Seeking Security under the Aegis of Two Great Powers:

Singapore's Defence Policy from 1965 to 1975

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Abbreviations

AMDA	Anglo-Malayan Defence Arrangement
ANZUK	Australian, New Zealand, United Kingdom
APCs	Armoured Personnel Carriers
BNI	Bank Negara Indonesia
BOC	Bank of China
BS	Barisan Sosialis
CCG	Commonwealth Consultative Group
CEV	Combat Engineer Vehicles
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
LAS	Lockheed Aircraft Services
LST	Landing Ship Tank
MGB	Missile Gunboat
PAP	People's Action Party
R&R	Rest and Recuperation
SADC	Singapore Air Defence Command
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UN	United Nations
US	United States

Abstract

Singapore's separation from Malaysia on 9 August 1965 was a mutually agreed outcome after several secret negotiations between the political leaders from both states. Singapore, however, felt vulnerable against Malaysia and another of its nearby neighbour, Indonesia, and this insecurity compelled it to look to extra-regional power for security. Singapore's sense of vulnerability was framed by its security dilemma, which in turn was shaped by historical antagonism against Malaysia and Indonesia, along with Singapore's singular status as a Chinese-majority country situated between two Malay-Muslim majority states.

Applying small states security and security dilemma frameworks, this thesis explores Singapore's reliance on two great powers, Britain and United States (US), for security against external threats during the first ten years of its independence. Reviewing both primary and secondary sources, this thesis examines the foundations of Singapore's security dilemma against its two larger and ethnically different neighbouring states, and its defence policy through the lens of diplomacy and deterrence.

Singapore's twin pillars of defence policy, diplomacy and deterrence, were shaped on the basis of close relations with Britain and US. On the diplomatic front, Singapore navigated two contradictory policies at the onset of its independence - non-alignment and close relations with two great powers. While on the surface Singapore was seemed to be pursuing non-alignment as its foreign policy, greater weight was given to its relations with Britain and US as they provided a more tangible security umbrella for the country. Britain had defended Singapore before and after its independence against an actual Indonesian military hostility, and also averted an impending Malaysian military intervention in the months after Singapore's independence. Britain's withdrawal from its bases in Singapore from 1968 to 1971 gave the impetus for Singapore to develop further its relations with US. Through diplomacy, military relations with Britain however, continued beyond 1971 through the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), while at the same time its defence relations with US was deepened.

Strong diplomatic relations with the two great powers also gave strength to the second pillar of Singapore's defence policy - deterrence. Both Britain and US gave Singapore access to their military armaments and technology, which allowed the country to attain military superiority over Malaysia and Indonesia within ten years. By 1975, Singapore's military strength gave its leaders the confidence to consider military intervention in Malaysia if there was a need to. This research concludes that the role of two great powers, Britain and US, was critical to the security of Singapore in the first ten years of its independence. The umbrella of security imparted by the great powers gave Singapore the time and resources to build up its defence capabilities to defend itself against external threats.

Declaration of Original Work

'I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.'

Sign:

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Chapter One
Introduction

> I am going to defend myself to the best of my ability. And since the best of my ability is not equal to the best of other chaps' abilities, I am going to get whatever help from whoever I can get it, to make it as good as their abilities and better. And if it is better than the abilities of those who intend to involve me in such a military entanglement, then I will have peace.
>
> Lee Kuan Yew
> Singapore's first Prime Minister[1]
> 3 September 1966.

Singapore had been founded as a British trading port by Stamford Raffles in 1819,[2] and officially came under Britain's rule through the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824.[3] Britain's colonial rule in Singapore, interrupted by Japanese occupation during World War Two from 1942 to 1945, ended when Singapore merged with Malaya to form the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. Political, economic and security disputes led to the Singapore's separation from Malaysia on 9 August 1965. Contrary to earlier discourse that Singapore was ejected from Malaysia,[4] the separation in fact was a mutually agreed outcome after months of secret negotiations involving a small group of leaders from both states to manage the escalating tension between them. Singapore's independence, however, took place during a tumultuous period within Southeast Asia. Apart from confronting a hostile Malaysia after a difficult political union, Singapore was facing a low intensity military conflict, known as *konfrontasi,* against Indonesia.[5] At the same time, Singapore had to face a Southeast Asia plagued by inter-states tension and conflicts: Communist North Vietnam was battling the American backed South Vietnam;[6] and Malaysia-Philippines relations were tense due to Philippines' claim over Sabah, a Malaysian state situated in the north of Borneo.[7]

To compound further Singapore's fear of external threats to its security, the only military presence in Singapore on its independence day were foreign: Britain, a great power and former colonial ruler; and Malaysia. Britain's military presence in Singapore afforded the island with military and

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[1] Lee, Kuan Yew - Transcript of a Press Conference by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Hyderabad House, New Delhi, 3 September 1966, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 10 August 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/record-details/7403d383-115d-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad

[2] Dobbs, Stephen, "The Singapore River/Port in a Global Context" in Heng, Derek and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (eds)**,** *Singapore in Global History Global Connections*, (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2011) p 52.

[3] Baker, Jim, *Crossroads: A Popular History of Malaysia & Singapore*, (Marshall Cavendish International, Singapore, 2008), p 89.

[4] The earlier conventional discourse was that Singapore did not anticipate or actively sought independence from Malaysia. See for example, Chandler, David P, *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987), p 415 and Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy: Coping with Vulnerability*, (Routledge, London, 2000), p 14.

[5] Huxley, Tim, *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore*, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001), p 42.

[6] Leifer, Michael, "Southeast Asia" in Chin, Kin Wah and Leo Suryadinata (eds), *Michael Leifer: Selected Works on Southeast Asia*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2005), p 12.

[7] Leifer, Michael, "Regional Association: Sources of Conflict" in Chin, Kin Wah and Leo Suryadinata (eds), *Michael Leifer: Selected Works on Southeast Asia*, pp 58-59.

economic security,[8] but that security was short-lived. In 1967, Britain announced its plan to withdraw from its bases in Singapore by mid-1970s. Britain's withdrawal, seen as a betrayal by Singapore, was brought forward to 1971 due to dire economic circumstances in Britain following the collapse of the British sterling.[9] The departure of Britain from Singapore, however, did not put Singapore's security at stake. By then, Singapore had established a strong relationship with United States (US), whose active presence in Southeast Asia in the 1960s was to contain the spread of communism in the region.[10] The era of US dominant presence in Southeast Asia came to an end in 1975 with communist forces victory in Indochina.[11] Thus the period 1965-1975 was a challenging period for Singapore's security planners: the island needed to build up its military capabilities; and managing the shift of reliance for security from one great power to another.

As it viewed the immediate region as a threat to its security, this thesis explores Singapore's reliance on extra-regional power, particularly Britain and US, for security from 1965 to 1975. The central argument of this thesis is that although Singapore claimed to be a neutral and non-aligned state, it placed more emphasis on relations with Britain and US for security against external threat originating from the immediate region.

Vulnerability

One recurring narrative on Singapore's history is the island's sense of vulnerability against its two larger and ethnically different neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. In his book *Defending the Lion City*, Huxley opined that Singapore's unstable relationship with its two larger Malay-Muslim neighbours was the most pressing external environment concern for the island-state.[12] This argument is supported by Rolls, who argued that while Singapore's military development during the Second Cold War period was targeted against a possible Vietnamese/Soviet threat, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) was also geared to counter the Malaysian military capability improvement program.[13]

Singapore's sense of vulnerability, especially to Malaysia, also arises out of its dependency on imported resources from its neighbours. Both Kwek and Liow commented that Singapore's reliance on

[8] Morrison, Charles Edward and Astri Suhrke, *Strategies of Survival: The Foreign Policy Dilemmas of Smaller Asian States*, (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978), p 181.

[9] Longinotti, Edward, "Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez: From Economic Determinism to Political Choice", *Contemporary British History 29.3* (2015), pp 332-333.

[10] Dreisbach, Kai, "Between SEATO and ASEAN: The United States and the regional organization of Southeast Asia", in Frey et al (eds), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia: International Perspectives in Decolonization*, (ME Sharpe, New York, 2003), pp 251-252. See also Ball, George, "US Policy in Southeast Asia", Confidential, Airgram, 9 July 1964, US Department of State, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) collection: Philippines. In the document, the US State Department addressed the main US objective in Southeast Asia during that period was to contain communist aggression.

[11] Address by Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the Press Club Luncheon in Wellington, Monday, 7 April 1975, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 8 Sept 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19750407a.pdf. See also Mauzy, Diane K, and Brian L Job, "US policy in Southeast Asia: Limited Re-Engagement after Years of Benign Neglect", *Asian Survey 47.4* (2007), pp 622-623.

[12] Huxley, Tim, *Defending the Lion City*, p 41.

[13] Rolls, M G, *The Arms Dynamic in Southeast Asia During the Second Cold War*, (Ashgate, Burlington, 2002), p 35. The Second Cold War took place between the later part of 1970s to mid-1980s due to rising US-Soviet tension. See Roberts, Priscilla, *The Cold War*, (The History Press, Glouchestershire, 2013), p 31.

Malaysia for water supply allowed Malaysia to use it as a leverage when dealing with Singapore.[14] The sense of "resource vulnerability" was so critical that Segal suggests the purpose of Singapore building up the SAF, among other things, was to protect its water supply originating from the southern Malaysian state of Johor.[15] If the suggestion is accurate, Singapore's sense of "resource vulnerability" was so acute that it was forced to contemplate a military takeover of Malaysian territory to secure its water supply, despite the fact that such military move would have damaging consequences for both states.

Small States Security

Another approach in analysing Singapore's security strategy is to view it through small states security framework. Early research on small states security, such as the 1971 United Nations (UN) report *Small States & Territories: Status and Problems,* focus on the vulnerabilities of small states and the challenges they face in defence and foreign policies. The main narrative is that small states have undersized state machinery and limited human talents, resulting in them facing vulnerabilities in their foreign relations.[16] Barston noted that small states have limited capacity to advance their interests through foreign policies because of inadequate resources.[17] Another study by the Commonwealth Consultative Group (CCG) addresses the economic, political and military threats from external powers that small states face.[18] This study reveals small states are vulnerable from a military standpoint due to their limited human and economic resources, which are needed to establish a credible defence force to protect their ground, air and maritime interests. [19]

Recent literature has attempted to portray small states as capable in protecting their security. For example, Heng and Syed make a case that small states are able to protect their national interests by shaping international norms through initiatives and involvement in international organisations.[20] Wivel however reasoned that small states' success in international organisations is dependent on how congruent their objectives are to those of great powers, and pointed out that even within the European Union (EU), major powers such as Britain and France, because of their military capabilities, exercised

[14] Kwek, Theophilus and Liow, Joseph Chinyong, "Singapore's Relations With Malaysia and Indonesia", in Desker, Barry and Ang Cheng Guan (eds), *Perspective on the Security of Singapore: The First 50 Years*, (Imperial College Press, Singapore, 2015), p 137.

[15] Segal, Diane, "Singapore's Water Trade with Malaysia and Alternatives", *John F Kennedy School of Government*, (Harvard University, Boston, 2004), p 18.

[16] Rapoport, J, Muteba, E and Therattil, J J, *Small States & Territories: Status and Problems – A UNITAR Study Vol. 27,* (Arno Press, New York, 1971), pp 111-114.

[17] Barston, Ronald P, "The External Relations of Small States", in Schou, August and Arne Olav Brundtland (eds), *Small States in International Relations*, (Almqvist and Wiskell, Stockholm, 1971), p 44.

[18] Commonwealth Secretariat, *Champion of Small States*, Produced on the occasion of the Third Global Biennial Conference on Small States, Saint Lucia 26-27 March 2014, p 1. See also Rajan, M S, "The United Nations and the Security of Small States", *International Studies*, *31*(3) (1994), p 288.

[19] Commonwealth Secretariat, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society,* (Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 1985), p 15.

[20] Heng, Yee-Kuang, and Syed Mohammed Ad'ha Aljunied, "Can Small States Be More than Price Takers in Global Governance?", *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 21.3 (2015), p 448.

more influences in defence and military matters than smaller member-states.[21] In fact, Volker and Singer reiterated the need for small states to leverage on alliances with great powers for security against external threats.[22] Applying the small states security framework on Singapore, we could briefly look at the vulnerabilities Singapore faced during the early years after its independence.

Economic Vulnerability

Small states depend highly on foreign trades or investment primarily due to their tiny domestic market and limited resources,[23] thus exposing them to external dynamics beyond their control. Their economies are also likely to concentrate on a narrow range of products or services, making them more vulnerable to any adverse development in the international market relating to the products or services they produce.[24] In Singapore's case, external circumstances beyond its control threatened its economic survival during the post-independence period. First, the separation from Malaysia in 1965 had cut off the island-state from its economic hinterland.[25] Second, the ongoing *konfrontasi* with Indonesia threatened Singapore's traditional role as a major trading post for Southeast Asia.[26] Third, the impending closure of British military bases in Singapore meant local workers who were directly or indirectly employed by the British military presence would lose their livelihood.[27] Singapore could not influence these events and therefore had to modify its economic policies accordingly to ensure the survival of its economy.

Political Vulnerability

Small states are politically vulnerable to more powerful states. Vital and Wallis observes that small states have difficulty in maintaining their sovereignty due to limited resources (human and/or capital), especially when up against more dominant states.[28] Great powers, because of better access to resources, possess far superior expertise and capacities against small states in foreign relations and intelligence capabilities – the former having a global reach while the latter at regional level at best.[29] Naturally this

[21] Wivel, Anders, "The Security Challenge of Small EU Member States: Interests, Identity and the Development of the EU as a Security Actor", *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 43.2 (2005), pp 395 and 402. See also Thorhallsson, Baldur, and Anders Wivel., "Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like To Know?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs 19.4* (2006), p 658. Both authors observed that large states within the EU attempt to shape the institution to their advantage.

[22] Krause, V and J D Singer, "Minor Powers, Alliance, and Armed Conflict, Some Preliminary Patterns", in Reiter, Eric and H Gartner (eds), *Small States and Alliances*, (Physica-Verlag, Heidelberg, 2001), p 17.

