

# **The Role of the United States and The “Asian Solution” Approach in the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation (1963-1966)**

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## *Abstract*

*The Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation between 1963-1966 was an important event attracting the attention of politicians and scholars alike as the conflict had threatened the long existing relations between the two countries. Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia was due to its refusal to accept the formation of the new federation of Malaysia, founded on 16th September 1963. Sukarno's confrontational stand on this had broken the long-standing sentiments of regional brotherhood or “saudara serumpun” that had nurtured between the two countries for many years. The conflict also saw the involvement of major powers like the United States (U.S.), Britain, China and Russia in the midst of bipolar power struggle between the communist and the anti-communist as part of the ongoing Cold War. The three years of confrontation witnessed great attempts at peace efforts by U.S. Although U.S. involvement in the conflict was merely as a moderator for both countries it was also fueled by its efforts of containment of communism in the Southeast Asian region. The U.S. viewed that the conflict should be resolved in the context of “Asian solution” as it involved two Asian countries. A settlement to the Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation was finally achieved through the Bangkok Agreement, signed in August 1966. This paper discusses the role of U.S. in its attempts at finding an amicable settle to the confrontation in the form of “Asian solution.”*

**Keywords:** Malaysia, Indonesia, Confrontation, United States, Bangkok Treaty.

## **Introduction**

David Easter in his book “*Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia 1960-1966*” considers the Malaysia – Indonesia Confrontation as an ‘undeclared war’. However, most scholars agree, this event as the biggest diplomatic conflict that severed ties between the two Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, it also got a few super powers such as Britain, the U.S., Russia and China involved in the conflict. However compared to Russia and China, Britain and the U.S. involvements were more obvious and direct. This was because of the U.S. role as South East Asia’s ‘security umbrella’ during the Cold War that period. As for Britain, through her commitment in the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) she was responsible for the security of Malaysia. Besides, Britain was an ally of the U.S. in the international security strategy scheme especially in conflicts with the communist bloc during the Cold War. These two super powers were greatly concerned about the Malaysia-

Indonesia confrontation as they feared that it would develop into a conflict macro in nature. Thus the confrontation became an important issue in these two western allies' foreign policy talks at the time.

There is much literature on different aspects of the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation written both by western and Asian scholars. For example, D. Hindley, in his paper on 'Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia: Search for Motives' has discussed the Indonesian domestic political problems as the reason for Sukarno's expansionist interests towards Malaysia in 1960s era. Besides that, according to Hindley, the foreign policy objectives of Indonesia against Malaysia at that time was also intended to divert the Indonesians attention from the problems of economic recession in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the earliest works on the Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation. Other writers have also discussed the role of major powers like the U.S. in its efforts to end the confrontation.

J.A.C Mackie in his book, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963 – 1966* has discussed on the circumstances and the involvement of the great powers, particularly the U.S. in its efforts to end the confrontation.<sup>2</sup> U.S. involvement was also examined by Kivimaki who stated that U.S. hegemony preceded as a complement to other Western powers in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> D. Easter has discussed British participation in the Malaysian-Indonesian conflict based on British official records.<sup>4</sup> Asian scholars have also written on the confrontation. Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, for example, has written on the role of the British in the conflict based on British records<sup>5</sup> while M. Kunaselan in his book titled *Konfrontasi Malaysia-Indonesia 1963-1966* has focused on the negotiations between Malaysia and Indonesia to settle the dispute.<sup>6</sup> This article tries to explain the role of the US and its "Asian Solution" approach in the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation.

### **The United States' Approach in the Malaysia-Indonesia Conflict**

The Confrontation was the direct outcome of the decision by the Federation of Malaya to form a new Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, consisting of, apart from the ten states of Malaya, the north Borneo states of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Singapore. Sukarno viewed the formation of Malaysia as an act of neo-colonialism, a British agenda to surround Indonesia. Hence Indonesia launched the "Ganyang Malaysia" (Crush Malaysia) campaign because Sukarno viewed the decision to form Malaysia as a challenge to his own idea of Greater Indonesia.<sup>7</sup>

As for the British, they felt the formation of the new federation would better serve the region. As stated by Easter:

