malaysia into a bankrupt country [15]. This created speculation that there will be uproar between Malaysia-China relations. However, Mahathir turned the tables during the bilateral meeting in China (August 2018) when he assured that China’s policy of Malaysia will not change and that the relationship will be strengthened [16]. Mahathir emphasised that Malaysia wanted to switch the focal point towards other economic areas instead. He was showing interest to have closer cooperation in e-commerce, technology and agricultural sector. For the record, China was the second country he visited after Japan since he made a comeback, denoting that it will continuously remain as Malaysia’s important trading partner. On the other hand, China also reassured that their relations with Malaysia will continue to prosper and Xi Jinping further emphasized Malaysia as one of key nation in their BRI project [17].

Presently, Tun Mahathir views China as an epitome for economic development and wants to make China a role model to prosper the country by learning from its experience. Despite having some issues both countries will continuously work relentlessly to preserve their long-standing relationship. Nevertheless, Mahathir 2.0's administration will continue to adopt the principle of equidistance with China to safeguard the balance of relations with the major powers.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHINA TO MALAYSIA

National Interest

One of the main purposes of Malaysia's interest towards China is to pursue its national interest. This can be described within the context of internal and external as follow:

a. **Internal Reasons.** Tun Abdul Razak's 1974 meeting of Premier Zhao En Lai and Chairman Mao Tse Tung personally to solve the issue of neutralizing the CPM among other issues via the visit to China made a paradigm shift in Malaysian Foreign Policy. China's positive cooperation in assuring that it will not support the CPM's struggle proved to be the positive yardstick to the good bilateral relations and the end to the CPM menace and the end the blocking of 'Suara Revolusi Malaysia' (Malayan Voice of Revolution) radio broadcasts which was used as a propaganda tool by the CPM to lure the Malaysians to join and fight for them.

Besides that, both countries also agreed that there would not be dual nationality (principles of *jus soli*) with regards to the 220,000 overseas Chinese national in Malaysia [18]. China believed that the destiny of the overseas Chinese should lie in the country that they resided and not considered themselves as separate. With the special arrangement, in the 70s both governments managed to resolve the issue of overseas Chinese national who were red identity card holders then. This is a clear example of cordial relations between the two nations.

Tun Razak took further positive measures in order to restore internal stability (by resolving issues between the Malay and Chinese community in Malaysia) after the May 1969 racial riot by visiting China in 1974 and also by introducing the New Economic Policy (NEP) which was aimed to eradicate economic poverty between the Malays and the Chinese. Additionally, getting the Chinese support during the general election was crucial for Barisan Nasional at that particular time and Tun Razak's visit to China proved to be fruitful where Barisan Nasional clinched a huge victory where it won 135 over 154 seats during the 4th General Election in 1974 [19].

b. **External reasons.** Malaysia made major adjustments to its foreign policy in 1970 from Pro-West to Non-Alignment posture in order to pursue national interest. One of the major steps towards neutralization actually came after the establishment of relations with China in 1974 and the pursuance of equidistance policy vis-à-vis major powers. It

was easy for Malaysia to reconcile with China due to changes in China’s foreign policy where they showed more moderate external posture. Another factor that led Malaysia to have relation with China came by when the US started to engage China. The secret meeting of Henry Kissinger plus the ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’ between US-China in 1971 (where a group of American ping pong players visited China) and the subsequent announcement of the historic visit by President Nixon enlightened the spirit of Malaysia that the move to construct relations with China was on the right track [20]. The visit of President Nixon to China was an important indicator that other countries especially countries in the region could sought a state to state relations with China.

Economic Interest

Acknowledging China as an economic power house, Malaysia considered China’s economic expansion as an opportunity and maximising rewards from it will be one of the main agenda for Malaysia. With the average GDP growth of 6.5% yearly, China is set to overtake the US by 2030 as shown in the Figure 1. China certainly seems destined for economic pre-eminence, if current trends continue.

The establishment of diplomatic relation enhanced the economic and trade relation between Malaysia and China. In recent years, Malaysia’s imports and exports to China have increased dramatically and currently China is the largest trading partner of Malaysia with overall trading of RM24.4 billion from January till September 2018 as shown in Figure 2.

