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The Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (JDFR) is committed to the advancement of scholarly knowledge by encouraging discussion among several branches of international studies, foreign relations, diplomacy, strategic and security studies and development studies. The primary objective of JDFR is to enhance international studies, foreign policy and diplomacy as an art and science within the context of Malaysia in particular and the world in general. Founded in 1999, the Journal publishes articles, book reviews and interviews whose content and approach are of interest to a wide range of scholars and policy makers. As such, readership consists of individuals in government, business, academia and education both locally and regionally as well as internationally. JDFR is published by an Editorial Board from the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Malaysia. In addition, distinguished individuals from the diplomatic corps, scholars and prominent policy makers have been appointed to serve on the Advisory Board of the Journal.

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Editorial Note

This is a Special Edition of the Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Malaysia's independence—the only edition of the Journal for 2007, instead of the usual two per year.

This edition, contains, among others, articles on two prominent Malaysian politicians-cum-diplomats, namely Tun Dr. Ismail Abdul Rahman and Tun Omar Ong Yoke Lin, both members in the Cabinet of Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Malaysia's first Prime Minister. Both served with distinction in Tunku's Cabinet and as diplomats *par excellence* as Ambassador to the United States and concurrently as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York during the critical early years of the country's existence as an independent nation. As diplomats, they had in their own unique way contributed to the promotion of the new nation on the international stage, both at the capital of the super-power and at the headquarters of the United Nations.

To give a flavour of the diplomacy of the nation in the early days, we have included, as appendices to Professor Saravanamuttu's essay, excerpts of the 12th Session (678th and 688th Plenary Meetings) of the United Nations General Assembly, containing the inaugural address by Tun Dr. Ismail upon the admission of the Federation of Malaya as the 82nd member of the United Nations on 17 September 1957 and his speech a week later on 25th September 1957 at the Plenary Session of the UNGA. The two excerpts give the reader an idea not only of the diplomatic style of the country's first Permanent Representative to the United Nations and first Ambassador to the United States but also describe the foreign policy principles and orientation of the newly independent nation, much of which remain intact to this day, and which attest to the influential role that Tun Dr. Ismail played as one of the early architects of the country's foreign policy, alongside three other prominent figures namely, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Ghazali Shafie. IDFR would

like to extend its gratitude to the Library of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, for providing copies of the documents, and the United Nations Headquarters, New York, for permission to reproduce them in this journal.

Tun Ismail—Early Architect of Malaysian Foreign Policy

By Johan Saravanamuttu

Dr. Johan Saravanamuttu is currently Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore. Former Professor of Political Science at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Penang, where he served as Dean of the School of Social Sciences (1994-1996) and as Dean of the Research Platform on Social Transformation (2003-2006). In 1997, he took up the Visiting Chair in ASEAN and International Studies at the University of Toronto. His published works include the first major study of Malaysia's foreign policy (1983), ASEAN regional non-governmental organizations (1986) and the nexus between industrialization and the institutionalization of authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia (1991). Recent publications include New Politics in Malaysia (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003; edited with Francis Loh) and Political Islam in Southeast Asia, Special Issue (Guest Editor), Global Change Peace & Security (Vol. 16, No.2, June 2004).

INTRODUCTION

The biography of Tun Dr. Ismail, *The Reluctant Politician*, written by Ooi Kee Beng (2006)¹ has given us some important information and insights about the role of Tun Dr. Ismail in the formulation of Malaysia's early foreign policy. As we know, Tun (Dr.) Ismail Haji Abdul Rahman was not only Deputy Prime Minister at the peak of his career before he passed away in 1973, but he was also Minister of External Affairs over the years 1959 till 1960. On top of this, he was Malaysia's Minister Plenipotentiary, first Ambassador to the US and Permanent Representative to the United Nations from September 1957 till February 1959.

This brief essay will explore Tun Ismail's role in the formulation of and influence over overall foreign policy as well as several significant aspects of Malaysia's

¹ 2006. Ooi Kee Beng. *The Reluctant Politician: Tun Dr. Ismail and His Time*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

foreign policy, namely: Malaysian-American relations, Malaysia's orientation towards communism, attitudes towards the People's Republic of China, the proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, and Singapore's separation from Malaysia. In writing this essay, apart from using Ooi's biography, I will also draw directly from material found in some of the Tun Ismail Papers deposited at the Library of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, and parts of my own book published in 1983 on Malaysia's foreign policy.

Perhaps it would be germane to first contextualise Tun Ismail's role in foreign policy by drawing on the rich narrative provided by Ooi's book on Tun Ismail, the 'reluctant' politician. In spite of this political reticence, how did such a person become virtually the third most important politician in Malaysian history and, as some have even suggested, 'the best prime minister Malaysia never had'?

RELUCTANT POLITICIAN

After completing his medical studies in Melbourne, Ismail returned to open up a practice as a doctor in his native Johore in 1945. Ismail's own family was already deeply involved in public affairs, his father, Abdul Rahman Yassin, having been president of the Senate and his brother Suleiman, having been in Tunku's circle since Cambridge days, who was involved in the independence movement and was later High Commissioner to Australia. Ooi gives an interesting account of how Ismail was persuaded to enter politics, essentially by the Tunku, and to become the Alliance member of the Executive Council of the Federal Legislative Council in 1953. Tunku himself had demurred taking up the position as he wanted to focus on the independence process. After independence, it was again the Tunku who prevailed on Ismail to lead Malaysia's mission at the United States and the United Nations.

In his various dealings with superiors and subordinates Ismail cut a character that was principled, if feisty. As Minister Plenipotentiary in New York, he worked hard to maintain Malaysia's anti-communist stance and non-recognition of the People's Republic of China in the face of the continuing communist insurgency in Malaysia. He was therefore incensed and immediately threatened to resign when the Tunku blurted out in The Netherlands that it was not a bad idea to consider recognizing China. The Tunku, who belatedly realized his mistake,

recalled later that Ismail tried to submit his resignation a few times but because the Tunku deliberately avoided him, the resignation never came.