[23] Sutton, Paul, and Anthony Payne, "Lilliput under Threat: The Security Problems of Small Island and Enclave Developing States", *Political Studies* 41.4 (1993). p 582. See also Streeten, Paul, "The Special Problems of Small Countries", *World Development 21.2* (1993), pp 197-198.

[24] Sutton, Paul, and Anthony Payne, "Lilliput under Threat", p 583.

[25] Menon, Ravi, "An Economic History of Singapore: 1965-2065", Keynote Address by Mr Ravi Menon, Managing Director, Monetary Authority of Singapore, at the Singapore Economic Review Conference 2015 on 5 August 2015 (Accessed on 8 August 2016), http://www.mas.gov.sg/News-and-Publications/Speeches-and-Monetary-Policy-Statements/Speeches/2015/An-Economic-History-of-Singapore.aspx

[26] Singapore's Ministry of Trade & Industry, "MTI Insight: 1965-78", (Viewed on 29 July 2016), https://www.mti.gov.sg/MTIInsights/Pages/1965-%E2%80%93-1978.aspx

[27] Ibid.

[28] Vital, D, *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967), p 1. See also Wallis, Joanne, "Small States in a Globalised World: Resilience as a Response to Vulnerability?", *Melbourne Journal of Politics 33* (2008), p 37.

[29] Vital, D, *The Inequality of States*, p 24.

afford great powers more leverage in their relationships with small states, which they could then use to exert political pressure to encroach on the sovereignty of the small states.

In the context of Singapore, its dependency on water, energy and resources from external sources make it very vulnerable to external political pressure from a more dominant power/neighbour. Singapore's dependency on water supply from Malaysia has been used as a leverage by Malaysia to influence Singapore's foreign policy. Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, had threatened to cut water supply to Singapore if the island's foreign policies were found to be damaging to Malaysia.[30] Singapore's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, in fact acknowledged Singapore's political vulnerability to Malaysia. Lee said that Singapore's dependency on Malaysia for its water and trade shaped Singapore's post-independent trade negotiation with Indonesia, a country which Malaysia viewed then as a threat to its security.[31]

Military Vulnerability

Besides having limited resources to build a credible defence capabilities, small states geographical size is another weak point which can be exploited by invading forces. In any military aggression or even a violation of part of its territory by external forces, the rest of the state will be under immediate threat due to the "proximity of the invading forces to the rest of the country".[32] In fact, small states can be overpowered rapidly, such as Germany invasion of Denmark on 9 April 1940,[33] and Iraq invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990.[34] With a land area of about 700 sq km, Singapore does not have strategic depth to absorb any external military attacks. The then Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean highlighted this vulnerability in a speech delivered in 2005:

> There is no natural buffer between the core of our activities and critical infrastructure, and the external environment. Without a hinterland, without strategic depth, we do not have the option of falling back and regrouping to come back from an attack.[35]

[30] Segal, Diane, "Singapore's Water Trade with Malaysia and Alternatives", p 17.

[31] Transcript of an Interview Given by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, to four foreign correspondents on 14 August 1965, at the studios of Television Singapura, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 10 August 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/record-details/740b40f5-115d-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad.

[32] Commonwealth Secretariat, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, p 24.

[33] Hooker Jr, Richard D, and Christopher Coglainese, "Operation Weserubung and the Origins of Joint Warfare", *National Defense Univ, Inst For National Strategic Studies, Washington DC*, (1993), p 105.

[34] BBC News website,"1990: Iraq invades Kuwait", *BBC on This Day (BBC)*, 2 August 1990, (Viewed on 27 July 2016), http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/2/newsid_2526000/2526937.stm.

[35] Teo, Chee Hean, "Defending Singapore: Strategies For A Small State", Speech By Mr Teo Chee Hean, Minister For Defence, at Lunch Talk to the Singapore Press Club, 21 April 2005, 12.30 pm at Raffles Hotel, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 10 Aug 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/view-html?filename=20050421992.htm

In the face of military vulnerability, one way for small states to protect their security against external threats is through alliances with more dominant powers.[36] Ang argues that Singapore's immediate security concerns during the early post-independent period was tilted towards protecting its territorial integrity,[37] and from early on, Singapore's leaders such as Lee Kuan Yew and Goh Keng Swee[38] knew Singapore's defence capabilities limitations, and the need to rely on great powers such as Britain and US to protect its territory from external threats.[39]

In analyzing Singapore's reliance on Britain and US, for its security, primary and secondary evidences, which will include government documents available to the public, transcripts of speeches and interviews, military postures and arms procurements will be analysed.

The next chapter of this thesis examines the sources of Singapore's security dilemma, which compelled the island to look to extra-regional powers for security. Singapore's defence policy, exercised through diplomacy and military deterrence, was therefore anchored on relations with Britain and US.

Chapter Three analyses Singapore's application of diplomacy for its security against external threats. Non-alignment and military reliance with great powers contradict each other, yet Singapore navigated the diplomatic conundrum successfully. Although identified as a non-aligned state, Singapore was able to continue military relations with Britain and developed one with US.

Chapter Four accounts for Britain and US contributions towards Singapore's security, with a focus on Singapore's military deterrence capabilities. Britain had defended Singapore against Indonesia during the *konfrontrasi*, and prevented Malaysia from violating Singapore's sovereignty within a few months after separation. Within ten years of its independence, however, Singapore had achieved military superiority over Malaysia and Indonesia, which was possible through close relations with Britain and US.

This research will conclude that the role of two great powers, Britain and US, was critical to the security of Singapore in the first ten years of its independence. The umbrella of security imparted by the great powers gave Singapore the time and resources to build up its military capability, something which was necessary to wean itself from being dependent on external forces for the defence of its territory.

[36] Wallis, Joanne, "Small States in a Globalised World", p 39.

[37] Ang, Cheng Guan, "Singapore Conception of Security", in Desker, Barry and Ang Cheng Guan (eds), *Perspective on the Security of Singapore: The First 50 Years*, (Imperial College Press, Singapore, 2015), p 3.

[38] Mr Goh Keng Swee was Singapore's first defence minister.

[39] Ang, Cheng Guan, "Singapore Conception of Security", p 7.

Chapter Two
Singapore's Security Dilemma

In its early years of independence, mutual distrust framed Singapore's relations with its two closest neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. Actions taken by all three states in their interactions with each other led to this undesirable outcome. This chapter examines the dynamics of Singapore's relations with Malaysia and Indonesia, and how these relations influenced Singapore's early defence policy. This chapter begins by outlining the security dilemma framework within which Singapore was operating within. The next two parts analyse Singapore's relations with Malaysia and Indonesia. The last part of this chapter addresses a strategic shift in Malaysia-Indonesia's relations in the second-half of the 1960s, and its impact on Singapore.

Security-Dilemma Framework

In the realm of international relations, uncertainty shapes inter-state relations because the decision-makers of one state cannot fully know the intention of the other states' decision-makers.[1] Booth and Wheeler argue that a state's security dilemma is framed at two levels. The first level - 'dilemma of interpretation' – is a situation when an assessment has to be made on the intention/motive of the other states in the absence of a complete picture and full information. The second level – 'dilemma of response' – is the next stage when a state determines how it should respond to the perceived intentions of other states.[2] Using Collins' deterrence model, a state views deterrence as a response in dealing with other states that it assumes have malign intention.[3] The main point of this framework is that mutual distrust between states shapes their engagements with each other.

In the second-half of the 1960s, the behavior of all the three states in the Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia relationship was one out of mutual distrust. In the specific case of Singapore, antagonisms born of recent history, along with Singapore's singular status as a Chinese-majority country situated between two Malay-Muslim majority states, led to its sense of vulnerability.[4] Singapore, with some justifications, viewed that its 'Chinese-identity' would

[1] Booth, Ken, and Nicholas Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation, and Trust in World Politics*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008), p 4.

[2] Ibid, pp 4-5.

[3] Collins, Alan, *Security Dilemmas of Southeast Asia*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2000), p 6.

[4] Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 44.

lead to the new state being associated with the Chinese problem, with which both Malaysia and Indonesia felt threatened.[5] It was in this context that Singapore's security dilemma was formed.

Critical to the understanding of Singapore's ongoing security dilemma is the fact that the People's Action Party (PAP), led by Lee Kuan Yew, has governed Singapore continuously since well before independence, and thus the experiences of the PAP-leadership during the pre- and immediate post-independence period deeply influenced Singapore's defence policy.[6]

Singapore-Malaysia

Singapore gained self-governing status from Britain with the passing of the State of Singapore Act in August 1958, which handed control of all domestic affairs to the island-state.[7] In the 1959 election, the PAP formed the new government after winning 43 out of 51 seats in the Legislative Assembly.[8] The PAP-government then moved to obtain Singapore's independence from Britain and secure economic survival through late entry into the Federation of Malaya as a constituent state.[9]

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the leader of the Federation, had initially resisted merger with Singapore on the ground that a Chinese-majority Singapore would weaken the position of the Malays within Malaya.[10] But Tunku softened his position on the merger because he was concerned that the left-wing Barisan Sosialis (BS) party in Singapore might take power from the PAP, and create a communist state that would pose a security threat to Malaya.[11] Thus on 16 September 1963, Singapore merged with Malaya, along with the North Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak, to form the Federation of Malaysia.

The political union between Singapore and Malaysia in general, and the relations between the PAP-government and Malaysian Central Government led by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in particular, were acrimonious, with communalism often identified as the predominant driver.[12] Central to the argument that communalism was the

[5] Nathan, K S, "Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Retrospect and Prospect", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2002), p 387.

[6] Huxley, Tim, *Defending the Lion City*, p 30.

[7] Turnbull, C M, *A History of Singapore 1819-1975*, (Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1977), p 267.

[8] Yeo, Kim Wah, and Lau, Albert, "From Colonialism to Independence, 1945-1965", in Ernest, C T Chew, and Lee Edwin (eds), *A History of Singapore*, (Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1991), p 138.

[9] Turnball, C M, *A History of Singapore 1819-1975*, pp 273 and 275.

[10] Yeo, Kim Wah, and Lau, Albert, "From Colonialism to Independence, 1945-1965", p 139.

[11] Memo, Kuala Lumpur to State Department, 8 June 1961, 790.00/6-861, Decimal Files, 1960-63, RG 59, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington quoted in Subritzky, John, "Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire in Southeast Asia, 1961–65", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (2000), p 210. See also Sopiee, Mohamed Noordin, *From Malayan Union to Singapore separation: Political unification in the Malaysia region, 1945-65*, (Universiti Malaya Press, Malaysia, 1974) p 142.

[12] Rahim, Lily Zubaidah, *Singapore in the Malay World: Building and Breaching Regional Bridges*, (Routledge, London, 2009), p 41.

primary cause of the tense relations was the fact that both the PAP and UMNO have different principles in governing a multi-racial Malaysia. UMNO viewed the concept of "Malaysian Malaysia" as one where the Malays have special rights, contrary to the PAP's interpretation of equal treatment regardless of race.[13]

The tense relations between both parties led to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia on 9 August 1965. A closer examination of Singapore-Malaysia's relations during the merger reveals that differences over foreign and economic policies had also played an important role in creating a tense relationship between both parties. The Central Government, having experienced domestic and external security threats in the form of communist insurgency (1948-1960) and Indonesia's military aggression or *konfrontasi* (1963-1966), approached Singapore-Malaysia relations from a security-perspective. Singapore, on the other hand, viewed the relations as an economic opportunity to solve its unemployment problems.[14] Malaysia saw the PAP's push for economic gains, especially on trade with Indonesia and China, as detrimental to its security, but Singapore craved closer economic ties with both countries.

Foreign Policy

Prior to the merger with Malaysia in 1963, the PAP-government already had extensive foreign affairs experience. After the Second World War, several governments had established consulates and commissions in Singapore due to its strategic location at the intersection of major shipping and air routes and its role as the de facto capital of British Malaya. By 1963, there were 30 foreign consulates and commissions based on the island.[15] Singapore's position as a preferred stop-over location for foreign leaders visiting Southeast Asia also allowed the PAP-government to meet and establish contacts with them.[16] The PAP-government also undertook overseas missions to advance Singapore's interests.[17] Regular engagements with foreign diplomatic and political leaders therefore gave the PAP- government confidence and experience in foreign relations, which was a problem once Singapore joined Malaysia.

The terms of merger with Malaysia dictated that PAP-government gave up control over defence, security and foreign affairs to the Central Government.[18] The PAP, in power as a state

[13] Jones, Matthew, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002), p 273.

[14] Wee Hong-Ling, "Redefining Hinterland: The Singapore Experience", *Middle States Geographer 28* (1995), p 69. See also Lee, Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, (Times Edition, Singapore, 1998), pp 346-347.

[15] Wilairat, Kawin, *Singapore's Foreign Policy Vol. 10*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1975), p 1.

[16] Ibid, p 2.

[17] Josey, Alex, *Lee Kuan Yew*, (Donald Moore Press, Singapore, 1968), pp 221, 229-231.

[18] Wilairat, Kawin, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 13.

government, however, had attempted to shape the Central Government's foreign policy. The PAP-government pushed for Malaysia to forge closer relations with Afro-Asian, Non-Aligned countries and communist states.[19] The PAP-government argued that Indonesia had been successful in its diplomatic maneuver to garner support from Afro-Asian, Non-Aligned and communist states against Malaysia, and Malaysia needed to respond.[20]

The Central Government also accused the PAP-government of leveraging on its relations with foreign governments and media to challenge the Central Government's domestic policies. For instance, Lee highlighted the racial tension between the different ethnic groups within Malaysia and advanced the PAP-government's version of 'Malaysian Malaysia' to foreign press during a trip to Australia and New Zealand in early 1965, thus drawing condemnation and accusation from the Central Government that Lee was a traitor to Malaysia.[21]

Economic Policy

Singapore's merger with Malaysia also led to conflict over economic policies per se. The ideology of open trade with other states regardless of political differences was a central principle of the PAP-government's approach, but it stood in contrast to the Central Government's practice of meshing political factors and its trade policies. A prime point of contention was Singapore's effort to maintain its position as an entrepot centre in Southeast Asia. To this end, the PAP-government attempted to maintain the barter trade system with Indonesian traders, even during the *Konfrontasi* period, and despite Jakarta's embargo on trade with Singapore.[22] Due to security concerns, the Central Government banned Singapore from continuing its barter trade with Indonesian traders that manage to evade Jakarta's embargo.[23]

The Central Government's watched over the banking sector in Singapore from a security-lens too. Tunku in December 1963 objected to the Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI) and Bank of China (BOC) operations in Singapore as they posed a threat to Malaysia's security.[24] Lee challenged the notion that BOC's operations threatened Malaysia's security, although there

[19] The Straits Times, "Dr. Toh calls for re-orientation of foreign policy", 31 December 1964, p 5. See also The Straits Times, "Dr. Goh on the good Red nations", 19 December 1964, p 11. Singapore's then Finance Minister, Dr Goh Keng Swee, had argued that that there were good communist countries which Malaysia should consider establishing diplomatic relation with.