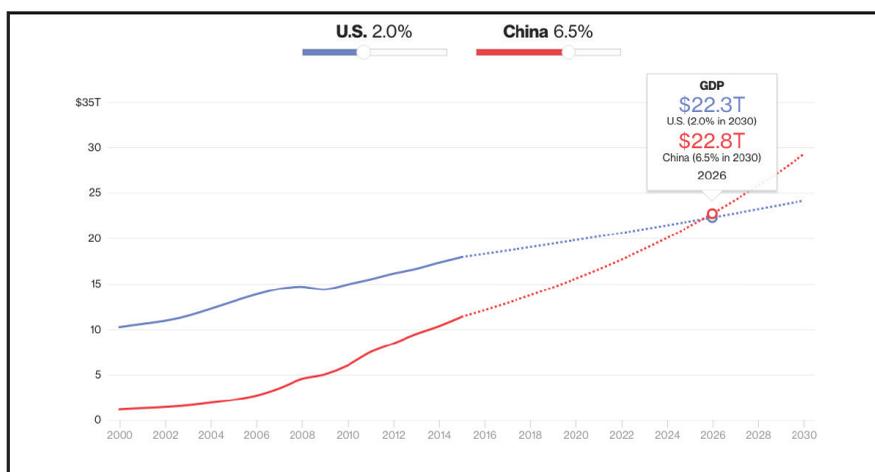


Figure 1: China GDP vs US GDP (Source: IMF via Bloomberg 2018)

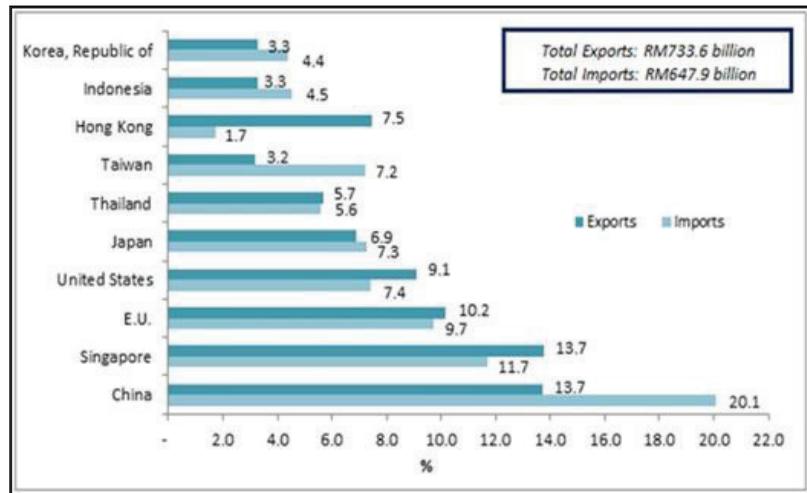


Figure 2: Malaysia's Major Trading Partners in Jan – Sept 2018
(Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia)

With China's continuous economic growth, Malaysia has made the initiative of creating investment ground for trade and business in order to capture China's investment. Through the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) which took effect in 2010, Malaysia introduced the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). It gives opportunities for China's investment to Malaysia. Besides that, Malaysia's giant companies such as Berjaya Groups, YTL Corporation and Hong Leong Group made presence in China by benefiting from the bilateral investment.

Geo-Political Interest

The Malaysia-China relation has really grown into a matured partnership. Undoubtedly, the role of great powers within the region like China is vital for regional order and stability. It does not mean that Malaysia is forging a tight alliance or bandwagon with China. Malaysia as a small country should proactively be able to reap benefits from this tranquil period and at the same time, maintain existing ties with other great powers with the approach of equidistance in safeguarding its national interests.

Diaspora

Malaysia being a multiracial community with 25% of its population comprising of Chinese, took the opportunity to develop trade relation using the ethnic approach. The similarities in culture fostered a better relationship between the two nations. The Malaysian Chinese who have traditional linkage with China made it easier to attract and invest in China. Besides that, during Tun Razak's tenure as the Prime Minister, the relations with China provided a codifying effect on the support of Chinese in Malaysia for Barisan Nasional during the general election, as it proved crucial for them at that particular time [21].

Enhance Defence and Security Cooperation

In order to take Malaysia-China relations to newer heights, Malaysia and China established defence and security cooperation. In 1995, with the establishment of military attaché offices in both countries, China and Malaysia have witnessed growing contacts and exchanges of visits between their military circles. In 2005, the then Defence Minister, Datuk Seri Najib visited China and establish closer defence ties by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which opened up the way for bilateral activities such as military training and exchange of personnel and information. This paved the way for dialogues between countries in order to understand each other’s perspective of regional and international security developments. With the MOU in place and recognizing China’s advancement in technology, Malaysia in its 9th Malaysia Plan acquired FN-6 Manual Portable Air Defence System (MANPADS) from China [22]. In December 2014, Malaysian Armed Forces and People Liberation Army had their first joint exercise on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Operation in Kuala Lumpur.