Ismail was also not one to suffer fools and he detested incompetence. It is interesting to note that while in New York, Ismail was often irritated by the manner in which some of his subordinates under-performed, while he praised and thought well of persons who were responsible and also conducted their work intelligently. Among the individuals who won Ismail's respect were: Musa Hitam (former deputy premier), Mohamed Sopiee (former Labour Party leader, who became First Secretary to Ismail in New York), Ismail Ali (later to be Bank Negara Governor), Albert Talalla (diplomat), Suffian Hashim (Chief Justice) and Lim Chong Eu (MCA leader, later Gerakan leader). The Kuoks, Philip and Robert, were close friends and in the book copious reference is made to Ismail's conversations and intimations with both brothers. William, the third brother, who died as a guerilla at the hands of the British, is also mentioned in Ooi's book. Other family friends and associates included the Cheahs and Puthuchearys.

It is clear that Ismail was a pragmatist while being staunchly democratic in his approach to politics. In spite of his gloomy May 13 statement that "democracy is dead in Malaysia", it was very evident that after the May 1969 incident, he was working hard to resurrect democracy. Forced to re-emerge from his retirement, he played a crucial role under Tun Razak in the six-member National Operations Council (NOC), and for all intents and purposes, Razak depended heavily on Ismail for final decisions. Interestingly, Ismail initially pressed for Harun Idris's arrest but was dissuaded by Hanif Omar who said that the first incidents of May 13 occurred in Gombak, not near Kampong Baru in Kuala Lumpur. Most importantly Ismail cogently argued against any military takeover or martial law which was apparently what the Tunku had wanted in the beginning. The sense was that Ismail was conscientious about the eventual return to democratic politics as much as he was uncompromising about stemming political instability. Detentions and arrests comprising all major ethnic groups totaled 8,114 by July 5. Ismail also dealt firmly with the Malay "ultras". Mahathir Mohamad was expelled from UMNO on July 12 and Musa Hitam was sent off for study leave to Sussex University. Tengku Razaleigh in an interview said it was Ismail who wanted Mahathir expelled and it was also Ismail who stopped two attempts to re-admit him into UMNO (Ooi, 2006: 206).

The picture one gets of Ismail the man is clearly that of a person who was liberal-minded, had close associates from all the communities of Malaysia, and indeed, some of his closest friends were non-Malays, some of them left-leaning.

ANTI-COMMUNISM, CHINA POLICY, US AID

Like most people of the Tunku's generation Ismail had strong views about communism. As a diplomat and as Malaysia's acting foreign minister, he ably argued for Malaysia's anti-communist and pro-Western stances and worked hard to be on friendly terms with the US not least of all so as to source US financial aid for Malaysia.

Ooi writes of how Ismail's straightforward style of presenting his views flustered some diplomats at the United Nations. In his intervention in the plenary session of the General Assembly on 25 September 1957, he had obliquely admonished China arguing against its admission into the world body since in his view Beijing was exporting revolution and subversion to Malaya. His speech aroused the angry reaction of the Indian representative V. K. Krishna Menon, known for his advocacy of non-alignment. Ismail intimates that Menon thought it regrettable that the representative of a new member of the UN should make use of his maiden speech to propose the exclusion of other nations, which drew the Malaysian's response that being new didn't mean that Malaya would keep its mouth shut on matters relating to its foreign policy (Ooi, 2006: 90). In his memoir, Ismail recalls that he spoke with some passion in his inaugural speech at the UN about the role of the newly independent Malaya, viz.:

Our position in the world today is...unique in that we are fairly content with what we already possess. We do not need vast sums of money from our friends to tide us along in our own affairs. We do not covet the goods and chattels nor the territory of others...The greatest need of my country today is peace and the goodwill of all countries with which it is our desire to live in friendship and mutual understanding. We venture to suggest that our unique position permits us to play an impartial role in the affairs of the world. (Saravanamuttu, 1983: 28)².

² 1983. J. Saravanamuttu. *The Dilemma of Independence: Two Decades of Malaysia's Foreign Policy 1957-1977*. Penang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia.

While serving at the UN and the US, Ismail attended a conference of the American Academy of Political and Social Science on Southeast Asia, on April 11-12, 1958 in Philadelphia. He writes that he was impressed with the presentation on China relations of Mr. Warburg, an American millionaire and author, with that of U Thant (on relations with the Soviet Union), then Burma's permanent representative to the UN, and with the speech of Mr Mehta the Indian Ambassador on colonialism. He writes that he did not agree with Mr. Warburg's criticism of US foreign policy and his advocacy of China's admission to the UN. However, "I could not help being impressed by the clarity of his thinking and oratory."³ One wonders if it wasn't this clarity of thinking that a few years later persuaded Ismail that it was necessary for Malaysia to recognize China. At that same meeting Ismail had a taste of the politicking over the China question when U Thant's speech led to a walk-out by pro-Kuomintang Chinese delegates.

Ismail also writes about his meeting with John D. Rockefeller III who called at the Malaysian Embassy on May 1, 1958. Rockefeller was evidently important in soliciting American investment into the fledgling Malayan state and Ismail no doubt sought his ideas and help especially in promoting Malay entrepreneurship. He writes of the meeting, "I am deeply impressed with Mr. Rockefeller. He is an unassuming man and his family regards the vast fortune of the Rockefellers as a trust, which must be devoted for the welfare of mankind." Rockefeller also impressed Ismail of the need for Malaya to immediately establish a central bank for purposes of attracting and regulating foreign capital. (*Notes, TIP: 62*).

No doubt, the Rockefeller meeting was an important precursor to the May 26 meeting that same year with America's foremost architect of Cold War foreign policy, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. The meeting was arranged with a view to secure a large loan from the US for Malaya's first development plan on the instruction of the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. In the event, Ismail was given ten minutes to present his request for a M\$455 million loan. Dulles was "flabbergasted" to hear the amount requested and remarked that "USA resources were not unlimited". He nevertheless expressed his appreciation for Malaya's strong stance

³ *Notes by the Ambassador, Tun Ismail Papers*, p. 54, hereafter, *Notes, TIP*.

against communism. (*Notes, TIP*: 71-72). Ismail provided three rationales for why Malaya needed the one-off loan:

(1)The Communists in the jungles are all but beaten. If the present Government's policy of attacking on two fronts—the economic and the military—is pressed forward, the Emergency as such will end, at the latest in two years time; (2) further increases in taxation will then be possible and the Government will be prepared to raise them if necessary; and (3) the establishment of a Central Bank will facilitate the expansion of the floating debt on a sound basis and assist the Government in its long-term operations. (Ooi, 2006: 109).