It was the way for Britain to decolonise in South East Asia but still retain the crucial Singapore military base, and to do so on a cheaper, more cost effective basis. By securing Singapore base through Malaysia, Britain could maintain herself as a global power.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore the Confrontation was viewed as being detrimental to British and other super power interests in the region. A meeting between Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. (ANZUS) was held from 16 to 18 October 1963, in Washington D.C. to discuss the Indonesian confrontation policy on Malaysia.<sup>9</sup> Sir David Ormsby Gore, British Ambassador in Washington reminded the members at the meeting that Sukarno practiced expansionist policy and wished to dominate South East Asian region. In his view, if Indonesia with the help of the Philippines were to cause the new Federation of Malaysia to collapse, Western power interests in the region would surely be jeopardised. Based on this consideration, Gore, supported by Sir G. Barwick, Australia's Foreign Minister and Alistair McIntoch, New Zealand's Foreign Secretary believed that Indonesia's aggression against Malaysia should be halted.<sup>10</sup> The meeting decided that Australia, New Zealand and Britain would continue their commitment to defend Malaysia and even expressed that it was the Commonwealth's main responsibility.<sup>11</sup> These countries' worries were also based on the U.S. intelligence that Indonesia was believed to have made covert agreement with China to divide the Southeast Asian Region into their respective spheres of influence. The said division included the Asia's mainland, Malaysia and Singapore that would be placed under China's influence with clusters of islands in the region would be under Indonesia's.<sup>12</sup>

The Western powers were also very concerned about the power struggle between the communist and anti-communist bloc in the region in the Cold War. As such Indonesia had to be kept with the western bloc. This became the main factor in influencing the U.S. approach towards Indonesia during the Confrontation. Indonesia was crucial to U.S. policy in Southeast Asia, especially concerning critical matters of security in Vietnam and Laos. At the same time, Indonesia was considered to act as a buffer against communism that was proliferating in the region, especially to prevent it from spreading to other countries in the Pacific region like Australia and New Zealand.

However, the main concern of the US was that Indonesia's anti-imperialistic policies were more in line with the anti-west communist bloc. This concern became a dilemma in formulating the US policy towards Indonesia. It was felt that Indonesia's confrontational stand would worsen the US position in the region. In William Bundy's (U.S. Foreign Policy Adviser and Cold War Adviser) memorandum to President Johnson, he said:

We are on sharp downward curve in US-Indo relations, largely because of the continued threat to “crush” Malaysia and our necessary opposition to it. Sukarno has now adopted a far more overtly anti-US line, which makes holding up further aid, essential. At the same time, the very fact that we're on a slippery slope makes it all more important not to burn all our bridges to Indonesia: (1) with Vietnam and Laos already on our Southeast Asia plate, we can ill-afford a major crisis with Indonesia too just now;...<sup>13</sup>

U.S. policy towards Indonesia was also determined by the country's advantage of having 100 million people, the most populous in Southeast Asia and the fifth in the world. The U.S.

viewed that it would be a disaster if Indonesia fell to the communists. The sheer number of people in the country supporting communism would give it strength to oppose the anti-communist West. Therefore the U.S. considered Indonesia as an important platform to counter- balance the strength of the communist power in Southeast Asia if the country were to have closer ties with it. This is mentioned in U.S. official records:

The programs we have planned are there now because we think they are “essential to our national interest.” This is not because we like Sukarno, but because we are contending for the long-range future of a country of 100 million with great resources in a strategic location.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, the U.S. approach towards Indonesia was actually driven by other factors too. One of it was that Washington did not want a chaotic Indonesia as U.S. oil companies operating in Indonesia could be declared state-owned. Clearly the two oil companies worth USD500 million also influenced the U.S. State Department policy on Indonesia. Apart from that, there was the US concern over the growing influence of the Indonesian Communist Party [*CPI Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI)*], and the country’s inclination to cooperate with Beijing.<sup>15</sup>

Although Indonesia was crucial to the U.S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia, U.S. had to consider Malaysia’s security as well as it was anti-communist and pro-West. Malaysia was also a former British colony, a strong ally of the U.S. Thus the U.S. had to play a balancing role in the conflict by taking pragmatic and realistic steps to settle Indonesia-Malaysia dispute.