[20] Wilairat, Kawin, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, pp 19-20.

[21] The Straits Times, "Alliance's opening gun bombards Front, PAP and trade unions", 27 May 1965, p 13. In this article, Lee was accused by Mahathir Mohammed, a Malaysian Member of Parliament, of using foreign governments to influence the Central Government over policies which the PAP disagreed with. Mahathir was later on appointed as the Malaysian Prime Minister in 1981.

[22] Wilairat, Kawin, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 26.

[23] Ibid, p 27.

[24] The Straits Times, "Tengku in Singapore calls for unity", 28 September 1963, p 1.

were allegations that China could be funding communist and subversive elements within Malaysia through the BOC branch in Singapore.[25] Lee argued that BOC's operations facilitated China's trade with Singapore, which had already been affected by the *konfrontasi*.[26]

The PAP-government was further frustrated by the Central Government's slow response to facilitate Singapore's industrialization efforts,[27] and failure to establish a common market in Malaysia into which Singapore could market its products.[28] Singapore also disagreed with the unilateral imposition of additional duties and taxes on Singapore by the Central Government.[29]

A combination of conflicts over communal-relations, foreign and economic policies during the merger sowed the seed of mutual distrust between Singapore and Malaysia to the extent that preparations were made for Rajaratnam, then Singapore's Minister for Culture, to lead a Singapore Government-in-Exile in Cambodia if the Central Government decided to crack down on the PAP-government.[30] Tunku however felt that it was better for Singapore to exit from Malaysia; and subsequently a small group of top leadership from the PAP and Central governments negotiated secretly for Singapore's peaceful exit from Malaysia.[31]

Separation

Singapore-Malaysia relations after the separation fed the cycle of distrust that had already existed. Malaysia was not comfortable with independent Singapore's foreign and defence policies that might be detrimental to its security, and therefore saw the need to deploy its

[25] The Straits Times, "Closure of bank may lead to no trade with China: Lee", 24 June 1965, p 18.

[26] Yeo, Kim Wah, and Lau, Albert, "From Colonialism to Independence, 1945-1965", p 144.

[27] Janadas, Devan, "Singapore could have become 'one country, two systems' within Malaysia, not sovereign country", The Straits Times, 28 January 2015. The Singapore's Economic Development Board (EDB) sought to award tax-free status of up to 10 years to new investors as part of its strategy to attract new investors. However, the Central Government only cleared 2 out of 69 applications in the period when Singapore was part of Malaysia.

[28] Chan, Heng Chee, *Singapore: The Politics of Survival, 1965-1967*, (Oxford University Press, Singapore & Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p 7.

[29] Ibid, p 7.

[30] Drysdale, John, *Singapore Struggle for Success*, (George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1984), p 380.

[31] Contrary to early narratives that Singapore's exit from Malaysia was a sudden directive from the Central Government to Singapore, Melanie Chew in her book argued otherwise. See Chew, Melanie, *Leaders of Singapore*, (World Scientific, Singapore, 2015) p 132-133. Goh Keng Swee (Singapore's first defence minister) had conducted secret negotiation with Tun Abdul Razak, then Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, for the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. Unclassified documents of Goh (nicknamed Albatross File) was put on displayed at the Singapore's National Museum, Exhibit "We Built a Nation" on December 2015. The author had visited the exhibits on 20 January 2017 and noted 3 items from the file was put on display. The first item was Goh's handwritten note of his meeting with Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister on 20 July 1965 – the note established that the separation was not imposed on Singapore, but was an "outcome of a carefully and intentionally negotiated by a small group of Singapore's leaders". The second note was Lee's authorization letter for Goh to negotiate with the Malaysian on behalf of Lee dated 26 July 1965. The third item was Lee's analysis on the possible outcomes for Singapore's exit from Malaysia. See also, Lim, Edmund, "Secret documents reveal extent of negotiations for Separation", *The Straits Times online*, 22 December 2015, (Accessed on 19 November 2016), <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/secret-documents-reveal-extent-of-negotiations-for-separation>. Other reference include National Museum of Singapore's press release, "A Special Exhibition on Singapore's Founding Leaders Opens at the National Museum of Singapore", Annex B1 and C1, (Accessed on 19 November 2016), http://nationalmuseum.sg/~/media/nms/documents/we-built-a-nation_media%20release_20150920.pdf. The Australian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur was also briefed by the Malaysian Government on 16 August 1965 on the discussion between Singapore and Malaysia leading to the separation. See "Cablegram from Critchley to Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, 16 August 1965, No 1795", in Dee, Moreen (ed), *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961-1966*, (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2005), pp 488-489.

military forces in Singapore after the separation.[32] Malaysia had stationed its troops in Singapore when the island was part of Malaysia.[33] The PAP-government had agreed under the Separation Agreement to allow Malaysia to continue stationing its military in Singapore for external defence.[34] Singapore's negative attitude towards Malaysian military presence on the island, however, raised Malaysia's doubt on Singapore's sincerity towards their bilateral-relations. Tension arose when in February 1966, Malaysia turned down Singapore's request to vacate a military barrack in Holland Road for a Singapore infantry unit returning from a deployment in the Malaysian-state of Sabah.[35] Lee also questioned Malaysia's motive for continuing its military presence in Singapore, which was now a separate sovereign state,[36] and viewed the Malaysian troops as a security threat.[37]

Malaysia's behavior towards Singapore created suspicion too. When Singapore's parliament session opened in December 1965, the most senior Malaysian army officer in Singapore told Lee that he had received instruction from Tunku to provide military escorts for Lee to the Singapore's Parliament, a request to which Lee acceded unwillingly.[38] Lee interpreted Malaysia's behavior as an attempt to exert its influence in Singapore, and resulted in suspicion and fears that Malaysia would use its military to dominate the island.[39] The political situation in Malaysia after the Separation also added to Singapore's fear that its sovereignty was at risk. Tunku's decision to allow the separation of Singapore from Malaysia was not widely accepted within UMNO, and there was a possibility that extremist UMNO members might replace Tunku and instigate for Singapore to be brought back into the Federation by military force.[40]

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[32] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia And Singapore: The Transformation of a Security System 1957-1971,* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983), p 117.

[33] Datta-Ray, Sunanda K, *Looking East to Look West: Lee Kuan Yew's Mission India,* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2009), p 122.

[34] United Nations Treaty Series, "Malaysia and Singapore: Agreement on Separation and Independence of Singapore Treaties and Agreements", United Nations (1965). Article V subsection 3 stated; The Government of Singapore will afford to the Government of Malaysia the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities used by its military forces within Singapore and will permit the Government of Malaysia to make such use of these bases and facilities as the Government of Malaysia may consider necessary for the purpose of external defence.

[35] Teo, Alden, "1963 - Pioneering Spirit of 2 SIR", 7 April 1999, Singapore's Defence Ministry website (Retrieved on 9 Nov 2016), <https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/about_us/history/overview/birth_of_saf/v03n04_history.print.img.html>. See also

[36] Datta-Ray, Sunanda K, *Looking East to Look West: Lee Kuan Yew's Mission India,* p 122.

[37] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia And Singapore,* p 117.

[38] Datta-Ray, Sunanda K, *Looking East to Look West,* p 123.

[39] Singapore Ministry of Defence's website, *Creating the Singapore Armed Forces,* (Retrieved on 29 Oct 2016), <https://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/one-of-kind-2nd-ed2015/chp/007_creatingSAF.pdf>.

[40] Loo, Bernard Fook Weng, "Goh Keng Swee and the Emergence of a Modern SAF: The Rearing of a Poisonous Shrimp", in Chew, Emrys, and Kwa Chong Guan (eds), *Goh Keng Swee: A Legacy Of Public Service,* (World Scientific, Singapore, 2012), p 132.

Singapore-Indonesia

Singapore-Indonesia relations in the late 1950s to 1960s were also shaped by distrust.[41] Between 1958-1959, US had used Singapore, then a British-colony, as a base to provide funding and weapons to Sumatran rebels fighting against the Indonesian central government based in Jakarta, thus straining Singapore-Indonesia's relations long before Singapore obtained self-governance status.[42]

Once the PAP took over power in 1959, Lee attempted to impress upon the Indonesian that Singapore was not a threat to its security. To show Singapore's support for Indonesia's interests, Lee expressed his backing for Indonesia's effort to claim West Irian from the Dutch during his visit to Jakarta in 1960.[43]

By 1963, Singapore's relations with Indonesia had taken for the worse. Singapore's independence from Britain through the merger with Malaysia pushed Singapore-Indonesia's relations into a crisis mode. Indonesia, then under President Sukarno, viewed the Western powers as a security threat,[44] and the constitutional settlements on statehood between Malaysia, Singapore and Britain as an extension of colonial attempt to exert influence in the region.[45] The extension of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Arrangement (AMDA), a guarantee of Britain's military protection for peninsula Malaya, to Singapore, Serawak and Sabah, was also seen as a military threat to Indonesia's security.[46]

Indonesia's launched *konfrontasi* on 20 January 1963, and subsequently, Indonesian army regulars, while posing as local insurgents, began infiltrating into Malaysia to create chaos.[47] Singapore was not exempted from the conflict: Indonesian military personnel disguising as civilians were believed to be responsible for a racial riot on 4 September 1964;

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[41] Lee, T C L, "Explaining Indonesia's Relations with Singapore during the New Order Period: The Case of Regime Maintenance and Foreign Policy", *RSIS Working Paper, No. 10, Singapore: Nanyang Technological University*, (2001), p 1.

[42] Liow, Joseph Chinyong, *The Politics of Indonesia-Malaysia Relations: One Kin, Two Nations*, (Routledge, London, 2004), p 89. For detail study on Singapore's role in the Sumatran rebellion, see also Kahin, Audrey, and George McTurnan Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: the Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia*, (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997), pp 120-121. The worsening Singapore-Indonesian relations had resulted in Singapore-Indonesia's trade to drop by about 50% within 6 months in the year 1958. See The Straits Times, "Trade? Stop Rebels", 17 December 1958, p 1.

[43] Lee, Kuan Yew, "Prime Minister Farewell Speech at Jakarta", 26 January 1960, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Retrieved on 2 Nov 2016), <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19600126.pdf>.

[44] Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto: Aspiring to International Leadership*, (Times Academic Press, Singapore, 1996), p 11.

[45] Turnbull, C M, "Regionalism and Nationalism", in Tarling, Nicholas (ed), *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia vol. 2* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), p 612.

[46] Ibid, p 613.

[47] Subritzky, John, "Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire in Southeast Asia, 1961–65", pp 213-214.

and several landings by Indonesian forces were attempted on Singapore between November and December 1964.[48]

Singapore-Indonesia relations did not thaw immediately after *Konfrontasi* ended in 1966. On 10 May 1965, two Indonesian marines exploded bombs at Macdonald House in Singapore, killing two persons and injured 33 others.[49] The two marines were captured by Singaporean authorities shortly afterwards and executed in 1968, despite leniency pleas by the Indonesian government, after which a mob sacked the Singapore's embassy in Jakarta. Singapore's relations with Indonesia recovered only in 1973 after Lee's scattered flowers on the graves of the two marines during a visit to Indonesia.[50]

Malaysia-Indonesia Relations: Strategic Shift

The strategic shift in Malaysia-Indonesia relations during the post-*Konfrontasi* period had also influenced Singapore's perception of both Malaysia and Indonesia as a threat. Singapore became independent while *konfrontasi* was still ongoing, but Singapore was keen to establish relations with Indonesia because of the economic potential of barter trade with that country.[51] In response, Malaysia threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Singapore if it established relations with Indonesia.[52] Malaysia also pressured Singapore to reject Indonesia's recognition of its independence: security checks were imposed on 16-17 April 1966 at the causeway linking both states; and travel restrictions against Singaporean citizens travelling to Malaysia were enforced.[53]

While Malaysia opposed Singapore's attempt at establishing relations with Indonesia, it was clandestinely negotiating with Indonesia to end the *konfrontasi*.[54] The concept of blood-brotherhood, espoused by both Malaysia and Indonesia as a basis to end *konfrontasi*, was a strategic shift of Malaysia-Indonesia relations towards one which was based on regional Malay-hegemony to curtail the influence of the Chinese in the region.[55] As reflected by an Australia intelligence report in 1966, regional Malay-hegemony was an "element of encircling Singapore

[48] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "Konfrontasi: Why it still matters to Singapore", *Rajaratnam School of International Studies, RSIS Commentaries, No. 054 – 16* (March 2015).

[49] The Straits Times, "Terror Bomb Kills 2 Girls At Bank", 11 March 1965, p 1.

[50] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "Konfrontasi: Why it still matters to Singapore".

[51] Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 57. See also "Transcript of an Interview Given by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, to four foreign correspondents on 14 August 1965, at the studios of Television Singapura", National Archives of Singapore's website, (Viewed on 5 November 2016), <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/record-details/740b40f5-115d-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad>.

[52] Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 57.

[53] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia And Singapore*, p 119.

[54] Ibid, pp 119-120.

[55] Liow, Joseph Chinyong, *The Politics of Indonesia-Malaysia Relations*, p 108.

in their (Malaysia) current thinking … a deal with Indonesia that will keep the Chinese in their place and permanently ensure Malay-hegemony in this area…".[56]

The strategic shift towards a regional Malay-hegemony did not take place in a vacuum. Between July-August 1963 and in response to increasing Chinese presence in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, the three states formed MAPHILINDO, a confederation to bring the three states closer on the basis of Malay-unity.[57] While MAPHILINDO failed to take off with the formation of Malaysia, the ideology of Malay-unity gained traction again in the post-*konfrontasi* period.