Besides that, High-Level Defence Committee was also established in 2017 to institutionalise defence cooperation between Malaysia and China to further enhance military partnership, information and intelligence sharing, training and education, strategic affairs, bilateral and regional issues [23]. In a joint statement of China and Malaysia of bilateral ties during Tun Mahathir’s visit this year, both countries are positive towards high-level defence engagement and would like to install Secured Defence Telephone Link that connect the defence ministers [24]. Recently, under the banner of Peace and Friendship; Malaysia, China and Thailand participated in a trilateral military exercise which was held for 10 days beginning from 20 October 2018 in the Straits of Malacca [25].

In addition, Malaysia has also acquired four Littoral Mission Ships (LMS) from China under the Malaysian Navy’s 15 to 5 transformation programme in April 2017. Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd and China Shipbuilding and Offshore International Co Ltd (CSOC) are collaborating in building the four vessels in Wuchang Shipyard, China. The first vessel is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019 [26].

Non Military Activities (Others)

Strong cooperation and friendship between Malaysia and China has grown and paid dividends in the form of people to people relations where there is continuous growth in tourism and education sectors. China occupies a prominent position in Malaysia’s tourism industry where in last 5 years the average tourist from China was 1.5 million people yearly. In 2016, Malaysia changed its strategy accordingly in order to attract more Chinese tourists by offering visa waiver for them. The arrival of Chinese tourists has definitely boosted and benefited the local tourist industry and has helped to support the Malaysia economy. Besides that, Malaysia has also made herself an attractive place

to earn quality tertiary education for foreign students. Malaysian Universities and private colleges including Chinese Universities in Malaysia have attracted large number of students China and these students can be potential friends for Malaysian business community to do business in China. This turning point has paved the way for enhanced relationship between Malaysia and China for confidence building and fostering of better ties between state to state relations and people to people relations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MALAYSIA TO CHINA

National Interest.

In the 1980s, events and developments in China encouraged the improvement of relations between China and the Southeast Asian countries. Firstly, the death of Chairman Mao in 1976 and the subsequent ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping led to the initiation of China's economic open door policy aimed at improve China's domestic & international affairs, politics, economics and societal affairs [27]. With the largest population in the world, cheap labour and vast natural resources and China offered tremendous economic opportunities for trade and investment to its neighbouring countries such as Malaysia where trades between both countries has increased tremendously.

China adopted a policy of 'good neighbourhood' since 1990, in the wake of Western sanctions over the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 [28]. The policy aimed to promote new image and new cordial relationship with neighbours through border stabilization, closer relationships, confidence building measures and mutual trust, created significant favourable external environment in improving relation with surrounding countries in which Malaysia as a small state welcomed the effort.

In 1997, China's leadership introduced 'new security concept' which emphasizes four core elements: mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and co-operation which indeed exercise of soft power by China [29]. It brings more flexibility on the management of territorial disputes and managing relations with Southeast Asian countries. Through this approach, which was a move initiated by ASEAN, has led to active diplomatic and military contacts to reassure Southeast Asian countries that the image of the 'China threat' was an illusion created by the west.

Malaysia's Role in ASEAN

China treated ASEAN as a collective organization which is important for China's diplomatic and security objectives in East and Southeast Asia. Since Malaysia is the pioneer and has a strong influence in ASEAN, it was easier for China to pursue her interest in ASEAN countries. Malaysia played a significant role in integrating China into ASEAN activities where in 1991; Tun Abdullah Badawi (then foreign minister) invited his Chinese counterpart to attend the opening of ASEAN ministerial meeting which marked the beginning of ASEAN-China dialogue. Relations with ASEAN countries

were crucial for China at that time as they had sanctions from the Western following Tiananmen incident in 1989.

Trade and Investment

As the Chinese economy continues to grow, supply of raw materials and energy resources has become increasingly critical. Southeast Asia is an important source for China’s present and future needs. Although the supply from the region will not meet China’s overall demand, it would nonetheless help Beijing to expand its imports on raw materials. Malaysia being a major exporter of petroleum products, rubber, palm oil and minerals will benefit from this move. Of recently, China has become increasingly reliant on Malaysian bauxite, with Malaysia now the second largest exporter to China, after Australia [30].

ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) has provided a platform for China to expand its economics power in the region. By focusing on Malaysia, China could utilize Malaysia as the main mover for expansion into the Pacific region besides the Asian market. Beside trades, China also benefitted from various projects in Malaysia such as big steel project in Terengganu and the Penang Second Bridge and off late Malaysia’s outward flow of FDI from China has been increasing due to China’s heavy investment in various projects such as MRT project, Iskandar Johor project, Kuantan Industrial Park and Malacca Gateway project.