### **Kennedy’s Involvement and the “Asian Solution”**

An effort to improve Malaysia-Indonesia ties was made through the U.S. Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy, who brought a peace mission from the U.S. President. Kennedy’s presence was also to ensure the U.S.-Indonesia ties were not affected because of Indonesia’s confrontation policy with Malaysia.<sup>16</sup> Kennedy was chosen by virtue of the power and authority of his name and also because of his active participation in the West Irian issue that had ended in Indonesia’s favour. Kennedy also had personal ties with Sukarno by virtue of his late brother President Kennedy’s friendship with the Indonesian president.<sup>17</sup> In fact, according to H.P. Jones, the former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, U.S.-Indonesia ties in the mid 1963 was very much influenced by the friendship between the two presidents. The choice of Kennedy was partially to persuade the Indonesian President to change his mind and partially as a therapeutic value as the Kennedys were still in shock over the tragic assassination of John F. Kennedy.<sup>18</sup> More importantly, the diplomatic mission borne by Kennedy was to ensure that the two countries – Malaysia and Indonesia would be able to find a solution to the dispute based on “Asian Solution.”<sup>19</sup>

From the U.S. perspective, the conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia should be resolved within the Asian’s spirit due to the fact that it involved two Asian countries. This solution is known as the “Asian Solution”. The U.S. approach was very important in view of the fact that the two countries involved had a better understanding of their needs in finding a solution to the conflict without pressure from any other party including the Western powers. Therefore, U.S. felt that, in the context of the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation, the two countries should solve their problems themselves and be assisted by countries only acceptable by both countries such as the U.S. or Japan or Thailand.

Thus in this connection, the first step towards finding a solution to the conflict was to deal with Sukarno. This was because in the context of Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation, Sukarno was the key to the whole problem. The meeting between Kennedy and Sukarno was arranged by the Prime Minister of Japan, Hayato Ikeda, in Tokyo. Kennedy arrived in Tokyo on 16 January 1964 and in the meeting with Sukarno, he explained the implication of Indonesia’s action on Malaysia. Kennedy was worried that if the Confrontation policy continued, the American public would oppose any bilateral ties between the two countries and Indonesia would stand to lose friends at the international level.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. Attorney General also stated that the main objective of his visit was to convince Sukarno that his military policy on Malaysia would jeopardise U.S.-Indonesia ties, especially in relation to their cooperation programs that had existed for some time.<sup>21</sup> Kennedy also tried to persuade Sukarno to accept the fact that Malaysia was not West Irian and that Indonesia should also accept the fact that the U.S. recognised Malaysia’s existence.”<sup>22</sup>

At this meeting, Kennedy also suggested that Indonesia and Britain withdraw their troops concurrently from the border and conduct a Three Leader Summit. Sukarno concurred with this suggestion and also agreed to an armistice and a ministerial level talk to be held in Bangkok in early February. Kennedy also made it clear that if Sukarno guaranteed the withdrawal of his army, he would then fly to Kuala Lumpur and Manila to encourage leaders of the two countries to confer as soon as possible in order to find the “Asian Solution.”<sup>23</sup>

When Kennedy arrived in Kuala Lumpur on 21 January 1964 and informed Tunku Abdul Rahman the Malaysian Premier about this, he agreed to an armistice but had doubts about withdrawing troops as he doubted Sukarno’s sincerity. In Tunku’s view, Sukarno signed the armistice as a temporary tactical device. He asserted that any armistice should be accompanied with withdrawal of Indonesian troops.<sup>24</sup>

The purpose of Kennedy’s visit was a way for the U.S. to solve the conflict between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. This was thought to be vital as the Malaysia-Indonesia conflict involved the Philippines as well since the country too had laid claims over Sabah. British Foreign Secretary James Butler’s telegram to the U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, dated 21 January 1964 stated that Kennedy’s attempts to find the ‘Asian Solution’ should be supported if the talks could present a way towards peace on a voluntary

basis and without Indonesia's pressure on Malaysia. Butler also stated that they supported the establishment of "Maphilindo", a regional establishment comprising Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia.<sup>25</sup>

Butler was also worried that if the three governments were left to conduct talks without the presence of any Western power, their interests could be left out. He felt the need for western representation. In his view, the Indonesia's main purpose was its opposition towards *Anglo – Malayan Defence Agreement* (AMDA) and the army base facility in Singapore acquired by Britain through the treaty. He was also worried that Indonesia would use this as a pre-condition for ending the Confrontation and re-establishing ties with Malaysia.