Historically, both Malaysia and Indonesia had faced threats from domestic communist movements backed by communist-China.[58] After *konfrontasi* ended, both states were facing insurgency along their common border in Borneo. While the insurgency was a mixture of anti-colonial, anti-Malaysia and Indonesian-communists elements, it was then viewed as a single insurgent movement backed by communist-China.[59] The insurgency therefore had morphed into a battleground between ethnic Chinese insurgency backed by communist China against the Malay-led government in both states. Sentiments against the Chinese were high in both states, resulting in security operations targeting the Chinese community.[60]

The insurgents regularly launched attacks along the common border between Malaysia and Indonesia, leading to a closer military ties between both states by 1967.[61] Joint military operations and shared intelligence against the insurgents were conducted; Indonesian troops were using Malaysian army bases in Sarawak as supply points for their operations in the Indonesia's part of Borneo; and both states allowed their troops to cross into each other territory to pursue the insurgents.[62] The close military relations between both states were startling because up until 1966, their militaries were fighting each other along their common border in

[56] Ibid, p 108.

[57] Ibid, pp 100-101.

[58] According to Alexander, many Chinese Indonesian in 1965 were open communists or communist sympathizers. There were more than 1 million Chinese in Indonesia who insisted on being Chinese citizens and carrying Chinese passports under the Indonesia-China Dual-Nationality Agreement. The agreement was repealed in 1969 and all Chinese were advised to take up Indonesian citizenship. See Alexander, Garth, *The Invisible China: The Overseas Chinese and the Politics of Southeast Asia*, (Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1974) p 138. In the case of Malaysia, it had faced communist insurgency between 1948-1960. The threats from Chinese community in Malaya supporting the communist insurgency was real that the British had deported Chinese squatters to China between 1948 to 1953. See Chin, Low Choo, "The Repatriation of the Chinese as A Counter-Insurgency Policy during the Malayan Emergency", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 45.03* (2014).

[59] Davidson, Jamie S, and Douglas Kammen, "Indonesia's Unknown War and the Lineages of Violence in West Kalimantan", *Indonesia 73* (2002), p 58. The Indonesian government mistakenly identified two Malaysian Chinese as Communist China's agents operating in Kalimantan to aid the insurgency.

[60] Van der Kroef, Justus M, "The Sarawak-Indonesian Border Insurgency", *Modern Asian Studies, Vol 2(3),* (1968), p 255.

[61] Liow, Joseph Chinyong, *The Politics of Indonesia-Malaysia Relations*, pp 108-109.

[62] Ibid, p 108, 109. See also Van der Kroef, Justus M, "The Sarawak-Indonesian Border Insurgency", pp 245 and 257.

Borneo. Yet a year later, the two former enemies were fighting shoulder-to-shoulder on the same battlefield against a common, but ethnically different enemy.

The shift of Malaysia-Indonesia relations on the basis of Malay-hegemony placed a Chinese-majority Singapore in a difficult position, as reflected in a statement by an Indonesian official in 1968 that "Singapore would need to adjust its relations with Malaysia and Indonesia in order to fit in with the circumstances of the region".[63] The close Malaysia-Indonesia military alliance seen in Borneo from 1967 onwards could also be turned against Singapore. The fear of such possibility formed the cornerstone for some of Singapore's defence policy during the post-independent period: the expansion of its military capabilities;[64] and the total exclusion of Singapore Malay citizens from compulsory military service in the late 1960s to the early 1970s.[65]

The actions by Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, before and after Singapore's independence, fed the cycle of mutual distrust among the three states. Beside communalism, Singapore's 'quasi-independent' foreign and economic policies while it was part of Malaysia, created suspicion on Singapore's motives towards the Federation. Malaysia's clandestine negotiations with Indonesia to end *konfrontasi*, while at the same time blocking Singapore's attempt to establish relations with Indonesia, was deceitful. Indonesia viewed Singapore as a threat even while it was still a Crown Colony. Indonesia's military aggression in Singapore's during *konfrontasi* led Singapore to perceive that Indonesia was potentially aggressive with an expansionist outlook.[66] The ideology of regional Malay-hegemony, existed long before Singapore's independence, became a reality in the post-*konfrontasi* period through closer Malaysia-Indonesia foreign and military relations. Historical antagonism and ethnic-distinction therefore shaped Singapore's security dilemma against Malaysia and Indonesia. These factors influenced Singapore's early diplomatic moves, which is discussed in the next chapter.

[63] Liow, Joseph Chinyong, *The Politics of Indonesia-Malaysia Relations*, p 115.

[64] Ibid, p 115.

[65] Barr, Michael D, and Zlatko Skrbiš, *Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-Building Project, No. 11* (Nias Press, Copenhagen, 2008), p 218.

[66] Hamilton-Hart, Natasha, "Indonesia-Singapore Relations", in Ganesan, Narayanan, and Ramses Amer (eds), *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism And Multilateralism*, (Institute of Southeast Asian, Singapore, 2010), p 204.

Chapter 3
Diplomacy: Illusion of Non-Alignment and Great Powers

Singapore's security dilemma shaped its perception that Malaysia and Indonesia were the primary threats to its security.[1] Singapore drew upon a combination of diplomacy and deterrence strategies to deal with these threats, and they came to form the twin pillars of its defence policy.[2] This chapter analyses Singapore's diplomatic response to its security dilemma, arguing that Singapore's diplomatic stance at the onset of independence as a neutral, non-aligned state was illusory. In reality, Singapore placed more emphasis on its relations with two great powers, Britain and US.

The first part of this chapter analyses Singapore's response to its security dilemma within the small states security framework. The next two parts discuss Singapore's non-alignment policy and its relations with Britain and US respectively.

Small States Security Framework

Rickli argues that a small state has two security options due to its lack of resources – maximising either its influence or its autonomy. Maximising its influence requires the small state to join an alliance, or adopt a balancing/bandwagon strategy with great powers for its security.[3] The key point of "maximising influence" strategy is for the small state to ally itself with a great power, and in return for the security provided, it will cede parts of its autonomy to the great power.[4] Both Snyder and Gartner address the shortfalls of this strategy: the small state might be drawn into conflicts serving the strategic interest of the great powers alone; and there is no guarantee that the great powers will aid the small state during a conflict.[5]

The second security option is to maximise its autonomy – generally the small state adopts a neutral stance, and removes great powers' role in its security strategy. The small state

[1] Several Singapore's scholars and politicians viewed Malaysia and Indonesia as the primary threats to Singapore's territorial integrity in its early years of independence. For example, see Ang, Cheng Guan, "Malaysia, Singapore, and the Road to the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), July 1970–November 1971", *War & Society 30.3* (2011), p 222. Ang, Cheng Guan, *Lee Kuan Yew's Strategic Thought*, (Routledge, New London, 2013), p 24. Desker, Barry, and Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, "S Rajaratnam and the Making of Singapore Foreign Policy", in Kwa, Chong Guan (ed), *S Rajaratnam on Singapore: From Ideas to Reality*. (World Scientific, Singapore, 2006) p 4. See also S. Rajaratnam's speech quoted in Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 45. Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First*, (Times Edition, Singapore, 2000) p 19 and 262. Singh, Bilveer, *Arming the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF): Trends and Implications*, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2003), pp 18 and 23.

[2] Singapore Armed Forces, *Singapore: Army, National Security and Defence Policy Handbook*, (International Business Publications, Washington, 2007) p 49.

[3] Rickli, Jean-Marc, "European Small States' Military Policies after the Cold War: From Territorial to Niche Strategies", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (2008), 21:3, p 310.

[4] Ibid p 310.

[5] Snyder, Glenn H, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", *World Politics 36.04* (1984), p 467 and Gärtner, Heinz, "Small States and Alliances", in Reiter, Erich and Gartner, Heinze (eds), *Small States and Alliances*, (Physica-Verlag, Heidelberg, 2001), p 2.

does not expect protection from great powers and is less likely to be involved in others' conflicts.[6] Indorf argues conversely that neutrality was insufficient to deter external threats, and a small state must leverage on its resources or relations with great powers to achieve security.[7] Indorf's argument has merit – Cambodia's neutrality in the 1950s-1960s did not stop US and Vietnamese communist forces from violating Cambodia's territory during the Vietnam War.[8] Further back during World War One, Germany did not invade the Netherlands because of its neutrality, but primarily because the 200,000 strong Dutch army would have bogged down Germany forces.[9]

Some scholars argue that the international system's structure is a more critical factor for small states' security. Maass opined that the Cold War that lasted during the post-World War Two period until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and which saw US-Soviet rivalry over ideological differences, made small states' security feasible.[10] Both powers, in their attempts to win over other states into their bloc, or to prevent them from pivoting towards their adversary's orbit, tended to provide security benefits to small states. For example, Iceland obtained security through its alliance with the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) even though its military contribution for its own security was minimal.[11] Hey and Elman supported Maass' argument on the importance of the international system's structure, highlighting that international and regional dynamics constrain and shape small states' foreign policy.[12]

Singapore's diplomatic stance combined both Rickli's security-options – maximising its influence and autonomy. The Cold War period was dominated by rivalry between US-led non-communist bloc against the Soviet-led communist bloc, and non-alignment ideology developed as a product of the Cold War.[13] In the 1950s and 1960s, several newly independent Afro-Asian states that refused to align with either of the superpowers chose non-alignment ideology to assert their independence.[14] After the separation from Malaysia, Singapore declared

[6] Rickli, Jean-Marc, "European Small States' Military Policies after the Cold War", p 310.

[7] Indorf, Hans H, *Strategies for Small State Survival*, (Graham Brash, Singapore 1985), p 14 and 27.

[8] Tully, John, *Short History of Cambodia: From Empire to Survival*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2006), pp 126 and 149.

[9] Abbenhuis, Maartje, *The Art Of Staying Neutral: The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918*, (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2006) pp 31-32.

[10] Maass, Matthias, "Small States: Survival and Proliferation", *International Politics 51.6* (2014), p 721.

[11] Ibid p 721.

[12] Hey, Jeanne A K, *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 2003) p 193. Elman, Miriam Fendius, "The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard", *British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 25, No. 2* (April 1995), pp 175-176.

[13] Keethaponcalan, S I, "Reshaping the Non-Aligned Movement: Challenges and Vision", *Bandung: Journal of the Global South 3.1* (2016), p 4.

itself as a non-aligned state, and yet it relied on Britain and US for its security. These two foreign policy directions, which on the surface seems to be contradictory, served one common purpose – to enhance Singapore's security against external threats.

Illusion of Non-Alignment

Being identified as a neutral non-aligned state was necessary for Singapore in its early years of independence. The most important diplomatic objective for Singapore after the separation from Malaysia was to obtain international recognition of its sovereignty, especially through membership of the UN.[15] Non-alignment ensured international recognition of Singapore's sovereignty and membership to the UN, thus providing diplomatic deterrence against any potential aggressor.

Singapore's admission to the UN could not be taken for granted since several African and South American states, such as Katanga[16] (now part of Congo), had been denied recognition then by the UN as they were unstable, and it was therefore necessary to win supports from the non-aligned states within the UN for a successful admission into the international body.[17] While declaring itself as a non-aligned state,[18] Britain's military presence in Singapore contradicted its claim of non-alignment.[19] There was a need to reinforce Singapore's non-alignment stance amongst the Afro-Asian and non-aligned states. Within a month of independence, Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, launched a public attack on US and Britain: Lee exposed a US attempt to recruit a local security official to provide intelligence on Singapore to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); and threatened to eject Britain from its military bases in Singapore.[20] The hard-line position showcased Singapore's

[14] Ibid, p 5. See also Singham, Arch W, and Shirley Hune, *Non-alignment in an Age of Alignments*, (Lawrence Hill Books, Connecticut, 1986), pp 63 and 68.

[15] Goh, Evelyn and Daniel Chua, *Singapore Chronicles: Diplomacy*, (Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, 2015) p 14. See also Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website , "Opening Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan at the Launch of MFA Exhibition On '50 Years Of Singapore's Foreign Policy" At Capitol Piazza, 1 December 2015, (Accessed on 1 January 2017), https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/media_centre/press_room/pr/2015/201512/press_20151201.html

[16] Gibbs, David N, "Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nations, and the Congo Crisis of 1960–1: A Reinterpretation", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31.01 (1993), p 165 and 167. The UN did not recognized Katanga declaration of independence from Congo on July 1960.

[17] Goh, Evelyn and Daniel Chua, *Singapore Chronicles: Diplomacy*, p 14.

[18] See Transcript of a Press Conference of the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, gave to a group of foreign correspondents on 11 December 1965, at the Television Singapura studios. National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 2 January 2017), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19651211b.pdf. Lee stated: "the Americans now realise that, in certain parts of the world, non-alignment may be a jolly good thing for them, because it saves them the cost of involvement. And it is not all that far-fetched ... Quite a number on the other side of the world -- the Russians and eventually even others besides the Russians -- may decide that non-involvement of countries like Singapore, and even Malaysia, may be in their long-term interests. And that will suit us all fine".

[19] Australia and New Zealand viewed Southeast Asia's stability as crucial to their security. As both had small military forces, Britain's large military presence in the region was important to provide the mass and infrastructure which the Australian and New Zealanders could operate from. Singapore played a critical role in this aspect as it hosted key British naval, army and air bases in the region. See Farrel, Brian P, "What do we do now? British Commonwealth and American Reactions to the Separation of Malaysia and Singapore", *Australian Defence Force Journal Issue 170*, (2006), p 16.