It is not entirely clear what eventually became of this process of securing the large loan but the Secretary of State politely requested Ismail to pursue the matter with Clarence Douglas Dillon, the Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. It appears that it was not until much later that the matter was settled. Malaya received two Development Loan Fund (DLF) grants worth US\$20 million and Ismail's successor as Ambassador to America, Nik Ahmad Kamil, signed the agreements on March 18, 1959.⁴ Further to that, Ismail, in his subsequent capacity as foreign minister signed an investment guarantee agreement, which came under the US Mutual Security Program, with provisions for the extension of military, economic and technical assistance (Ooi, 2006: 124).

Thus it is evident that in his years as US Ambassador and UN Permanent Representative, Ismail very much played the role of promoting American-Malaysian relations, maintaining a strong stance against communism and a firm attitude of non-recognition of the People's Republic of China.

NONALIGNMENT, NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Interestingly, though, Ismail was also responsible for the very significant shift to nonalignment in Malaysian foreign policy which came during the Tun Razak era. In 1968, after retirement from Cabinet because of his health, as UMNO

⁴ Information derived from Pamela Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian Nexus* (1991), as cited in Ooi (2006: 124).

backbencher, he called for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, to be guaranteed by all the major powers including China. Indeed, even by 1966, after the end of confrontation, in a speech to the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia, he had argued for the need of a regional organization, averring that “we cannot survive long as independent peoples—as Burmese, Thais, Indonesian, Laotians, Vietnamese, Malaysians, Cambodians, Singaporeans and Filipinos—unless we also think and act as South-East Asians.” (Ooi, 2006: 169). It also became obvious that by this time Ismail was convinced of the imperative to recognize the People’s Republic of China. Ismail’s speech clearly set the tone for the shift in Malaysian foreign policy for years to come:

We look forward to the day when outside powers both great and small will accept our right as a region (i.e. Southeast Asia) and as constituent nations of this region, to sustain our distinctive ways of life in freedom and prosperity, without interference.... We do not oppose the communist system in mainland China so long as it confines itself within its own borders. But we call upon the People’s Republic of China to keep its hands off our region and to adopt a policy of peaceful co-existence towards its fellow Asians in Southeast Asia.

We look forward to a regional association embracing Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam....Such a community would not be a military alliance. It would not be an anti-communist alliance. Nor, for that matter, would it be an anti-western alliance....I do not believe that military blocs and alliances by themselves can provide a lasting solution to the problem of communist expansionism. I myself envisage an organization which would be first and last, pro-Southeast Asia, pro-development, pro-regional co-operation and pro-peace. (Saravanamuttu, 1983: 73)

By 1968, Ismail, who had retired from Cabinet six months earlier for health reasons, put forward as a back-bencher in Parliament his seminal “Ismail Peace Plan”, which called for the neutralization of Southeast Asia guaranteed by the major powers, the signing of non-aggression pacts and the declaration of a policy of co-existence:

The time is...ripe for the countries in the region to declare collectively the neutralization of Southeast Asia. To be effective, this must be guaranteed by the big-powers, including Communist China. Second, it is time that the countries in Southeast Asia signed non-aggression treaties with one another. Now is also the time for the countries in Southeast Asia to declare a policy of co-existence in the sense that the countries...should not interfere in the internal affairs of each other and to accept whatever form of government a country chooses to elect or adopt....The alternative to the neutralization of Southeast Asia guaranteed by the big powers...is an open invitation by the region to the current big powers to make it a pawn in big power politics. The alternative to the signing of non-aggression treaties among the countries in the region is an arms race among themselves which would be detrimental to their economy. The alternative to the declaration of the policy of co-existence is increased tension and subversion in the region. (Saravanamuttu,1983: 74-75)

This policy that Ismail enunciated above subsequently became Malaysia's and ASEAN's iconic policy for a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia. Soon after his death in 1973 also came the recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1974 by Malaysia, the first Southeast Asian country to make the move.

THOUGHTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

In a rare moment, the good doctor penned in his Ambassador's notes a lengthy commentary about his views on the Middle East situation and Arab nationalism. This was during the period of mid-July 1958 when the Security Council was hotly debating the fact that American and British troops had entered Lebanon and Jordan respectively, the Lebanese and Jordanian governments having invited this in their effort to resist the pan-Arabism propounded and promoted by Gamal Abdul-Nasser of Egypt. Ismail, in his notes, laments the fact that the Americans, who supposedly believed in nationalism, had fought "in defence of imperialism and feudalism":

The question is how far...nationalism, once it has assumed a destructive form [can] go? Can it be induced to assume a constructive form? As to the

first question, I am definite it will spread far and wide, bringing misery and destruction in its path, before finally dying out. As to the second question, I am sure it can, provided America uses her strength and influence against Imperialism and Feudalism, or at the very least refusing to support them and supporting nationalism instead. However, unfortunately, solutions to international problems have to take into account such questions as Alliances and sensitivity of members of the Alliances. The American foreign policy is based on the containment of the Communists, and it was in pursuance of this policy that regional pacts such as NATO and SEATO were formed and the Eisenhower Doctrine (sic)⁵ was formulated. (*Notes, TIP: 81-84*)

Ismail's thoughtful commentary above hints at the genesis of his idea for the neutralization of Southeast Asia which was most likely spurred by the problems of major power intervention in the Middle East.

SINGAPORE MERGER AND SEPARATION

Another significant aspect of Ismail's political thinking relates to the episode of Singapore's merger with Malaysia and its subsequent separation on 9 August 1965. While it was the Tunku's decision that Singapore should leave Malaysia, the authors behind the separation agreement were Razak, Ismail, Tan Siew Sin and Singapore's Goh Keng Swee and Eddie Barker. In an article to the *National Geographic*, Ismail wrote: "At the moment both nations, comparatively speaking, are well off. If they can co-exist for some time, each understanding the other's point of view, *the time will come when they will merge again. It is better to wait for this to come because if they do not do so they will sink together instead of coming together*" (Ooi, 2006: 160, italics mine). Ooi points out that conspiracy theories abound about the merger and separation but Ismail remained steadfast in his assertion that separation was "a painful but temporary phase" in the history of the Malaysian federation and, furthermore, he also wrote in his memoir that in spite of what was believed, the separation was by mutual consent (Ooi, 2006: 162).