Geo-Strategic Importance

Malaysia’s location at the central of South East Asian Countries has provided geo-strategic importance to China as Malacca Straits is the main trade route linking China with European countries and Middle East. Besides that, China also is promoting its ‘Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)’ which was first announced in 2013 by China’s President Xi Jinping [31]. It aims at reviving the ancient trade route between Asia and Europe. This strategy will see Chinese corporations building roads, railway lines, ports and power grids badly needed in many parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Malaysia is one of the countries that falls into the route.

‘One China Policy’

China is seeking support on the Taiwan’s issue where on Taiwan’s status standpoint; Malaysia is strictly adhering to the “One-China Policy” and continues to uphold the principle that Taiwan is part of China [32]. Malaysia has left both sides to resolve their differences peacefully and China appreciates Malaysia’s support on these issues and values its overall relationship with Malaysia. During Tun Mahathir’s first tenure as the Prime Minister, Malaysia was a soul mate of international politics & regional affairs to China where he formed a new form of regionalism (1990s) that centred East Asia instead of Asia Pacific and had political discomfort with the US.

ISSUES INVOLVING MALAYSIA AND CHINA

Overlapping claims in the South China Sea remains the only potential flashpoint in Malaysia-China relations. The sovereignty dispute in the South China Sea nearly erupted into a critical problem when Malaysia and Vietnam tendered a joint petition to dispute China's territorial boundary claim in the South China Sea in May 2009. This drew strong response from Beijing as it rebuked the argument presented by Malaysia and Vietnam and asked the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) not to review the submission. Beijing was successful in overturning the petition but it seemed to have left a dent on Malaysia-China relations. Nevertheless, this was quickly fixed first by Wen Jiabao when he assured his Malaysian counterpart that China would continue to adhere to the Declaration of Conduct on the South China Sea shortly after Najib's visit to Beijing [33]. As for Malaysia, it expects China to resolve the issue in a peaceful manner and act rationally in accordance of its perception as the big power in the region since both Malaysia and China have to exert greater efforts to expand mutual trust, promote mutual understanding of their convergent and economic relations.

Malaysia close links with the US through military cooperation has provided political discomfort for China. Military links with the US are through annual joint military exercise conducted by United States Pacific Fleet known as Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) and through procurement of defence equipment such as the M16 and M4 carbine rifles has placed China's relations with Malaysia on a precaution note. Malaysia is expected to continue with this 'hedging strategy' with the US in order to gain benefit as the US could act as a countervailing power in the region in order to check China's uncertainty action regarding the disputes of South China Sea.

Accordingly, the unresolved mystery disappearance of MH 370 caused rifts between both nations as China initially was not convinced with the way Malaysia handled the issue because of the many 'unknowns' (lack of information). However, the discomfort was resolved when the government up and explained the actual situation to the public.

Off recently, Malaysia's cancellation of three China mega projects as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had created propaganda that it will frost the relationship between both countries. These projects include the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) and two gas pipelines, the Multi-Product Pipeline (MPP) and Trans-Sabah Gas Pipeline (TSGP). The ECRL was being constructed by China Communications Construction Co Ltd stretching 430 miles from South China Sea to the Straits of Malacca shipping routes. The MPP was a 372-mile multi-product petroleum pipeline connecting Melaka and Port Dickson to Jitra, whereas the TSGP was a 411-mile gas pipeline connecting the Kimanis Gas Terminal to Sandakan and Tawau [34]. The present government claimed that the projects are surrounded by controversies with the misuse of funds and corruptions. Having said that, the 'old and new Prime Minister' Tun Mahathir did not blame China on the blunder, instead it was laid on the previous government. With the national debt is on the rise, the projects are called off for the time being until feasibility study is done

by the present government. This was well explained by Tun Mahathir to President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. He also stressed that China will always be Malaysia’s key trading partner. China through its ambassador also assured that they are looking forward to forging closer cooperation with Malaysia to end the speculated saga between the countries [35].

CONCLUSION

The seed of Malaysia-China political and economic convergence were sown in the 1980s, the relationship only began to discernibly bear fruit after the cold war and has grown to be a very unique based on the view that relationship between major powers towards a small country. This diplomatic relation has really grown into a matured partnership over the past 40 years and it has been synchronized within the political, economic and military agenda. As English Statesman, Lord Pharameston said ‘nations have no permanent friend or enemy, they only have permanent interest’ directly resembles both nations’ reasons for engaging each other. It is obvious that the benefits attained significantly over the years are mainly with respect to expanding each other’s economic viability and prosperity. In summary, Malaysia is expected to continue with its ‘hedging’ approach through maximising and benefiting from economic & diplomatic developments with China while still maintaining military links with the US.

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