[20] The Straits Times, "Lee: We can tell Britain to quit in 24 hours', 1 September 1965, p 1. During a press interview with the foreign correspondents, Lee Kuan Yew highlighted in 1960, a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent was caught attempting to recruit a local

sovereignty and willingness to stand up against western powers. To further address the concerns on British military presence on the island,[21] Singapore justified that the British military bases was temporary as Singapore was defenceless, and these bases would go once Singapore had the means to defend itself.[22] After obtaining membership of the UN on 21 September 1965, Singapore sent its Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on a mission to several Afro-Asian and non-aligned states to buttress its credential as an independent, neutral state.[23]

Non-alignment also served Singapore at the regional level. Indonesia, pursuing non-alignment, had viewed Singapore as a neo-colony for the British[24] and refused to recognise Singapore's independence initially due to the presence of British bases on the island.[25] Downplaying the presence of British forces in Singapore, taking a non-aligned position, and playing anti-British/US cards, were useful in turning Indonesia from a foe to a friend.[26]

Non-alignment was just a slogan to capture the support of Afro-Asian and non-aligned states. Singapore viewed its relations with Britain and later the US to be more crucial for its security. Lee had assured the British immediately after independent that Singapore needed the British bases for the next 15-20 years.[27] It was economically and militarily perilous for Singapore to expel the British - 50,000 Singaporeans depended on the British bases for their livelihood;[28] and Singapore had only 2 army battalions compared against Malaysian 12 battalions of troops and the 300,000 strong Indonesian army.[29]

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intelligence officer to supply information on Singapore to the CIA. Lee claimed he and the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) was offered $10 million by the US government to keep the matter under wrap, an offer that was turned down. On the issue of British military bases in Singapore, Lee stated his stance that the bases should be used only for the defence of Singapore and Malaysia, and the bases should not be used for offensive purposes against the People's Republic of China and Indonesia. See also Leifer, Michael, *Singapore's Foreign Policy*, p 102.

[21] The non-aligned movement required member-states not to host foreign military bases within their territories in the context of "Great Power" conflicts. See Non-aligned movement website, (Accessed on 2 January 2017), http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/non-aligned-movement-nam/.

[22] Statement of Mr S Rajaratnam Foreign Minister of Singapore at the General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 September 1965 on the Occasion of Singapore's Admission to the United Nations, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 2 January 2017), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/PressR19650921.pdf,

[23] National Archives of Singapore's website, "Making Friends", (Accessed on 3 January 2017), http://www.nas.gov.sg/1stCab/PanelPDF/Section%202%20-%20Making%20Friend%20Panel.pdf. The 16 states visited were: Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia , Uganda, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Britain, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, India, Cambodia, Myanmar (then known as Burma), Thailand.

[24] Kumar, Rajesh, *Non-Alignment Policy of Indonesia*, (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1997), p 97.

[25] Lee, Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, (Marshall Cavendish International Asia, Singapore, 2012), p 652.

[26] On the day of Singapore's independence, then Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, stated his desire to establish friendly relations with Indonesia as early as possible. He stated, "We want to be friends with Indonesia. We have always wanted to be friends with Indonesia. We would like to settle any difficulties and differences with Indonesia'. See Transcript of a Press Conference Given by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, at Broadcasting House, Singapore, at 1200 hours on Monday, 9 August 1965.

[27] Easter, David, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia: 1960-1966*, (Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2004), p 149.

[28] Ang, Cheng Guan, *Lee Kuan Yew's Strategic Thought*, (Routledge, London, 2013) p 27.

[29] Jeshurun, Chandran, *The Growth of the Malaysian Armed Forces 1963-73, Some Foreign Press Reactions, Occasional Paper No. 35* (Institute of Southeast Asian, Singapore, 1975), p 13. Indonesia had 300,000 strong army backed by 400 aircraft. See also Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 68.

Great Powers

During the Cold War, Southeast Asia was a region where major powers competed for influence. Beside the US-Soviet Union rivalry, China and Japan were also competing for influence within the region.[30] The interest of extra-regional powers facilitated Singapore's aim to establish a balance-of-power regional security structure, which meant an international or regional environment where there is no undue dominance of one or more states determining the regional order.[31] Lee believed it was necessary that Singapore "always have overwhelming power" on its side to counter its larger neighbours.[32] It was this belief on having extra-regional power to counter regional threats that Singapore viewed Britain and US as critical to its security.[33] Singapore's foreign policy between 1965-1975 was therefore aimed to anchor Britain and later the US in Southeast Asia.[34]

Importance of Singapore

Singapore was crucial to both Britain's and US' strategic interests even before its independence. Political development in Asia-Pacific during the post-World War Two period, especially China's changeover towards communism in 1949, caused the US to shift attention to Southeast Asia, and the region was subsequently marked as a containment line against the spread of communism.[35] By the early 1950s, the US viewed the survival of non-communist regimes in the region as critical to its interests,[36] and the shipping lane in Malacca Straits, situated close to Singapore, was critical to US' strategy against the Soviet in the event of a

[30] Sukma, Rizal, and K. S. Nathan, "Globalization's Impact on Threat Perceptions and Defence Postures in Southeast Asia: Two Views", in Till, Geoffrey, Emrys Chew, and Joshua Ho (eds), *Globalisation and Defence in the Asia-Pacific: Arms Across Asia*, (Routledge, London, 2008), p 93.

[31] Latif, Asadul Iqbal, *Between Rising Powers: China, Singapore and India*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2007), pp 31-32.

[32] Lee, Kuan Yew, "We want to be ourselves", speech delivered to the University of Singapore, 9 October 1965, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 20 August 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19661009a.pdf.

[33] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 174. See also Wilson, Dick, *The Neutralization of Southeast Asia*, (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975), p 83. Lee emphasized the importance of U.S. military presence for Southeast Asia's security against communist threats.

[34] Lee Kuan Yew viewed larger regional states could potentially threaten Singapore due its small size and population, and the presence of western powers in Southeast Asia, in this case Britain, was a counterbalance to regional power which allowed small states like Singapore to survive. See Transcript of a Talk Given by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, on the subject "Big and Small Fishes in Asian Waters" at a meeting of the University of Singapore Democratic Socialist Club at the University campus on 15 June 1966. See also Ang, Cheng Guan, *Lee Kuan Yew's Strategic Thought*, p 21.

[35] Ahcarya, Amitav, *The Making of Southeast Asia: International Relations of a Region*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2012), p 133. On 18 July 1949, US State Secretary, Dean Acheson, expressed US policy of not allowing Southeast Asia to be dominated by communists.

[36] Ibid, p 133.

conflict.[37] Britain, having colonial presence in Southeast Asia, was important to the US strategy of containing communism by ensuring a smooth decolonisation process.[38]

Britain's strategic interest in Southeast Asia began in 1948 when Britain began viewing the region as the battleground for US-Soviet rivalry, and identified its role as a regional security provider to protect its colonies from security threat until they were ready to defend themselves.[39] 1948 was also the year when the communist commenced their insurrection against the British in Malaya.[40] Britain continued its role as a security provider to the mid-1960s, when the new British Labour Government under Harold Wilson came to office.[41]

US-Britain strategic interests in Southeast Asia had implications on Singapore's security. Strategically located along the shipping routes linking the Indian Ocean, Straits of Malacca and South China Sea, Singapore by the mid-1950s was the headquarters for British forces in Malaya, Hong Kong, Fiji and Borneo territories, and hosted the only dry dock between Japan and Australia capable of accommodating aircraft carriers.[42] Any great power controlling the island would therefore be able to exert influence on the Malacca Straits.

It was in the interest of Britain to ensure the security of Singapore as its bases on the island served its strategic interest vis-à-vis the US. When Singapore was part of Malaysia between 1963-1965, Britain's responsibility for Singapore's defence was covered through the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Arrangement (AMDA).[43] After its separation from Malaysia, AMDA continued to provide the basis for Britain's role for the defence of Singapore.[44]

From Singapore's perspective, the presence of British forces on the island was necessary because Singapore would not be able to defend itself against any external threat in the medium term post-independence period.[45] Military conflict with Indonesia was still ongoing until 1966, and Malaysia continued to deploy its military in Singapore after the

[37] Sokolsky, Richard, "The role of Southeast Asia in US strategy toward China", No. RAND/MR-1170-AF. Rand Corp Santa Monica CA, (2000), p 11.

[38] Ahcarya, Amitav, *The Making of Southeast Asia*, p 132.

[39] Till, Geoffrey, "A Little Ray of Sunshine: Britain, and the Origins of the FPDA – A Retrospective on Objectives, Problems and Solution", in Storey, Ian, Ralf Emmers and Daljit Singh (eds), *Five Power Defence Arrangements At Forty*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Publishing, Singapore, 2011), p 4.

[40] Jackson, Robert, *The Malayan Emergency: The Commonwealth's War 1948-1966*, (Routledge, London, 1991), p 12.

[41] Pham, Phuong Lan, *Ending East of Suez: The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore 1964-1968*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 2010), p 17.

[42] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 38.

[43] Ibid, p 60.

[44] Ang, Cheng Guan, "Malaysia, Singapore, and the Road to the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA)", p 208.

[45] Office of the Historian, "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospect for Malaysia and Singapore, Washington, 16 December 1965", para C23, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXVI, Indonesia; Malaysia-Singapore; Philippines, US State Department's website, (Accessed on 28 March 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d270.

separation. Although the Separation Agreement allowed Malaysia to deploy its military in Singapore, the fact that Singapore viewed Malaysia as a security threat generated the fear that Malaysian troops on the island might be used against Singapore.[46] British forces in Singapore were therefore necessary to protect Singapore from Malaysia-Indonesia's potential hostile act.[47]

On July 1967, less than two years after Singapore's separation from Malaysia, economic crisis and a reassessment of Britain's defence policy led Britain to announce a withdrawal from Singapore by the mid-1970s.[48] Singapore's immediate response to the withdrawal was a plan to build up of its military within the next 10 years.[49] A worsening economic condition, however, pushed down the British pound by 14.3%,[50] and drove Britain to bring forward the withdrawal to April 1971.[51] The accelerated withdrawal left Singapore with only three years to build up its military capabilities. Lee's initial response to the new time-table was counter-productive - he threatened to remove Singapore from the sterling trading area; called for a boycott of British goods and threatened to shift control of Singapore's commercial port to Japanese firms.[52] The security of Singapore was at stake: Singapore-Malaysia's relations were still poor then, and the SAF was still small and weak, especially in the high skill area of air defence.[53] The thaw in Malaysia-Indonesia's relations following the end of *konfrontasi* in August 1966 also caused Singapore to be apprehensive towards its two ethnically different neighbours.[54]

As the British withdrawal was a foregone conclusion, Lee then shifted his focus on ensuring a continued British presence in the region but in a different form. Both Lee and Wilson agreed on a new, looser defence arrangement which would still anchor British and

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[46] Lee, Kuan Yew, *From the Third World to First*, pp 11 and 17.

[47] Huxley, Tim, *Defending the Lion City*, p 8.

[48] Murfett, Malcolm H, *Between Two Oceans: A Military History of Singapore from First Settlement to Final British Withdrawal*, (Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1999), pp 324-325. The annual running cost of the bases in Singapore is $70 million pound per year. Britain's threat assessment at that time identified a potential military threat from Europe was more likely to occur, thus a need to bring its military forces closer to Britain. See also "Pull-out in middle 1970's", The Straits Times, 19 July 1967, p 1.

[49] The Straits Times, "Lee: We have five to 10 years to build sinews", 20 July 1967, p 1.

[50] Pham, Phuong Lan, *Ending East of Suez: The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore 1964-1968*, p 206.

[51] For a detail study on the impact of the pound devaluation on Britain's decision to withdraw earlier from Singapore see ibid, pp 201 – 229.

[52] Murfett, Malcolm H, *Between Two Oceans*, p 323.

[53] Ibid p 323.

[54] According to US intelligence reports in December 1965, the mere possibility of an end to the Confrontation disturbed Singapore's leaders. The report stated: "They are concerned that, in the long run, the Malay fear of the Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore will draw Malaysia and Indonesia closer together. They believe that the Malay leaders of Kuala Lumpur are less apprehensive of eventual domination by Indonesia than of political submersion by the Chinese". See Office of the Historian, "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospect for Malaysia and Singapore, 16 December 1965", para C 21.

commonwealth forces to the defence of Singapore.[55] Lee's vision of having Britain playing some roles in the defence of Singapore gained traction when the new Conservative Government under Edward Heath came to power in London on June 1970. Heath was critical of Wilson's proposed military withdrawal from East of Suez, and wanted to establish a "residual commitment for British forces" in the region.[56] The new defence arrangement, framed within the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA), took effect on November 1971 in place of AMDA, and placed Britain as an equal, and not a leading provider for the defence of Singapore.[57] FPDA therefore became an avenue for Singapore to place extra-regional powers within Southeast Asia to balance against regional powers that might threaten its security.[58]

Singapore-US Relations

Post-independent Singapore's relations with the US were not amicable at the start. During a press interview less than one month after Singapore's independence, Lee verbally attacked the US and stated his stance to not allow US military presence in Singapore.[59] Lee highlighted US lack of understanding of overseas Chinese and Vietnamese, and criticised US policies in South Vietnam which Lee viewed had brought more instability to the state.[60]

Lee's animosity in 1965-1966 towards the US was superficial, with the aim of placating the non-aligned states and Soviet Union. Chua argued that the Soviet Union could block Singapore's entry to the UN, and therefore there was a need for Singapore to project an anti-US outlook.[61] A US intelligence report in December 1965 came to a similar conclusion - the British bases in Singapore placed Lee in a serious dilemma as they were necessary for Singapore's defence and economic security, yet presenting Singapore as a colonial stooge. The report further stated the US should expect further anti-US outburst from Lee in the foreseeable future.[62] After Singapore gained admission to the UN in September 1965, Singapore-US relations warmed up and by March 1966, the US embassy in Singapore was established and US

[55] Murfett, Malcolm H, *Between Two Oceans*, p 324.

[56] Till, Geoffrey, "A Little Ray of Sunshine: Britain, and the Origins of the FPDA", p 16.

[57] The FPDA established a framework for members to consult each other in the event of an external attack on Singapore or Malaysia. The members are: Singapore, Malaysia, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

[58] Till, Geoffrey, "A Little Ray of Sunshine: Britain, and the Origins of the FPDA", pp 17-18.

[59] Transcript of an Interview by Foreign Correspondents with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, held at TV Singapura at 1130 hours on 30 August 1965. Lee's animosity towards the US could be seen when he stated, "If the British withdraw I am prepared to go on with the Australians and the New Zealanders. But, I am not prepared to go on with Americans".

[60] Ibid. Lee launched further attack on the US on 13 September 1965, claiming the British "are not like the Americans who are crude and brash". See Transcript of Prime Minister's Interview with members of the Chinese Press in Hokkien Recorded at TV Singapura Studios on 13 September 1965.

[61] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "Revisiting Lee Kuan Yew's 1965–66 Anti-Americanism", *Asian Studies Review, 38:3* (2014), p 449.