Butler also stated that in the event that happens, it would not only be a problem to Britain, it would also involve Western Allies in the region. The worst problem would be that the end of Indonesia's Confrontation would lead to Malaysia being brought under Indonesia's influence which would in turn affect the whole of the Southeast Asia. Thailand would then rethink of her support for the Western Allies, affecting situations in Laos and Cambodia and probably the situation in Vietnam as well.<sup>26</sup>

Due to his concerns mentioned above, Butler proposed that there be a general revision of policy on Southeast Asia in the meeting between the British Prime Minister and the American President due to be held in February 1964. The policy revision should not only involve matters pertaining to Britain and Malaysia and the U.S. and Vietnam, it should also include other Western Powers in Southeast Asia.<sup>27</sup>

Britain hoped that the U.S. commitment could be acquired in the effort towards ending the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation. Thus in its talks with Malaysia, Britain had set the main issues that Malaysia should be aware of while negotiating with Indonesia. Malaysia should refuse any proposition by Indonesia to close the British base in Singapore or to conduct another referendum in Sabah and Sarawak.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the British ambassador to U.S. met President Johnson and requested the U.S. not to impose pressure or conditions for Tunku to attend the Asian Summit without acknowledgment from Indonesia. The President meanwhile gave assurances that the U.S. strictly opposed Indonesia's Confrontation policy on Malaysia.

Kennedy's peace effort visits took 12 days. He ended his visit in a meeting with British Prime Minister Douglas Home in London. At this meeting, he convinced Home that Sukarno desired a peaceful solution but needed to resolve resistance from PKI and the Indonesian army over the question of confrontation with Malaysia. Throughout his effort in finding the Asian Solution, Kennedy was criticised for his persuasion-based approach and the U.S. tolerance towards for Indonesia. In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian high-ranking officials had also expressed their concern to U.S. Attorney General over Sukarno remaining in power indefinitely in Indonesia and also over whether the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) would win or lose under Sukarno.<sup>29</sup>



Following the Kennedy-Sukarno-Tunku agreement, a conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Bangkok on 5-10 February 1964. The Indonesian delegation was led by Dr. Subandrio while the Malaysian delegation was led by Tun Abdul Razak. The conference that was chaired by Thailand's Foreign Minister Thanat Koman was also attended by the Philippines' Foreign Secretary Salvador P. Lopez. Important issues discussed were the question of armistice and withdrawal of Indonesian troops from Malaysian territories. On the question of armistice, an agreement was reached to appoint observers from Thailand to supervise the process and they pledged to ensure that the truce would be well-implemented. The three Foreign Ministers agreed to place a coordinator in Bangkok to assist Thailand in drawing up terms of the cease-fire. They also agreed that if fighting still continued between the belligerents, a cease-fire order would be released while waiting for the result of the investigation.<sup>30</sup>

The meeting initially agreed to have the belligerents disarm under the supervision of Thailand but this plan failed when Indonesia and Malaysia insisted on different requirements for the process. Indonesia was of the opinion that disarming did not mean withdrawing whereas Malaysia insisted on withdrawal as a pre-condition to it.<sup>31</sup> This confusion arose from the fact that the issue was not mentioned in the guiding principles to a cease-fire. Thanat Koman supported Malaysia, asserting that if Indonesia truly wanted to resolve the conflict, the withdrawal of troops should be implemented. He questioned Indonesia's reluctance to a withdrawal. Dr. Subandrio replied that the withdrawal of Indonesian army was a political question. He also stated the reason why the Malaysian proposition was unacceptable to them was that it would besmirch Indonesia's image and that the issue would be decided upon after referring to their President.<sup>32</sup>

During the negotiation process, in some instances, the Indonesia's diplomats did not want to show that they would concede. For example, Dr. Subandrio requested that the word “retreat” contained in the draft declaration be dropped as the delegation believed that the use of the word carried the meaning of defeat on the part of Indonesia. In this discussion too Indonesia denied that the confrontation with Malaysia was aimed to expand her power. In fact, Dr. Subandrio claimed that they wanted to ensure peace and political stability for Indonesia. He also alleged that the British had trapped them by enforcing the “divide and rule policy”.<sup>33</sup>