⁵ He presumably meant the "Truman Doctrine", which was the cornerstone of the Containment policy. It should also be noted that in the same notes Ismail states categorically, "Americans have no imperialistic designs, and of this I am convinced." This is very much in keeping with the pro-Western stance of Malaysian foreign policy at that time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this short essay I have tried to show that Tun (Dr.) Ismail Abdul Rahman not only made a significant impact on Malaysian foreign policy in the early years, but he was greatly responsible for formulating the model and definitive aspects of foreign policy in the early independent years and, rather more interestingly, also responsible for its shift to non-alignment in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This isn't gainsaying the fact that Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister, nor Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, and later, second Prime Minister, were not in agreement with many of Tun Ismail's ideas. Indeed, much of what Tun Ismail propounded in his years at the UN and also later as Acting Foreign Minister followed very much what may be considered the established foreign policy of Malaysia; its anti-communism and pro-Western policies. In the later years, however, it could well be said that Tun Ismail was no doubt the progenitor of the palpable shift of Malaysian foreign policy towards non-alignment, which was clearly pivotal to his notion of the neutralization of Southeast Asia.

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United Nations General Assembly

12th Session 678th Plenary Meeting

(Excerpts, including Inaugural Address of Tun Dr Ismail bin Abdul Rahman upon acceptance of the Federation of Malaya as the 82nd Member of the United Nations; Items 61-84)*

Tuesday, 17 September 1957 at 3 p.m.

Statement by the President regarding the procedure for the admission of the Federation of Malaya to membership in the United Nations

61. The PRESIDENT: The next item on the agenda is one which I am very happy to place before the General Assembly: it is the admission of the Federation of Malaya to membership in the United Nations.
62. The Security Council has unanimously recommended, [A/3654] to the General Assembly that the Federation of Malaya be admitted to membership in the Organization. Today the Assembly will take action on a draft resolution submitted by Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Ghana, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom [A/3655/Rev.1].
63. I understand that there is a general desire, a desire also expressed in the Security Council, that a decision should be taken with respect to the admission of the Federation of Malaya at the earliest opportunity in order that we may welcome its representatives at the beginning of the session and benefit also from their participation in our work from the very outset. The broader question of the admission of new Members to the United Nations appears as item 25 of the provisional agenda [A/3610]. I will therefore propose that, bearing in mind the provisions of rules 40 and 67, item 25 be considered as included in the agenda, for the limited purpose of acting immediately upon the application of the Federation of Malaya [A/3652].

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It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 25

Admission of new Members to the United Nations

ADMISSION OF THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA TO
MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS

64. Mr. LLOYD (UNITED KINGDOM): May I just say a word of congratulation to you, Mr. President, upon your election. There are many reasons why I should do so our old friendship, a high regard for your personal qualities and a deep admiration for your country, one of the Commonwealth family. I hope, and I am sure that all my fellow representatives hope too, that you will have a most successful term in the office which you are so well qualified to hold.
65. But my congratulations to you in no way detract from the warmth of the feelings of the United Kingdom delegation and its respect for Mr. Charles Malik, another old friend of mine in this Organization, and for his country. I agree with everything that has been said about him. He is certainly a man endowed with all the qualities needed by a President of the General Assembly, and his action today has added to the lustre of his great reputation.
66. With regard to the item now before the General Assembly, less than three weeks ago the Federation of Malaya achieved independence and at its own request was received into our Commonwealth of Nations, with the consent and warm welcome of all the Governments. The Federation of Malaya thus became the tenth member of that expanding community of independent and democratic States to which my country is proud to belong.
67. The Government of the Federation of Malaya immediately applied to the United Nations for membership. Within a week, the Security Council met to consider this application and unanimously adopted a resolution - which the United Kingdom, together with Australia, had been proud to sponsor - recommending to the General Assembly that the Federation of Malaya should be admitted to membership in this Organization. Today we are about to take the final step in that process of admission.

68. This has been done at the earliest opportunity in the twelfth session, immediately after the election of the President, so that the Federation of Malaya will be enabled, without delay, to take its part in our deliberations. We believe that through this Organization the Federation will gain strength and friendship, but it will also have an individual and responsible contribution to make to our work. Her Majesty the Queen, in her Independence Day message to the Head of State of the Federation, said: *"I am confident that Malaya will respond worthily to the challenging tasks of independence and that she will continue to show to the world that example of moderation and good will between all races that has been so marked a feature of her history."*
69. We in the United Kingdom have no doubt about the qualifications of the Federation of Malaya for membership. British people have worked in, with and for the Federation over the past eighty years in friendship and co-operation with its people. We know the people of Malaya well. If I may say so, we take a measure of pride in the fact that, as the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya has himself so generously acknowledged, we have handed over a legacy of good administration and a sound economic and constitutional foundation on which the state can strengthen and fortify its independence, and we are sure that this legacy is in good hands.
70. The Federation, as an equal and independent member of the Commonwealth, can rely on the continued help and support of the United Kingdom and of the other Commonwealth countries, both here in the United Nations and in other ways.
71. May I make just one further point. Some people have congratulated the Federation of Malaya on having won its fight for independence. Well, that fight was not against us, the British. We have, as a matter of deliberate policy, sought to guide the peoples of the British Empire to self-government and independence. We have not always agreed with them upon the timing or the precise methods, but it has been, and is, our declared and deliberate course of policy - a policy not forced upon us but voluntarily undertaken, and we are proud of it.