[62] Office of the Historian, "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospect for Malaysia and Singapore, Washington, 16 December 1965", para B 15 and C 28.

troops serving in Vietnam were allowed into the island for rest and recuperation (R&R) on the island.[63] Britain's decision in 1967 to withdraw from Singapore also forced Lee to view the US as critical to the stability and security of Southeast Asia. Recognizing the importance of the US to Singapore's security, Lee's first visit to the US as a Prime Minister of an independent Singapore in October 1967 was aimed at establishing "personal contact with the leaders of a great power he now regards as vital to Singapore's future economic stability and security".[64] It was during this visit that Lee suggested to US officials that Singapore would support US position in Asia in return for US commitment to Singapore.[65] In 1968, US embassy in Singapore reported to Washington that Lee was looking into the feasibility of US "assumption de facto British protective relationship with Singapore".[66] From 1968 onwards, Singapore became an important ship and aircraft repair centre for US military.[67]

Singapore-US relations did not develop smoothly after Lee's visit. In July 1969, the new US President, Richard Nixon, announced the Nixon Doctrine – a cessation of direct US involvement in Asian conflicts. Fearing a major-power vacuum in the region, Singapore strengthened its relations with Soviet Union, and Lee even suggested to the Soviets to utilise the former British bases in Singapore for ship-repairs.[68] While Chua argues that the pivot to the Soviets occurred as Singapore needed extra-regional powers to counter the threat of Communist China,[69] it was conceivable that Malaysia-Indonesia threats were also part of Singapore's consideration to anchor the Soviets in the region.

Concern about closer Singapore-Soviet Union relations, especially with the Soviets use of Singapore's naval facilities, led the US to coordinate with Britain, Australia and New Zealand to pressure Singapore to cease repairing Soviet warships and to disallow Soviet "intelligence-gathering vessels" from stopping at its ports.[70] Lee's flirtation with the Soviets ended in late 1972 when Singapore diplomatically shifted towards the US following warmer

[63] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "Revisiting Lee Kuan Yew's 1965–66 Anti-Americanism", p 457.

[64] Office of the Historian, "Intelligence Note From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Hughes) to Secretary of State Rusk, Washington, 9 August 1967", US State Department's website, (Accessed on 19 January 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d279.

[65] Office of the Historian, "Discussion note between Lee Kuan Yew and Dean Rusk, US Secretary of State, No 285 Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, 17 October 1967, 4:15 pm", US State Department's website, (Accessed on 28 March 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d285.

[66] Office of the Historian, "Telegram from the Embassy in Singapore to the State Department, Singapore, 3 January 1968", US State Department's website: (Accessed on 18 March 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d291.

[67] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "Becoming a 'Good Nixon Doctrine Country': Political Relations between the United States and Singapore during the Nixon Presidency", *Australian Journal of Politics & History 60.4*, (2014), p 536.

[68] Ibid, p 539.

[69] Ibid, p 541.

[70] Ibid, p 541.

US-China relations,[71] and Singapore's claim of non-alignment came to an end when Lee requested for US and Western naval forces presence in the region to counter Soviet's naval threat.[72]

Singapore's diplomacy aimed to maximise its influence and autonomy. It claimed neutrality, yet a closer study of Singapore's diplomacy revealed how it took advantage of great power rivalry in the region to anchor Britain, and later US, as a counter-balance to regional powers. While the great powers viewed the security benefits provided to Singapore as essential to advance their strategic interest in the region against the Soviet-led communist-bloc,[73] Singapore viewed their presence as an insurance against regional threats to its security.[74] The formation of FPDA ensured the continuation of British role, albeit a far limited one, to the defence of Singapore. US military presence in Singapore grew from being a mere R&R point for its troops serving in Vietnam to an important air and ship repair centre for US forces. The 1965-1975 period therefore oversaw Britain's diminishing role in Singapore's defence, which overlapped with increased US military presence on the island. The next chapter analyses both powers contributions to the military deterrence of Singapore.

[71] Ibid, p 542.

[72] Transcript of Press Conference Given by the Prime Minister in Tokyo, 11 May 1973, National Archives of Singapore's website, (Accessed on 29 December 2016), http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/search-result. See also Buszynski, Leszek, *Soviet Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*, (Mackays of Chatham, Kent, 1986) pp 75-76.

[73] Singapore's air and port facilities were crucial for both the US and Britain to project their military forces in the region. See Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 39 and Long, SR Joey, "Winning Hearts and Minds: US Psychological Warfare Operations in Singapore, 1955–1961", *Diplomatic History* 32.5 (2008), p 902.

[74] The Straits Times, "Lee's hope: Multilateral defence plan in South Asia", 12 September 1965, p 7. Lee stated without the British presence on the island, Singapore would be overrun by Indonesia or other regional power.

Chapter 4
Britain, US and Military Deterrence

Military deterrence formed the second pillar of Singapore's defence strategy, sitting alongside diplomacy, which was considered in the previous chapter. In the first ten years of Singapore's independence, both Britain and US contributed critically to Singapore's security against external threats at regional and domestic level. While multi-lateral forums such as AMDA and FPDA formed Singapore's security ring at regional level, both Britain and US also contributed at the domestic level by facilitating the establishment of a credible indigenous defence force, which act as a deterrent against any potential aggressor. For space consideration, this chapter analyses the contributions of Britain and US in the first ten years of Singapore's independence towards the rapid build-up of the SAF as a credible deterrent force.

At the regional level, Britain's unlimited commitment towards Singapore's security from 1965-1971 was governed through AMDA. Although AMDA ceased to exist in 1971, Britain continued to maintain a small military presence in Singapore under the auspices of the FPDA for two main reasons: first, Britain military presence in Southeast Asia would strengthen relations with Australia and New Zealand, which saw Southeast Asia's stability as critical to their security; second, Britain wanted to continue to maintain its influence after withdrawing most of its military from the region.[1] Following the termination of AMDA and the formation of FPDA in November 1971, Britain's role in Singapore's security was scaled down in terms of responsibility and actual forces deployed. Britain ceased to be a security provider for Singapore, but acted as an equal security partner with Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore through the FPDA.[2] Under the FPDA, a brigade of Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom troops (known collectively as ANZUK) were deployed in Singapore, alongside two to three warships and a submarine.[3] The presence of ANZUK forces provided Singapore a deterrence capability against Malaysia and Indonesia while its own armed forces was being built up.[4]

[1] Benvenuti, Andrea, and Moreen Dee, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements and the Reappraisal of the British and Australian Policy Interests in Southeast Asia, 1970–75", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 41.01* (2010), p 105. See also Thompson, Sue, *British Military Withdrawal and the Rise of Regional Cooperation in South-East Asia, 1964-73*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015), p 122.

[2] Benvenuti, Andrea, and Moreen Dee, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements and the Reappraisal of the British and Australian Policy Interests in Southeast Asia, 1970–75", p 112.

[3] Mellows, Jeffrey Arnold, "An Examination of the Contribution to the Security of Southeast Asia made by the 1971 Five Power Defence Agreement between Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore", (Dissertation. University of British Columbia, 1972), p 79.

[4] Ibid, p 77-81. See also Benvenuti, Andrea, and Moreen Dee, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements and the Reappraisal of the British and Australian Policy Interests in Southeast Asia, 1970–75", p 108.

The US contributed indirectly to the formation and operationalization of FPDA. Australia's involvement was critical for the FPDA to take off, and yet initially Australia was hesitant to join the regional security forum without any support from the US. In 1969, US President Richard Nixon promised US support for Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore in the event of any overt attack from a communist country, and this encouraged Australia to participate actively in the FPDA.[5]

At the domestic level, Britain and the US aided the rapid build-up of Singapore's conventional deterrence capability.[6] A capable military force created the deterrence factor against potential external threats against its territorial integrity, and within ten years after Singapore's separation from Malaysia, Singapore military forces had developed from a small unit to one that has and continued to have an edge over its two larger neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. Although many Singapore's commentators claimed that the SAF was built from scratch,[7] this chapter argues otherwise - it might be true the SAF was built from scratch at the organizational level (creation of the Ministry of Defence and the various branches of the SAF) and human resource level (recruitment and training of local population), but both Britain and US had provided critical contributions in terms of human resource development and armaments which allowed the SAF to develop as a credible deterrence force. Without Britain and US contributions, Singapore by 1975 would not have achieved military supremacy over Malaysia and Indonesia, which made deterrence a feasible strategy against external threats.

The first part of this chapter discusses the concept of deterrence. The next two parts analyse Britain and US' roles respectively towards the development of Singapore's military deterrence capability between 1965-1975.

[5] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "America's Role in the Five Power Defence Arrangements: Anglo-American Power Transition in South-East Asia, 1967–1971", *The International History Review* (2016), p 11.

[6] In this chapter, conventional military deterrence is defined as prevention of conflict during a crisis by maintaining the ability to deny an opponent their goals on the battlefield through the use of conventional forces. See Ladwig III, Walter C, "Indian Military Modernization and Conventional Deterrence in South Asia", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, (2015), p 735.

[7] For example, see Yeo, Philip, "Dr Goh Keng Swee and the Building of Singapore's Defence Industrial Capability: A First-Person Account of the Early Challenges in Building the Republic's Defence Industry", in Desker, Barry and Ang Cheng Guan (eds), *Perspectives on the Security of Singapore: The First 50 Years*, (Imperial College Press, Singapore, 2015), p 309. Singh, Bilveer, *Arming the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)*, p 19. Bilveer claimed that at the onset of independence, local defence capabilities were almost non-existent. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first Prime Minister, also commented that the SAF was built from almost nothing. See Singapore's Defence Ministry website, "Mr Lee Kuan Yew speaks with SAF Officers and Defence officials at dinner dialogue", 18 May 2012, (Retrieved on 28 February 2017), https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2012/may/18may12_nr.print.img.html

Deterrence

Huth argues that a state pursues deterrence as a security policy in order to prevent other states' from using military force as a mean to pursue their foreign policy goals.[8] Deterrence takes place when potential aggressors aggregated the consequences of military action outweighs the probability of success. A review of literatures on deterrence strategy emphasizes the cost of actions on the part of aggressors as the key determinant. Mearsheimer points out that an aggressor would be deterred from military action if the probability of success is lower than the cost of military action.[9] Snyder terms deterrence as discouraging the enemy "from taking military action by poising for him a prospect of cost and risk outweighing his prospective gain".[10] For a small-state like Singapore, deterrence is the best strategy as it cannot afford to be involved in a conflict.[11] A military conflict on Singapore's territory, even minor, will advertently affect the whole state and society due to Singapore's small geographical size.

Rosencrance contends deterrence "is a product of capability and credibility",[12] without which a state's deterrence status would be questionable. In the case of Singapore, a capable SAF would add credibility to its deterrence strategy against potential aggressors. Smaller in population and geographical size when compared against Malaysia and Indonesia, a strong military capable to hurt any aggressor would allow Singapore to manage its relations with Malaysia and Indonesia on a more equal footing. As Schelling stated in his book, "the power to hurt is bargaining power. To exploit it is diplomacy – vicious diplomacy".[13]

Military power would also give a sovereign state the flexibility to exercise its domestic or foreign policy independently. To illustrate, Britain's foreign policy between 1838-1846 was determined by the strength of its Royal Navy to deal with any challenges from abroad.[14] A capable military force was necessary for deterrence against Malaysia and Indonesia to be credible.

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[8] Huth, Paul K, "Military Deterrence and Statecraft", *Encyclopaedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict (Second Edition)*, (Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2010), p 1257.

[9] Mearsheimer, John J, *Conventional Deterrence*, (Cornell University Press, New York, 1983), p 14.

[10] Snyder, Glenn H, *Deterrence and Defence: Towards A Theory of National Security*, (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1961), p 1.

[11] Indorf, Hans H, *Strategies For Small-State Survival*, (Graham Brash, Singapore, 1985), p 6.

[12] Rosencrance, Richard, "Strategic Deterrence Reconsidered", in Bertram, Christoph (ed), *Strategic Deterrence in a Changing Environment*, (Gower Publishing Company Limited, Hampshire, 1981), p 27.

[13] Schelling, Thomas, "Arms and influence", in Mahnken, Thomas G., and Joseph A. Maiolo, (eds), *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, (Routledge, New York, 2008), p 87.

[14] Matzke, R B, *Deterrence Through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy under Pax Britannica*, (University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska, 2011), p 37.

Singapore-Britain

Once Singapore gained independence in 1965 until 1971, Britain was responsible for Singapore's defence through AMDA. While Britain's role in defending Singapore during the 1963-1966 *konfrontasi* period with Indonesia has been discussed extensively elsewhere, Britain did play a critical role in securing Singapore from potential Malaysian military aggression. On 19 October 1965, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister, stated his intention to establish barter trade relations with Indonesia through Pulau Senang, a southern Singapore's island located near to Indonesia.[15] Malaysia condemned Lee's proposal as the *konfrontasi* was still ongoing, and informed Britain on 22 October 1965 that Malaysia would deploy its navy in Singapore's water to "shoot Indonesian ships… on sight" and maintain a naval blockade of Pulau Senang.[16] The following few weeks saw top Malaysian leaders conveying several warnings to both Britain and Australia of possible military action against Singapore. In November 1965, Tunku Abdul Razak[17] informed Lord Head, Britain's High Commissioner to Malaysia, that Malaysian military forces might march across the causeway and impose "colonial rule … on Singapore" if need be.[18] A week later, the Malaysian Prime Minister himself told the Australian ambassador in Malaysia that Malaysian warships would attack Indonesian ships involved in the barter trade with Singapore.[19] At the end of November 1965, Malaysia informed Australia through the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur of its plan to apply economic sanctions and a naval blockade – even moving into Singapore territorial waters – to prevent Singapore-Indonesia barter trade from taking place.[20] Malaysia, however, did not proceed with the naval blockade after being warned by Britain.[21]

Without the intervention of Britain, Singapore would be unable to deter the Malaysian navy from executing a naval blockade of Pulau Senang. Regardless of the outcome of this incident, the main point is that Malaysia had considered military measures to exercise influence over Singapore's foreign and trade policies. Singapore's inability to defend itself then was

[15] Easter, David, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia: 1960-1966,* (Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2004) p 166.