As expected, Indonesia had also demanded that a referendum be held in Sabah and Sarawak. The Bangkok Conference clearly showed the many diplomatic tactics than real desire to resolve the conflict and it ended without any concrete solution. According to Mackie, this negotiation created different perceptions among the countries involved:

The Malaysians felt strongly that it was up to the Indonesians and Filipinos to make concessions; they regarded themselves as the aggrieved party who was being attacked after having carried out their obligations under the Manila Agreement. They should not now be expected to offer concessions

in the face of arms aggressions. The Indonesians on the other hand, felt they had already made a concession in agreeing to accept cease-fire and come to the conference table.<sup>34</sup>

It was quite clear that the main focus of the Bangkok Conference was the resolution of the Malaysian-Indonesian conflict through the withdrawal of Indonesian troops. But as stated by Dr. Subandrio, it could affect the image of Indonesia and consequently the U.S. suggested that the withdrawal be made without any announcement or publicity.<sup>35</sup> But a ceasefire agreement was not achieved although the U.S. had expected it to be successful and that negotiations could continue. James Forrestal, the U.S. National Security Consular Officer in his letter to U.S. Foreign Policy Advisor and Cold War Advisor, Bundy, said that he himself did not understand why negotiations to stop the conflict had failed despite efforts that had been undertaken at all levels. He recalled that in the context of Malaysia - Indonesia strife it had to do with the burden borne by the U.S. in the Vietnam War.<sup>36</sup>

The failure to end the conflict through the “Asian Solution” had caused the Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation to drag on and Dr. Subandrio in his declaration to the assembly of Indonesian volunteers in West Kalimantan had stated: “One hundred million armed people are behind you” and introduced AM Azahari as Prime Minister of the United Republic of North Borneo.<sup>37</sup> The failure of the “Asian Solution” approach stated by Indonesian Foreign Minister as a ‘magic formula’ (if the goal was successfully achieved), was actually expected, due to Indonesia lack of seriousness to resolve the conflicts that were taking place. At the same time, Malaysia too did not want to budge from the decisions that had been agreed upon in the past. Evidently, The U.S. did not bring peace in the Malaysia-Indonesia conflict through the “Asian Solution” approach. It was quite clear that both parties involved failed to show a willingness to accept peace terms along *quid pro quo*. In view of the seriousness of Indonesia’s invasion of Malaysian territory, the British government suggested that Malaysia should bring the issue to the United Nations (UN) Security Council. The U.S. did not object to this course of action but admitted that they were worried about the reaction that they would get from Sukarno. But Butler had outlined three forms of appropriate action, namely:

1. Based on Malaysia’s request, the U.S. along with the other Western powers would support Malaysia in the Security Council meeting.
2. Sukarno would be issued a warning that if Indonesia failed to pull out troops and resume negotiations, the U.S. would give full support to Malaysia.
3. Joining delegation of Asian countries such as Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and others in Indonesia.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, the U.S. and Britain promised to support Malaysia’s resolutions that would be submitted, but was worried about retaliatory acts by Indonesia because of their involvement in the war in Vietnam. The U.S. was also worried the Indonesia-Malaysia conflict could escalate, and this led President Johnson to request H. P. Jones



(U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia) to appease Sukarno for of the following reasons: The U.S. did not understand why Indonesia was not pleased with them when it was the U.S. and no other power that had helped Indonesia since the early years of independence. The U.S. President felt offended by Sukarno’s speech on August 17, 1964, as over the years the U.S. had protected not only Indonesia from the threat of Communist China but also the rest of Southeast Asia. When Indonesia declared “war” against the U.S., it was seen as a victory for the Chinese.

1. The U.S. had tried to explain to Sukarno that Indonesia would lose U.S. support if they invaded Malaysia and that was why the U.S. had sent the Attorney General Kennedy to promote peace.
2. President Johnson still had hope for a peaceful solution. It was better to negotiate than fight. The U.S. also hoped to establish relationships with key countries such as Indonesia and important leaders like Sukarno who was thought of to be as great as President Kennedy. However, Sukarno should also understand the U.S. position should they invade Malaysia.<sup>39</sup>