72. This is the fourth occasion since the first session of the General Assembly in 1945 upon which a representative of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has had the honour of proposing a newly independent member of the Commonwealth for membership in the United Nations, and it is our intention that there shall be other such memorable occasions in the future.
73. I am therefore honoured and glad to recommend to the General Assembly the draft resolution which other members of the Commonwealth have joined in sponsoring. I am sure that the General Assembly will accord a unanimous vote in favour of this draft resolution, and that that unanimity will be an auspicious introduction to the entry of the Federation of Malaya into the United Nations. In moving this draft resolution, I repeat once more the heartfelt good wishes of the people of the United Kingdom for those of the Federation of Malaya.
74. The PRESIDENT: We shall now proceed to vote on the draft resolution submitted by Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Ghana, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom [A/3655/Rev.1].
A vote was taken by roll-call. Japan, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.
In favour: Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy.
The draft resolution was adopted unanimously. The delegation of the Federation of Malaya escorted to its place in the General Assembly hall.

75. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Assembly, I have the great honour, in sincerity and in friendship, to welcome to our membership the new State of the Federation of Malaya.
76. It is very proper, on this happy occasion, that I should recall the record of the Federation of Malaya's uninterrupted progress towards independence, the great responsibility and statesmanship exercised by the Malayan leaders, and the harmony and co-operation existing between the Federation of Malaya and the United Kingdom, with whose guidance and help the new State has taken its place in the community of nations.
77. I am confident that our Organization will substantially gain by this addition to our numbers of another Member dedicated to the purposes of the Charter.
78. Mr. ISMAIL (Federation of Malaya): On behalf of the Government of the Federation of Malaya, I would like to express our gratitude to the President and to the other representatives gathered here for their warm welcome. I would like particularly to express our thanks to the members of the delegation of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth countries for the draft resolution which preceded our admission to membership in the United Nations.
79. It is with pride and humility that I speak before you today so soon after the emergence of the Federation of Malaya as an independent and fully sovereign country on 31 August 1957. I speak here today in this, the greatest assembly of nations, as the representative of a small nation, a nation of only 6 million people, living in an area of only 50,000 square miles. The acceptance by the General Assembly of the membership of the Federation of Malaya in the United Nations confers on my country a privilege and a right which we shall cherish. At the same time, it confers on my country, small though it is, a great responsibility which we envisaged when we set out, with determination and singleness of purpose, on the road to independence.
80. Although our material wealth and our standard of living compare very favourably with those of many nations in the world today, as a small nation, our basic strength lies not in these material things, but in the moral character

and purposes of our people. We have in Malaya three major racial groups: the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians, who have lived together for generations in peace and harmony. Neither the difference in religion and cultural background, nor the difference in their economic and social status, has created an insuperable barrier towards the national unity of these races. Our great desire is to have the right and the good fortune to live as a free, independent and united nation among the free nations of the world. The achievement of this desire through constitutional means, through friendly negotiation and a spirit of compromise, is the result of the abiding moral strength inherent in each of the three racial communities living in Malaya today.

81. We suggest that, to a small nation such as ours, as to all small nations, it is in the moral strength of our people that we shall find the inspiration to shoulder the responsibility which membership in the United Nations bestows upon us. Our Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, declared, in the Proclamation of Independence for the Federation of Malaya, that the Federation of our eleven States, with God's blessing, shall be forever a sovereign, democratic and independent State founded upon the principle of liberty and justice and ever seeking the welfare and happiness of its people and the maintenance of a just peace among all nations.
82. Our King, at the opening of our Parliament, had this to say: *"It is the intention of my Government to be on the most friendly terms with all countries in the world. My Government stands for peace, freedom and the well-being of every country of the world."* Continuing, His Majesty further said: *"My Government will adhere to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and, if the Federation is elected a Member of that Organization, my Government intends that this country should play its part within the bounds which limited resources must dictate in the work of the many international bodies which operate under the auspices of the United Nations."*
83. It is now my duty as the representative of the new independent Federation of Malaya, to affirm solemnly in the General Assembly the aim and object of the Government and people of the Federation of Malaya: with the grace of God, to observe the principles and further the purposes of the United Nations Charter.

84. With pride and joy, and an awareness of the grave responsibility before us, we take our place among you today. With God's blessing, we shall not fail in the trust that is placed upon my country and my people.

United Nations General Assembly

12th Session 688th Plenary Meeting

Items 75-84 (excerpts)*

Wednesday, 25 September 1957 at 3 p.m.

75. Mr. ISMAIL (Federation of Malaya): Mr. President, first and foremost I should like to congratulate you on your election as President of the twelfth session of the General Assembly. It will remain in our memory that it was during your Presidency that the Federation of Malaya was admitted to membership in the United Nations.
76. Being a newcomer to this Assembly, I must confess that it was with some hesitation that I decided to participate in this general debate. I should mention right away that as a newly independent nation, fully responsible to itself in both internal and external affairs, the Federation of Malaya is less than one month old. Before 31 August 1957, the external affairs of my country were entirely the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government and we had no hand in them. The people of the Federation of Malaya assumed complete responsibility over the external affairs of their country as from 31 August 1957, starting, so to speak, almost from scratch. We have been asked right from the dawn of independence what our foreign policies are. We consider that it is appropriate that statements on such policies should be made only in general terms, because it is inevitable that it will take time for us to formulate policies on specific matters, their formulation requiring all the careful study that they deserve.
- In general terms, therefore, the foreign policy of the Federation of Malaya is to safeguard our independence and to live in peace and harmony with all friendly nations of the world.

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77. We are fully conscious of the many and varied problems that face the world today, problems which are potentially dangerous to the peace and security of the world and which require solution. We are conscious that as a Member of the United Nations, small though we are as a nation, we have a part to play in the discussion on these vital problems and in the attempt to seek a solution to them. It was not my intention at this stage of our membership of the United Nations to speak on the problems which are before this session of the General Assembly. But after listening to the representatives who have spoken before me, some of whose statements have found a responsive chord in our hearts, I feel that I must make myself heard in this debate.
78. I would like first to express our gratitude to the many representatives for their kind words in this general debate in welcoming my country as a Member of the United Nations. We are particularly encouraged by the statement of the representative of New Zealand [683rd meeting] that the vitality of the United Nations is reflected not only in the scope of the General Assembly's agenda but also in its growing and nearly universal membership. There probably was never a time in the troubled history of the world when so much depended on the success of this Organization to solve those problems which threaten the peace and prosperity of the whole world. The vitality of the United Nations in finding solutions to these problems must depend on its Members, and I have no doubt that the growing and nearly universal membership of the United Nations will contribute towards this essential vitality.
79. This leads me to the subject of self-determination on which we have already heard wise words spoken here. I cannot do better than repeat the words of the representative of Ireland: "The principle of self-determination of peoples ought . . . to be the great master principle by which this Assembly should be guided in its quest for a just and peaceful world order" [682nd meeting, para. 29].
80. It is the firm belief in this principle which has brought independence to the people of my country. It was the staunch belief in this principle of self-determination that gave strength to nationalism in Malaya in the fight for independence. We can no longer afford to infringe this principle if we are to seek a just and peaceful world order, We firmly believe that it is the guiding