[16] Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Cablegram from Critchley to Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, 25 October 1965. No 338", in Dee, Moreen (ed), *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961-1966,* (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2005), p 524.

[17] Tunku Abdul Razak was the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister from 1957 to 1970.

[18] Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Cablegram from Critchley to Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, 10 November 1965, No 340", pp 527-528.

[19] Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Cablegram from Critchley to Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, 18 November 1965, No 344," pp 532-533.

[20] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Cablegram to Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, 24 November 1965", No 347, pp 536 – 538.

[21] Easter, David, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia – 1960-1966,* (Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2004), p 166.

acknowledged by the then Defence Minister Goh Keng Swee, who stated in December 1965 that without the British presence in Singapore, the island would be "easily overrun by any neighboring country within a radius of a thousand miles".[22]

Britain and SAF Capabilities

Britain's contribution towards Singapore's security against external threats did not cease with its withdrawal from Singapore in 1971. The withdrawal in fact facilitated the development of Singapore's indigenous defense capabilities. In May 1968, four months after Britain announced its withdrawal from Singapore to be brought forward to 1971 from the initial target of mid-1970s, Britain agreed to provide Singapore with a defence aid package to soften the impact of the British withdrawal from the island. Singapore was provided with $50 million pound in cash, transfer of facilitates, bases and air defense equipment such as warplanes and surface-to-air (SAM) missiles.[23] From 1968 to 1969 alone, Britain handed over to Singapore military-related properties worth $135 million which include three airbases, one naval base and several other military complexes.[24]

In September 1968, Singapore established its own air-force, then known as the Singapore Air Defence Command (SADC).[25] Britain provided the critical support for the successful set-up of SADC. From 1970 to 1971, Britain supplied 16 Strikemaster jet trainers and 20 Hawker-Hunter warplanes, and in 1972, additional 27 Hawker-Hunter warplanes were provided to Singapore along with 6 Skyvan transport aircrafts.[26] Britain also provided training for Singapore air-force pilots,[27] and other staff to man the radar and SAM equipment.[28]

In the air defence theatre, Britain handed over to Singapore in 1968 the most advance radar shield in Southeast Asia then that could detect any aerial threat against the island.[29] Singapore's air defence system was further augmented in June 1970 when Britain supplied 60

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[22] Kwa, Chong Guan, "Growing in Strength: Responding to National and Regional Realities", in Judith d'Silva (ed), *Giving Strength to our Nation: The SAF and Its People*, (Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore, 2015), pp 35 - 37.

[23] Murfett, Malcolm H, *Between Two Oceans*, p 324.

[24] Bose, Romen, *Singapore at War: Secrets from the Fall, Liberation and the Aftermath of WWII*, (Marshall Cavendish International Asia, Singapore, 2012), pp 108-109.

[25] Republic of Singapore Air Force's website, "1960s", (Accessed on 4 March 2017), https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/air_force/about/museum/1960s.html.

[26] Huxley, Tim, *Defending the Lion City*, p 21. See also Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) – SIPRI Arms Transfer Database's website: https://www.sipri.org/.

[27] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia And Singapore*, p 151.

[28] See The Straits Times, "$73 mil. Bloodhound deal by Spore", 5 October 1969, p 1 and "Ten Pass Out As Radar Operators", 7 February 1969, p 10.

[29] The Straits Times, "No gap says Lee", 20 January 1968, p 1.

Bloodhound MK-II SAM, which were capable of hitting aerial targets up to 80 km away.[30] The Bloodhounds long operating range gave Singapore the capability to hit aerial threats originating from Malaysia or Indonesia's airspace long before they reach Singapore. At the maritime sphere, Britain sold to Singapore between 1966 to 1971 four landing ship crafts and six patrol vessels for the fledging Singapore naval force.[31]

Singapore-US

While Britain's contribution to the SAF capabilities were mainly in the areas of airpower, air defence, and the provision of air, naval and other military bases, US contributions towards a capable SAF covered the naval, air and ground components. US extensive contributions towards the SAF was possible because of a strong Singapore-US relations, which was developed based on Singapore's assessment that its security as a non-communist state increasingly depended on US military presence in the face of British military withdrawal from Southeast Asia.[32]

The earliest recorded US military assistance to Singapore was the sales of 8 Cessna-172 Trainer planes in 1968.[33] This was rapidly followed by the sales of 280 Commando V-100 and V-200 versions of armoured personnel carriers (APCs) to Singapore, 12 M-60 battle tanks and 8 M-728 Combat Engineer Vehicles (CEV), all taking place between 1969 and 1971.[34] The SAF ground forces capabilities were further strengthened with the supplied of 300 M-113 APCs from the US from 1973 to 1974.[35] In less than 10 years since Singapore's independence, the SAF has a total of 580 APCs, which augmented the Israeli-supplied AMX-13 light tanks that Singapore procured in the late 1960s.[36] The AMX-13 tanks, backed by a large number of APCs, increased the firepower and mobility of the SAF, allowing large number of troops to be moved across the battlefield under protection from enemy firepower. The CEVs added SAF's offensive capability as they could be used for offensive oriented operations, such as the breaching/removal of roadblocks or obstacles and filing anti-tank ditches.[37]

[30] Information obtained from author's visit on 12 February 2017 to the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Museum located at 400 Airport Road, Singapore 534234.

[31] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) – SIPRI Arms Transfer Database (Accessed on 14 March 2017).

[32] Office of the Historian, "Telegram From the Embassy in Singapore to the Department of State, Singapore, 3 January 1968, 0540Z, No 291", (Accessed on 28 February 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d291.

[33] SIPRI Arms Transfer Database.

[34] Ibid

[35] Ibid.

[36] Raska, Michael, *Military Innovation in Small States: Creating a Reverse Asymmetry*, (Routledge, New York, 2016), p 140.

[37] M728 CEV website, (Accessed on 10th March 2017), http://www.military-today.com/engineering/m728_cev.htm

The US had also played a part in strengthening Singapore's air power. In the late 1960s, the US retired their A-4B Skyhawks warplanes and stored them in Arizona. Singapore took interest on the Skyhawks and on 28 April 1972, a Singapore team came to inspect and purchased 40 of the Skyhawks.[38] These Skyhawks were purchased at bargain price by Singapore as they were discharged from services by the US Navy and mothballed at the Arizona desert.[39] The selected Skyhawks were then refurbished and modified by Lockheed Aircraft Services (LAS) facility in Singapore, and the refurbished planes were renamed the A-4S.[40] These Skyhawks were also equipped with British-made avionics and two Aden 30mm cannons similar to the SADC's Hawker-Hunter fleets.[41] Singaporean pilots were trained by the US Navy through a 22 weeks training program,[42] and by 1974, the Skyhawks and their pilots were operationally ready, giving Singapore access to fighter-bomber capability for the first time.[43]

The US also contributed towards Singapore's naval capability in the early to mid-1970s. In 1971, Singapore procured six missile gunboats (MGBs) from West Germany and they were armed with Israeli missiles.[44] A US firm, Lytton Industries, provided 30 experts to integrate the different operating and weapon system platforms aboard the MGBs.[45] Lytton's involvement was possible only because the US government did not block the arrangement between Singapore and Lytton. The support of US government for the MGBs was critical as around the same time, Singapore had wanted to procure 16 US F-4E warplanes, but the attempt to purchase the F-4Es was blocked by the US State Department, fearing the sale might disrupt the development of the FPDA's Integrated Aid Defence System as Malaysia had procured F-5 warplanes instead.[46]

By 1972, these MGBs, primarily tasked to intercept and destroy enemy naval forces, were operational and capable of operating up to a radius of 1000 miles, with the ability to engage enemy ships and aircraft simultaneously.[47] Between 1971 and 1975, the US transferred

[38] Republic of Singapore Air Force, *Super Skyhawks: The RSAF A-4 Story*, (RSAF, Singapore, 2006), p 12.

[39] Chiang, Michael, *Fighting Fit: The Singapore Armed Forces*, (Times Edition, Singapore, 1990), p 178.

[40] Republic of Singapore Air Force, *Super Skyhawks*, p 13.

[41] Information obtained from exhibits in the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Museum. Author visited the museum on 12 February 2017.

[42] Republic of Singapore Air Force, *Super Skyhawks*, p 18.

[43] Republic of Singapore Air Force's website, (Accessed on 10th March 2017), https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/air_force/about/museum/1970s.html

[44] Singapore's Ministry of Defence, *The Singapore Armed Forces*, (Times Printers, Singapore, 1980), p 30.

[45] Ibid, p 30.

[46] Chua, Daniel Wei Boon, "America's Role in the Five Power Defence Arrangements: Anglo-American Power Transition in South-East Asia, 1967–1971", p 15.

[47] Singapore's Ministry of Defence, *The Singapore Armed Forces*, p 78.

6 Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) and 2 coastal minesweepers at no cost.[48] The provision of these vessels at low or no cost allowed Singapore to possess amphibious and mine counter-measures capability, which would not have been possible as the island's defence budget during the 1960s and 1970s was insufficient to procure such vessels.[49]

Deterrence Capability

The SAF grew rapidly from 1965 to 1975. In 1968, the year when Britain began winding down its presence in Singapore, there were 9,700 personnel in the SAF. This number grew to 55,000 in 1975, with a huge leap in the air-force capability from zero combat aircraft in 1968 to 95 in 1975 (See Table A below).

Table A: Singapore Armed Forces Strength 1968-1975[50]

	1968	1972	1975
Total Armed Forces (include regular, reservists and volunteers	9,700	23,000	55,000
Army (include regular, reservists and volunteers)	9,500	21,000	50,000
Tanks	na	50	75
APCs	na	na	580
Navy (include regular, reservists and volunteers)	200	500	2,000
Warships	2	4	18
Air Force (include regular, reservists and volunteers)	nil	1,500	3,000
Fighter / Interceptor / Bomber	nil	36	95

The 95 combat aircrafts were made up of Britain's Hawker-Hunters and US Skyhawks, and numerically superior to the combined Malaysian-Indonesian air forces. To illustrate, although the Indonesian air force in 1968 was large on paper, only 200 of its 550 warplanes were operational.[51] In 1975, Indonesia had only 47 combat aircrafts, some of which were operationally questionable.[52] Malaysia on the other and had 40 combat aircraft,[53] including 6

[48] Ibid p 140

[49] Goldrick, James, and Jack McCaffrie, *Navies of South-East Asia: A Comparative Study*, (Routledge, New York, 2012), p 140.

[50] Various Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*, (International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, various years 1968-1969, 1971-1972, 1975-1976), SIPRI Arms Transfer Database.

[51] *The Military Balance 1968-1969*, p 49.

[52] *The Military Balance 1975-1976*, p 55.

[53] Ibid p 57.

ageing Sabre F-86s donated by Australia.[54] The Malaysian warplanes could easily be deterred by the 60 Bloodhound SAM missiles that the SAF possessed.

The superiority in the air is necessary for deterrence against hostile aggressors in particular, or in any military conflict in general. Achieving air superiority is important even to great powers such as the US, which would not proceed with any military missions without "enjoying control of the skies over the region concerned".[55]

The capability of Singapore's warships, backed by numerically superior air power, would enable Singapore to secure its territorial water. The MGBs were equipped with Israeli supplied Gabriel anti-ship missiles and in 1974, Singapore was the first country in the region to successfully test fire the missile.[56] The Gabriels were able to engage and sink small to medium size enemy warships 20 km away,[57] thus giving the Singapore Navy a technological edge over the neighbouring states' navies. In fact the MGBs, with missile launching capabilities, were purchased to deter Russian-made cruisers operated by the Indonesian Navy.[58] In comparison, the Indonesian navy suffered from the country's economic hardship during the *konfrontasi* period of 1963-1966 due to suspension of aid and loans by the West.[59] Though on paper the Indonesian navy, mostly equipped with Soviet-warships and submarines, was the largest in Southeast Asia, the lack of fund and training limited the Indonesian warships to Surabaya exercise area only, and half of its submarines were not operational.[60] Indonesian naval capability degenerated further under Suharto when as a result of a review of Indonesia's defence needs, the navy saw personnel and budget cut.[61] By 1970, the loss of personnel and budget reduction, combined with the withdrawal of Soviet's support, caused the Indonesian navy to be moribund.[62] Between 1972-1974, Indonesia scrapped most of its Soviet-made warships and by 1975, the Indonesian navy were left with only 4 Soviet Riga-class frigates and 2 Whiskey-class submarines.[63]

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[54] Mak, J N, "The Modernization of the Malaysian Armed Forces", *Contemporary Southeast Asia 19.1* (1997), p 33.

[55] Gates, David, "Air Power: The Instrument of Choice", in Gray, Peter W (ed), *Air Power 21: Challenges For The New Century*, (The Stationary Office, London, 2000), p 39.

[56] Singapore Ministry of Defence, *Engineering Our Navy*, (First Printers, Singapore, 2016), p 6.

[57] Weapon System Nets' website, "Gabriel", (Accessed on 17 March 2017) (http://weaponsystems.net/weaponsystem/HH10%20-%20Gabriel.html).

[58] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 142.

[59] Goldrick, James, and Jack McCaffrie, *Navies of South-East Asia*, p 70.

[60] Ibid, p 70.

[61] Ibid pp 72-73.

[62] Ibid, p 74.

[63] Ibid, p 71.

SAF's capability improvement gave Singapore the confidence to defend itself. In 1972, Lee Kuan Yew boasted that Singapore had been transformed from military impotence to combat-readiness.[64] Singapore deterrence strategy increasingly placed more importance on engaging any hostile power on Malaysian soil before the enemy could reach Singapore.[65] Such strategy would create strategic depth to prevent Singapore from direct enemy fire.[66] By moving the battle onto the Malaysian peninsula, Singapore would also secure its water supplies originating from Skudai and Kota Tinggi, located in the southern Malaysian state of Johore.[67] In fact, a detail military plan to secure water supply from southern Johor in the case of a military conflict had been exercised within the SAF since the late 1960s – the plan was for Singapore warplanes to secure air superiority over Malaysia, and this to be followed by SAF commandos being dropped to secure key bridges on the Malaysian side of the causeway while the remaining SAF ground forces with tanks would enter Johor subsequently.[68] The SAF could afford to be offensive-oriented as Malaysia did not have any tanks to counter the SAF's Israeli-supplied AMX-13 tanks and American-supplied 580 APCs.[69]

Within 10 years of independence, Singapore had gained military superiority over Malaysia and Indonesia on the ground, air and maritime domains. The rapid build-up of the SAF in a short space of time, quantitatively and qualitatively, would not have been possible if the SAF was developed from scratch. Two great powers, Britain and US, provided the critical supports for the rapid development of the SAF capabilities, thus giving Singapore the military edge over Malaysia and Indonesia. Britain handed over air, navy and army bases to Singapore, therefore saving the Singapore's government from spending a large portion of its defence budget on infrastructural development. Instead, funds saved were diverted to purchase armaments such as the AMX-13 tanks, armoured vehicles, warplanes and warships. US support augmented the SAF's capabilities for ground, air and naval warfare. Some military assets, such as the Skyhawks and LSTs, were transferred to Singapore at low price or without any cost. Military superiority allowed Singapore to adopt deterrence as a security strategy against Malaysia and Indonesia, a strategy that lasted well into the 21st century.