On the question of Malaysia’s complaint to the UN Security Council of the United Nations, the British expected support from the U.S. as a friend and an ally in Southeast Asia and offered assurance that they would not attack Indonesia if the country stop attacks on Malaysia. If there was to be any counter-attack it would be very limited. The U.S. replied that they could not prevent Malaysia and Britain from taking their case to the UN if Indonesian troops wanted to invade Malaysia’s territory, “We can’t stop the UK and Malaysia going to the Security Council if 30-man paratroopers’ drop proves to be fact.”<sup>40</sup>

Malaysia also asked the West to defend her should attempts at the UN Security Council failed. For this purpose, the Australian ambassador met Bundy to talk about the role that could be played by the ANZUS. The U.S. agreed with this view, but asserted to Australia that they should not consider the U.S. to get involved in the event of the escalation of conflict. At the same time the U.S. also recognized that it was important for Malaysia to be given security guarantees if Indonesia continued to launch attacks. Indonesian soldiers’ incursions into Malaysian territory were seen to be leading to large and open hostilities between the two countries.<sup>41</sup> But the U.S. viewed that British display of their warships in the Straits of Sunda as provocative as it was done before the incursions by the Indonesian military. The U.S. was also concerned that the British action of displaying their carrier and destroyers would cause Sukarno to react with the might of Indonesian military comprising six to seven ships, whereas Britain had only three ships in the area to protect Malaysia. According to the U.S., this action on the part of the British would fuel Indonesia’s anger and it would complicate the confrontation case that would be brought to the UN Security Council.<sup>42</sup>

At the Security Council, the debate on the issue of encroachment received responses from many countries. Apart from Britain and the U.S. which certainly supported Malaysia,

delegates from Norway had presented a resolution known as the “Norwegian Resolution” which expressed disappointment and concern over the conflict that was taking place in Southeast Asia. This resolution also specifically referred to the action of the Indonesian invasion of Malaysia in September 1964.<sup>43</sup> The Norwegian delegate also appealed to the parties involved to respect each other’s territorial integrity and prevent violence and resolve conflicts through negotiation. But the resolution could not be implemented because the Russians had used their veto power against it.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Security Council conference failed to create an impact on the effort to resolve the dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia, it had at least brought the issue to the international level. This was evident when members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Afro-Asia such as India, Morocco and Ivory Coast voiced their opposition to Indonesia’s aggression against Malaysia. Indonesia was surprised by the opposition, as Sukarno had a strong influence among these nations. Even though the early negotiations had failed, the confrontation between the two countries finally ended with the signing of Bangkok Treaty. The treaty was signed on 11 August 1963 by Tun Abdul Razak Hussain (Malaysia’s Deputy Prime Minister) as a Malaysia representative and Tun Adam Malik (Indonesian Foreign Minister) as a representative of Indonesia.

### **Conclusion**

The U.S. involvement in the political circumstances of the Confrontation was driven by the Cold War that was taking place in international politics at the time. In keeping with its position as a superpower, the U.S. role was to counterbalance the conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition, as the power that oversaw Southeast Asia’s regional security, the U.S. policy of containment of communism became an important element in shaping its approach in the Malaysian-Indonesian conflict. In fact, the U.S. also tried to minimize, as far as possible, military conflict in the region because of the civil war that was going on in Vietnam during the same period. Indonesia’s importance in U.S. policy of containment of communism is very clear because of the position of Indonesia was considered as the last stronghold in the fight against communist expansion in Southeast Asia. U.S. involvement in the peace negotiations between Malaysia and Indonesia was due to it being the one Western power with close ties with Indonesia. Its involvement in the Malaysian-Indonesian conflict was also driven by the it’s close ties with Britain. Ironically, even though the U.S. was Britain’s ally, in some circumstances the superpower’s policies on Indonesia contradicted British interests. This was evident when the U.S. decided to channel economic aid to Indonesia. But for the U.S., the approach was aimed to mitigate Indonesia’s Confrontation with Malaysia while at the same time the U.S. was convinced that Malaysian security was guaranteed by AMDA. From one angle, the diversity of approaches used by the U.S. on the issue of confrontation was a manifestation of a superpower’s cockeyed foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

## End Notes

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<sup>2</sup> J.A.C. Mackie. (1974). *Confrontations: The Indonesia-Malaysia dispute 1963-1966*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> T. Kivimaki .(2003). *US-Indonesian Hegemonic Bargaining Strength of Weakness*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Denmark, Ashgate.