principle which will bring a solution to the problems which have arisen in Africa, in the Middle East and in our own part of the world—problems which the Assembly must face. Colonialism, which is the outright denial of the principle of self-determination, is the root cause of the misery and contention which exist in the world today, It has been the experience of my own country that so long as colonialism existed the energies of the people could not be diverted towards fighting communalism, which was the great bogey raised in the plural society of Malaya, or against militant communism which sought the overthrow of the constituted Government of the country, So long as colonialism existed, the energies of the people subjected to it would always be directed towards its removal and towards nothing else. And this is as it should be. Hard and bitter experience the world over has shown that nations cannot live side by side in peace and harmony so long as colonialism exists in one form or another and the principle of self-determination for all countries is ignored. The domination of territories by colonial powers has led to these colonial territories being used as pawns in the struggle of ideologies in the world. We have a proverb which in my own language states: *gajah berjuang, rumput juga yang binasa* (when elephants clash, it is the grass that is destroyed).

81. It is worth pointing out that once a country is freed from the deadening hand of colonialism, once the energies of a colonial people are no longer diverted towards fighting colonialism but are channelled towards their own salvation, history shows that the whole world is thereby benefited. I can readily point to the example of the United States, of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and of course, in our own time, the shining example of India, whose untiring efforts for peace and vast influence in world affairs today we readily acknowledge.
82. Like Ireland, like New Zealand, we are a small nation. Our position as a small, newly independent nation, taking our place in the family of nations, is perhaps unique in the world. Ours is what is known as a plural society in which three major races with different outlooks on life live side by side, and which nationalism has brought close together in brotherhood and unity towards a common goal. Nationalism and our abiding faith in democracy, we believe, will maintain and promote this unity of the races in Malaya, but this time towards the ultimate goals of peace and prosperity for all our people and

of friendly relations with all countries. It is obvious to us that the prerequisite to these ultimate objectives is peace. There is not yet a state of peace in my country. As I stated yesterday [686th meeting], we have fought militant and aggressive communism in the Federation of Malaya for the last nine years. Militant and aggressive communism, which has found followers among the alien groups in my country, has taken up arms against the constituted Government of my country and we are determined, more than ever now that we are a fully sovereign and independent nation, to end this useless struggle. Our Prime Minister has declared that it is the aim of his Government to end it by 31 August 1958, the anniversary of our independence.

83. Our position in the world today is unique also in that we are fairly content with what we already possess. We do not seek vast sums of money from our friends to tide us along in our own affairs. We do not covet the goods and chattels nor the territory of others. We have even refused to take the territory of Singapore into our little Federation of States, although the Singapore Government desires its voluntary union with us. We as an undeveloped country of course need assistance in the economic development of the country, particularly in the form of technical assistance. And we have received substantial aid in this form. But the greatest need of my country today is peace and the goodwill of all other countries with which it is our desire to live in friendship and mutual understanding. We venture to suggest that our unique position permits us to play an impartial role in the affairs of the world. It appears to us that there is need for objectivity in our judgements and actions as Members of this great Organization.
84. We therefore take our place among you with great hopes and faith in the ultimate goodness of mankind. We take our place here in this Assembly with a prayer in our hearts that we shall be guided in our discussions and our decisions by objective considerations. We suggest that we have taken our place in this Assembly as a right properly earned; we feel that the Members of this Assembly have accepted us among them purely on the merits of our position. Now that we are here as a Member of the United Nations, we would welcome all other countries which have earned the right to be a Member of the United Nations as my own country has done, and has so achieved that right.

An Ambassador *Par Excellence*: Tun Omar Yoke-Lin's Years in Washington, 1962-1973*

Dr. Chandran Jeshurun

Dr. Chandran Jeshurun earned his BA and MA at the University of Malaya before obtaining a PhD in International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He subsequently taught at the University of Malaya and the National University of Malaysia and was the first holder of the Chair of Asian History at the former from 1976 to 1989. He has also taught briefly at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and was a Commonwealth Senior Academic Staff Fellow at the Department of War Studies, King's College, London and a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the School of International Service, The American University, Washington, D.C. and the Department of Political Science at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, U.S.A. Later on, he served as Senior Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. He has published widely, his major works being The Contest for Siam, 1889-1902: A Study in Diplomatic Rivalry and Malaysian Defence Policy: A Study in Parliamentary Attitudes, 1963-1973. Dr. Chandran Jeshurun is also the author of Malaysia: Fifty Years of Diplomacy 1957-2007, launched by The Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia on 10 December 2007.

ABSTRACT

In the initial years, the Government of Malaysia appointed people of some noteworthiness to diplomatic posts in important countries. Among these outstanding appointments were Tun Dr. Ismail Abdul Rahman and Tun Omar Yoke-Lin Ong, who were appointed as ambassadors to Washington D.C. and concurrently accredited to United Nations in New York. Tun Dr. Ismail Abdul

*I would like to disclaim any scholarly authority for this article as I have had no means by which to tap the rich official and private sources that are now available to the serious student of recent Malaysian international history. It is offered here purely as a cursory insight into the state of an important bilateral relationship for Malaysia and as a passing anecdote of how one Malaysian Ambassador was the right man at the right place in time.

Rahman and Tun Omar Yoke-Lin Ong were politicians-cum-diplomats who played an important role in promoting the country's interests at the capital of the superpower and at the United Nations Headquarters. Ambassador Ong Yoke Lin's tenure coincided with a difficult period in Malaysia's relations with Indonesia and Singapore. On the economic front, Malaysia was badly effected by the Americans selling from their rubber stockpile. Ambassador Ong performed his diplomatic tasks with great distinction through his close contacts in Washington right up to the White House.