[64] Tan, Andrew, *Singapore Defence Policy in the new Millennium*, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1998), p 6.

[65] Raska, Michael, *Military Innovation in Small States: Creating a Reverse Asymmetry*, (Routledge, New York, 2016), p 141.

[66] Ibid p 142.

[67] Ibid p 142.

[68] Ibid p 142. See also Tan, Andrew, "Singapore's Defence: Capabilities, Trends, and Implications", *Contemporary Southeast Asia; Singapore 21.3* (December, 1999), p 455.

[69] *The Military Balance*, 1971-1972, p 49.

Chapter Five
Conclusion: Continuous Vulnerability, Great Power and Security

The end of the Cold War led to the creation or restoration of many new small states.[1] Prior to the 20th century, small states were vulnerable to great powers interests.[2] Events in Europe before and after World War Two further emphasised the perilous nature of small states. The partition and conquest of Czechoslovakia by Germany at the dawn of World War Two, and Soviet invasions of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) validate further the argument that small states, especially those in the European continent, are powerless to shape the international order to for their security needs, as they were either taken by force into the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, joined the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or chose neutrality and non-alignment.[3]

In Singapore's context, being sandwiched between two geographically larger and ethnically different neighbours steered the island to a sense of vulnerability. To add further to its insecurity, Singapore also experienced historical antagonism against Malaysia and Indonesia, both before and after its independence. Singapore was partly responsible for the tension with its neighbours, especially Malaysia: its insistence on re-starting trading relations with Indonesia while the *konfrontasi* was still ongoing; and failure to fulfil fully Article V of the Separation Agreement which allowed Malaysia to continue its military presence on the island. Singapore-Indonesia trade relations might allow Indonesia to use Singapore as an entry point into Malaysia, thus jeopardising Malaysia's security.[4] As the *konfrontasi* was still ongoing then, Malaysia also saw the continual presence of its troops in Singapore as a hedge against the Indonesian threat, but this was seen by Singapore as a potential threat to its security.[5]

Singapore's dispute with Malaysia over trade relations with Indonesia, and Malaysian continuous military presence in Singapore, underscored the core of the problem - Singapore differed philosophically in how it managed relations with Malaysia and Indonesia. For Singapore, its economic survival is critical and form the basis of its relations with other states. On the contrary, Malaysia viewed its relations with post-independent Singapore from security perspective, that the defence of Malaysia and Singapore are indivisible.[6] Malaysia's insecurity by Singapore's action was severe that it had even

[1] Crandall, Matthew, "Soft Security Threats and Small States: The Case of Estonia", *Defence Studies, 14:1,* (2014), p 31.

[2] Goetsche, Laurent, "The Foreign and Security Policy Interests of Small States in Today's Europe", in Goetsche, Laurent (ed), *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union: Interests and Policies*, (Springer, Boston, 1998), p 20. Goetsche observes that between 1648 (Peace of Westphalia) and 1815 (Congress of Vienna), great powers shaped the international system order to meet their interests at the expense of small states' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

[3] Ibid pp 21 and 22.

[4] Chin, Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*, p 117.

[5] Ibid p 117.

[6] Ibid, p 111.

considered military action against Singapore over the island trade's policy with Indonesia. Facing both actual and anticipated military violations to its sovereignty from Indonesia and Malaysia respectively, Singapore looked to extra-regional powers for security. In this aspect, Singapore was fortunate as its security needs intersected with the strategic interest of two great powers, Britain and US, whose aim was to contain communism in Southeast Asia.

Diplomatically, Singapore navigated successfully between non-alignment and orientating itself closer to Britain and US. Taking advantage of US-Soviet rivalry in the region, Singapore, under Lee Kuan Yew, worked hard to anchor Britain and US in the region. Although Britain withdrew from its bases in Singapore by 1971, Singapore managed to anchor Britain along with Australia and New Zealand into FPDA, the regional security architecture. The FPDA was useful for two reasons. First, it built confidence between Malaysia and Singapore as there was an absence of bilateral relations on external security between both states.[7] Second, FPDA acted as counter-weight to Malaysia,[8] and potential Indonesian adventurism.[9]

On the US front, Singapore welcomed US presence even before Britain withdrew from Singapore from 1968 to 1971. One of the steps taken was to support US military involvement in South Vietnam then by providing R&R facilities for US troops deployed in the Vietnam War, and facilitating the US transportation of Vietnamese officers to Singapore for training in Johor.[10] Britain's withdrawal beginning in 1968 compelled Singapore to deepen further its relations with US.[11]

In developing its deterrence capability, two critical outcomes were derived from Singapore's close relations with Britain and US; acquisition of military capabilities at low cost, and access to great powers' military technology. Britain handed over its military bases and other equipment such as radar facilities to Singapore, thus saving the PAP-government hundreds of millions of dollars on military infrastructural development, a point discussed extensively in Chapter Four. Britain and US also provided armaments such as vessels, warplanes, APCs and artillery pieces.[12] At times, these armaments were supplied to Singapore at negligible or no cost. The financial savings allowed Singapore to further procure other armaments, thus improving its deterrence capability. Lastly, Singapore acquired advance

[7] San, Khoo How, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: If It Ain't Broke….", *Pointer: Quarterly Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces 26.4 (*2000): 107-14. P 4.

[8] Methven Philip, *The Five Power Defence Arrangements and Military Cooperation Among ASEAN States: Incompatible Models for Security in Southeast Asia*, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1992), p 112.

[9] Huxley, Tim, "Singapore's Strategic Outlook", in Emmers, Ralf, and Joseph Liow (eds), *Order and Security in Southeast Asia: Essays in Memory of Michael Leifer*, (Routledge, London, 2006), p 147.

[10] Ang, Cheng Guan, "Singapore and the Vietnam War", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 40(2),* (June 2009), p 362.

[11] Office of the Historian, "Telegram from the Embassy in Singapore to the State Department, Singapore, 3 January 1968", US State Department's website: (Accessed on 18 March 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d291.

[12] For example of US military sales to Singapore see Office of the Historian, "Memorandum From Thomas J. Barnes of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), Washington, 5 November 1975", US State Department's website: (Accessed on 25 April 2017), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve12/d301. See also SIPRI database.

radar and SAM systems from Britain, fighter-bombers and missile capabilities for its warships from US. These acquisition gave the SAF the technological edge over its Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts. By mid-1970s, Singapore's military superiority gave its officials the confidence to consider launching military intervention in Malaysia if there was a need to, a point which Singapore raised to visiting US officials in July 1975.[13]

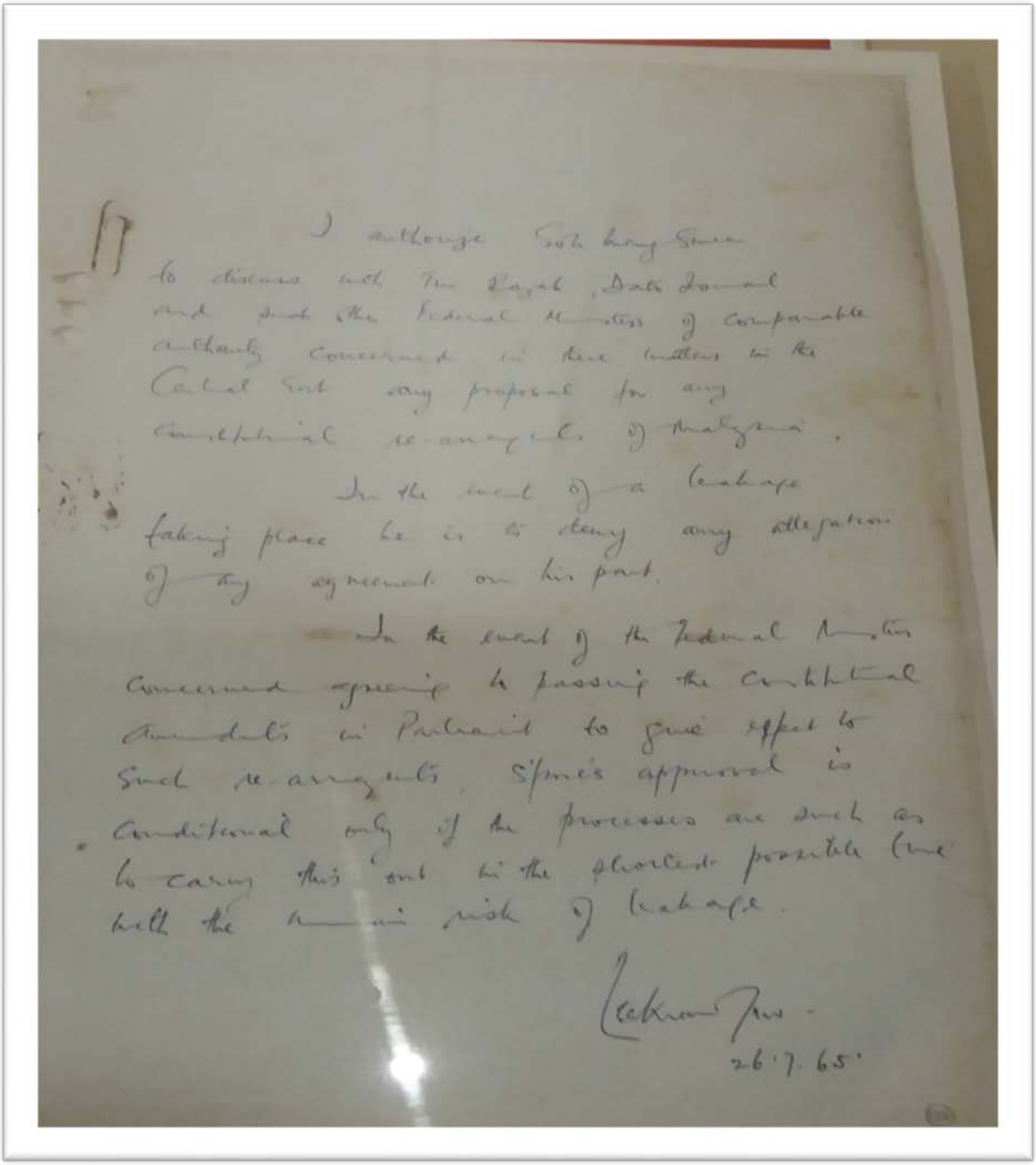
With Britain and US assistance, Singapore managed to achieve security against external threats. From being militarily impotent after its independence, by 1975, Singapore's military capability gave it the confident to consider military intervention on foreign soil. Indigenous military strength however, did not remove Singapore's continuous sense of vulnerability and reliance on great power for security, even in the 21st century.[14] Perhaps as a small state with its vulnerabilities, Singapore does not have any choice but continue seeking security under the aegis of a great power.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Du, Jifeng, "Singapore's security reliance on Washington will continue under Trump", *Global Times*, 6 December 2016. The author is a research fellow at the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

APPENDIX 1

Lee Kuan Yew's Authorization Letter for Goh Keng Swee to Commence Negotiation for Separation from Malaysia.



I authorise Goh Keng Swee
to discuss with Tun Razak, Dato Ismail
and such other Federal Ministers of Comparable
authority concerned in these matters in the
Central Govt any proposal for any
constitutional re-arrangements of Malaysia.

In the event of a breakage
taking place he is to deny any allegation
of any agreement on his part.

In the event of the Federal Ministers
concerned agreeing to passing the constitutional
amendments in Parliament to give effect to
such re-arrangements, S'pore's approval is
conditional only if the processes are such as
to carry this out in the shortest possible time
with the minimum risk of breakage.

Lee Kuan Yew
26.7.65

Lee Kuan Yew's letter authorising Dr Goh Keng Swee to negotiate the separation from Malaysia, dated 26 July 1965. Photo of document taken by Author during a visit to Singapore National Museum, 21st January 2017.

APPENDIX 2

Article V of the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia Act

Telephone No. 88350

Prime Minister,
Malaysia,
Kuala Lumpur

ARTICLE V

The parties hereto will enter into a treaty on external defence and mutual assistance providing that:-

(1) the parties hereto will establish a joint defence council for purposes of external defence and mutual assistance;

(2) the Government of Malaysia will afford to the Government of Singapore such assistance as may be considered reasonable and adequate for external defence, and in consideration thereof, the Government of Singapore will contribute from its own armed forces such units thereof as may be considered reasonable and adequate for such defence;

(3) the Government of Singapore will afford to the Government of Malaysia the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities used by its military forces within Singapore and will permit the Government of Malaysia to make such use of these bases and facilities as the Government of Malaysia may consider necessary for the purpose of external defence;

(4) each party will undertake not to enter into any treaty or agreement with a foreign country which may be detrimental to the independence and defence of the territory of the other party.

APPENDIX 3

British and US supplied warplanes and Surface to Air Missile.

British-supplied Hawker Hunter. The Hawker-Hunter was Singapore's first fighter jet. Photo taken by author on 12 February 2017, during a fieldwork trip to the Republic of Singapore's Air Force's Museum, Singapore.

US-supplied A4-S Skyhawks. Photo taken by author on 12 February 2017 during a fieldwork trip to the Republic of Singapore's Air Force's Museum, Singapore.

Bloodhound MK-II SAM that the British handed over to Singapore in June 1970. Photo taken by author on 12 February 2017 during a fieldwork trip to the Republic of Singapore's Air Force's Museum, Singapore.

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