<sup>4</sup> D. Easter. (2004). *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia 1960-1966*. London: Tauris Academic Studies.

<sup>5</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud . (2000). *Konfrontasi Malaysia-Indonesia*, Penerbit UKM: Bangi.

<sup>6</sup> M. Kunaselan. (1996). *Hubungan Malaysia-Indonesia 1957-1970*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

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<sup>8</sup> D. Easter. (2004). *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia 1960-1966*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> DEFE 11/784, telegram dari Gore di Washington ke Pejabat Luar, no. 3232, 18 Oktober 1963.

<sup>10</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, *Konfrontasi Malaysia-Indonesia*, pp.129.

<sup>11</sup> DEFE 11/784, telegram dari Gore di Washington ke Pejabat Luar, no. 3232, 18 Oktober 1963.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum on discussions between Ambassador Jones and Tunku Abdul Rahman, February 15, 1969, Jones papers, box 69, T. Kivimaki, *U.S.-Indonesian Hegemonic Bargaining Strength of Weakness*, 141.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson/1/, Washington, August 31, 1964. /1/Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Indonesia, Vol. II. Cables and Memos, 5/64-8/64, [2 of 2]. Secret. U.S. Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4442.htm>,. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson/1/, Washington, August 31, 1964. /1/Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Indonesia, Vol. II. Cables and Memos, 5/64-8/64, [2 of 2]. Secret. US Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4442.htm>, 4.

<sup>15</sup> DO 169/70, letter from Foreign Office to British delegation in OEDC at Paris, no. 1028, (39/32/G), 4 July 1963.

<sup>16</sup>DO 169/404, brief for the Secretary of State, Defence and Overseas policy Committee, 15 January 1964.

<sup>17</sup>A. Brackman. (1966) . *Southeast Asia's Second Front: The power struggle in the Malay Archipelago*: London: Frederick A Preager, 216.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Read) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/ , Washington, January 13, 1964, The Attorney General's Meeting with Sukarno, U.S. Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4425.htm>. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 172.

<sup>21</sup>Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 172.

<sup>22</sup>*Wall Street Journal*, February 15, 1963 in H.P. Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream*, Gunung Agung (S) Singapore MCMLXXX, Singapore, 1971, 269.

<sup>23</sup>Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Read) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/ , Washington, January 13, 1964, The Attorney General's Meeting with Sukarno, US Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4425.htm>. 18.

<sup>24</sup>DO 169/404, brief for the Secretary of State, Defence and Overseas policy Committee, 15 January 1964.

<sup>25</sup>Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in India, Washington, January 23, 1964, /1/ Source: National Archive and Record Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL INDON-MALAYSIA. Secret. U.S. Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4425.htm>, pp. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, pp. 138.

<sup>29</sup> Brackman, pp. 216.

<sup>30</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, pp. 139.

<sup>31</sup> DO 169/518, telegram from Foreign Office to Ankara, no. 42 saving, 11 February 1964.

<sup>32</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, pp. 139.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>J.A.C. Mackie. (1974). *Konfrontasi The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963-1966*. Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur. 226.

<sup>35</sup>National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 32-1, INDON-MALAYSIA. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Cuthell, cleared by Harriman, and approved by Hilsman. Also sent to Manila, Djakarta, Bangkok, London, Canberra, Wellington, and Singapore and repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Washington, February 18, 1964, U.S. Department of State, from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4448.htm>, pp. 6.

<sup>36</sup>Memorandum From Micheal V. Forrestal of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/Washington, March 5, 1964. Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. I, Memos, 11/63-3/64. Secret. U.S. Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4448.htm>, pp. 12.

<sup>37</sup>Jones, pp. 320.

<sup>38</sup>Letter From Secretary of State Rusk to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Butler/1/Washington, March 13, 1964. /1/Source National Archive and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 32-1 INDON-MALAYSIA. Secret. US Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xxvi/4448.htm>, pp. 25.

<sup>39</sup> Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Johnson/1/, Washington, September 3, 1964. /1/Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. III, Memos, 9/64-2/65, [2 of 2]. Secret. US Department of State, from, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonib/xxvi/4442.htm>, pp. 8.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, pp. 155.

<sup>44</sup>Rohani Haji Ab Ghani, pp. 264.

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