THE WASHINGTON EMBASSY AND ITS BACKGROUND

It was the practice in the initial years of the development of the Malaysian Foreign Service for the Government to appoint people of some noteworthiness to diplomatic posts in important countries. Next to the United Kingdom, the Ambassador to the United States of America certainly ranked as one of Malaysia's most senior appointments. As a matter of fact, as soon as we achieved independence in 1957, the first Ambassador to the US was none other than a ranking Alliance Party leader, Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman. Ismail, however, accepted the appointment on condition that he would not stay longer than necessary after having set up our new mission in the American capital.¹ On his imminent return home in 1959, the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, had a hard time trying to find a suitable successor to take over such a major responsibility. He only managed to get (then) Dato' Nik Ahmad Kamil, who had already been the first High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, to accept the Washington assignment "after a great deal of persuasion".² He had been brought back as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs. Thus, when Nik Ahmad Kamil requested to retire from his position, the Tunku had a real headache in finding a man whom he could really depend on as he had in the case of both Ismail and Nik Ahmad Kamil.

¹ Copy of letter from Ismail to Tunku, undated, *IAR/3/(2)/60*. [Private Papers of Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman kept at the Library of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore]. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the ISEAS Library and the kind permission of Tawfik Ismail Abdul Rahman for having been able to use the papers as well as cite from them.

² Tunku to Ismail, 24 November 1958, *IAR/3/(2)/66*. The Tunku wrote on Nik Ahmad Kamil's death (1909-1977) that "it brings to an end the story of those who had served the people and their country so well in the British colonial days and the Japanese occupation and even better in independent Malaya and Malaysia". *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur), 21st December 1977.

THE PREREQUISITES OF A MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE USA

It can be seen how concerned the Government was in maintaining correct relations with one of the two superpowers in the Cold War when the decision was made that none but their very best in the inner circle could be entrusted with the task of keeping on the right side of the Americans. At the Washington Mission, in particular, Dr Ismail had very clear ideas of how he would conduct Malaysia's relations with the US as well as participate at the multilateral level, as he was simultaneously the Malayan Permanent Representative at the United Nations in New York. This additional burden severely tested the early Ambassadors to the US as there was a heavy programme of UN meetings which the Permanent Representative had to handle personally and involved a lot of shuttling back and forth between the two cities. The writer of Ismail's biography, such as it is, does record the new Ambassador's cumbersome routine of having to find adequate accommodation for the Chancery and himself. But, in New York, he was determined that the physical attributes of the Malayan Mission "must not seem bigger than we actually are" and that the buildings should "conform to our status—noticeable without ostentation".³ As far as can be ascertained from Ismail's writings, he considered his assignment to the Washington and New York posts as a sort of "national service" and he was understandably concerned to raise the country's image within the UN context. It seems odd, therefore, that the writer of his biography should have noted that his "friends and relatives were appalled and saw the posting as a silently executed banishment".⁴

One of the more mundane problems that new Heads of Malayan Missions had to face was the whole business of "setting up shop" as Dr Ismail had to literally start from scratch with one eye all the time on costs. He expected "fireworks" from the Treasury when the final bill came up for payment.⁵ And this from a man who was not out to put up a pretentious front about the new nation in Southeast Asia and was humble enough to listen to his more experienced counterparts from countries

³ "My Memoirs", *IAR/12 (a)/Chapter Thirteen/48*.

⁴ Ooi Kee Beng, *The Reluctant Politician, Tun Dr Ismail and His Time* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), p. 86.

⁵ Ismail to O.A. Spencer, Economic Adviser in the Prime Minister's Department, 18th December 1957, *IAR/3(2)/52*.

such as Burma and Indonesia. The other less known responsibility that weighed on the early Malayan Ambassadors was their entertainment expenses which had to be partly subsidised from their own pockets as the Government allocation was never sufficient. This was why Ismail had “fought both tooth and nail for adequate cost of living” and he was grateful to the Tunku and Cabinet for having “recently approved” an allowance that was “sufficient for a person without private means to be our country’s Ambassador to Washington”.⁶ On the question of his successor, Ismail stated quite bluntly that “it is superfluous to tell you that practically all countries send their best men to represent them either in Washington or at the UN”. It was also of vital importance that the person should be “absolutely loyal” to the Party in power and, consequently, to the Government. He also believed that “it is preferable at this stage of the history of our country to have a Malay as our Ambassador to Washington and Permanent Representative to the UN”.⁷

BACKGROUND TO TUN OMAR’S APPOINTMENT

Names such as Zaiton Ibrahim (who was Number Two at the Ministry of External Affairs) and Tunku Mohamed bin Tunku Besar Burhanuddin (a senior civil servant who was then High Commissioner to India) had been considered for the Washington post when Nik Ahmad Kamil was due to return home in late 1961. The Tunku had even considered transferring Dato’ Suleiman Abdul Rahman, Dr Ismail’s elder brother, who was then High Commissioner to Australia, to Washington and appoint someone else to be Permanent Representative to the UN.⁸ The Government was by then on the verge of its major political and diplomatic exercise to form the new Federation of Malaysia comprising Malaya, Singapore and the three Borneo territories of Brunei, North Borneo and Sarawak. It is against this background of the politics and diplomacy

⁶ Ismail to the Tunku, undated, *IAR/3/ (2)/60*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Tunku to Dato’ Nik Ahmad Kamil, 23rd January 1962 and copy of Nik Ahmad Kamil’s reply, 20th February 1962, *Nik Ahmad Kamil Papers, SP/43/1/191* and *SP/43/1/192*, (Arkib Negara Malaysia). These letters are not open to the public but there are brief summaries of their contents in *Inventori Surat Persendirian* [Inventory of the Private Letters of] *Tan Sri Nik Ahmad Kamil Hj Nik Mahmood di susun oleh* [arranged by] Liang Poh Chu, (Kuala Lumpur: Arkib Negara Malaysia, 1999). The person that the Tunku mentioned as a possible choice for the UN appointment was a Dato’ Abdul Aziz but it could not be ascertained as to whom he meant. Nik Ahmad Kamil completely concurred that the Malayan Ambassador to the USA should not be burdened with “the heavy work load” in New York.

of the time that one has to appreciate the sheer confidence and strength of political will of the Tunku and his top Party leaders to decide on the new appointment. The Tunku's call upon the then Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dato' Ong Yoke Lin, to take up the dual posts of Ambassador and Permanent Representative in Washington and New York respectively is unparalleled in Malaysian diplomatic history. The greater wonder is why the middle-aged Ong Yoke Lin agreed to make the incredible transition from the parochial politics of Kuala Lumpur to the dizzying heights of international diplomacy at one of its two epicentres, Washington. In the absence of Malaysian archival sources, it is still not entirely clear on what basis Ong was picked for the job. Did it by any chance have anything to do with internal politics within the Alliance Party itself, or more likely, within MCA?

In the months leading up to the implementation of the Malaysia project Ong had played a central role in representing KL's case for the new Federation which had brought him into close contact with the Tunku himself.⁹ Ghazali Shafie has recounted that, when the Borneo visitors were in KL for consultations with the Federal Government, it was Ong who used to entertain them at the Lake Club. Once the Cobbold Commission for the setting-up of the new Federation of Malaysia had been formed, it was Ong again who pressed the pro-Malaysia group's case. Returning to KL by air after one of the Commission's sessions in Singapore, the Tunku asked Ghazali Shafie to accompany him to Alor Star. On their flight back to KL, Ghazali cleverly made the best of his privacy inside the aircraft to get the Tunku to listen sympathetically to his house-keeping problems at the Malaysian Missions abroad, especially in Europe and America. The Prime Minister approved additional funds for heating the residences of the staff and other shortcomings in living standards in those cold climates. It was then that the Tunku decided, presumably on Ghazali's prompting, to appoint the prominent Penang business man, Heah Joo Seang, as Ambassador to Burma and Ong Yoke Lin as the successor to Nik Kamil in Washington and New York.¹⁰

⁹ *Ghazali Shafie's Memoir on the Formation of Malaysia* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2004 [Second Printing]), pp. 128, 145.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. Heah did not, in the end, take up the Ambassadorship to Burma.

THE STATE OF MALAYSIA-US RELATIONS IN 1962 AND TUNKU'S OFFICIAL VISIT OF 1964

By early 1964 Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* had become a major regional upheaval because of Indonesian military incursions into Malaysian territory both by regulars as well as guerillas. The Americans had been keeping abreast of the situation and used a "carrot and stick" tactic with Sukarno so that he would not go overboard with his "Crush Malaysia" rhetoric. Dean Rusk, the U.S. Secretary of State, informed President Lyndon B. Johnson that the time had come to look into continuing US aid to Indonesia should Sukarno continue to be recalcitrant.¹¹ It was in these geo-political circumstances that the decision was taken in Washington to send out the Attorney-General, Robert Kennedy, as an intermediary to, first, meet with Sukarno who was then in Tokyo with his Japanese wife. Sukarno and his delegation had earlier been in Manila where he and President Macapagal had agreed to coordinate their policies in solving the *impasse* between them and Malaysia through the *Maphilindo* concept that had been agreed upon with Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak at the Manila Summit in 1963.¹²

Sukarno hosted breakfast for Bob Kennedy and his wife, Ethel, at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on 18th January 1964 and the atmosphere was apparently "extremely friendly, even lighthearted".¹³ Kennedy was scheduled to leave Tokyo on a lightning tour of Manila, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta before heading for London but Johnson was warned of the difficulty of pressuring the Tunku to agree to the formula worked out in Tokyo. The British had already told Johnson that the Tunku would most likely not agree to another Summit without prior recognition of Malaysia by both her neighbours. The Americans were, however, suspicious that it was the UK that was putting up the Tunku to take such a hard-line position and asked Kennedy to ensure that there should be an

¹¹ "Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson", 6th January 1964, p. 1 in Volume XXVI, *Foreign Relations 1964-1968 – Indonesia; Malaysia-Singapore; Philippines* [Editor: Edward C. Keefer; General Editor: David S. Patterson], Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2001) [hereafter referred to as *US/XXVI*].

¹² Kunaseelan Muniandy *Hubungan Malaysia-Indonesia, 1957-1970* [Malaysia-Indonesian Relations, 1957-1970] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1996), pp. 170, 206.

¹³ "18. Telegram From Michael V. Forrestal of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)", Tokyo, 18th January 1964, pp. 1-2, *US/XXVI*.

“Asian solution” to the problem.¹⁴ In the end, the so-called Kennedy initiative did not get anywhere as Sukarno refused to accept the Malaysian demand that, apart from the proclamation of a ceasefire, the Indonesians must also withdraw the guerilla forces operating inside Malaysian territory in Sabah and Sarawak.¹⁵ Part of the problem was that both Sukarno and the Tunku had apparently reneged on their bilateral discussions with Bob Kennedy when he had visited them in their respective countries.¹⁶

In any case, Kennedy wrote to the Tunku on 25th February urging him to invite the Thais to act as observers of the ceasefire, to continue negotiating with the Indonesians and not to raise the issue at the United Nations. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Roger Hilsman¹⁷ and Michael Forrestal¹⁸ of the National Security Council Staff also spoke to Ambassador Ong along similar lines on the day before the letter was sent.¹⁹ The situation was to change dramatically by the end of April with the Tunku’s Alliance Party securing a thumping victory in national elections, Indonesia having economic and political problems (in Sulawesi) and the Philippines pushing for an early Summit in Tokyo.²⁰ While all this was going on, it was hardly noticed that the Americans had extended an invitation to Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak to visit Washington. The result of this was the first clear indication that Malaysia could expect some form of aid from the US and Ambassador Ong’s role on the ground to smoothen things with the White House of President John Kennedy is yet to be explained due to the lack of primary sources.²¹

¹⁴ Fn 2, “20. Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Johnson”, 18th January 1964, p. 3, *US/XXVI*.

¹⁵ President Johnson and Robert Kennedy were not the best of friends and neither of them really wanted to be involved in the so-called US initiative to bring about an end to Confrontation. See Pamela Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian nexus: Themes in superpower-small state relations* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 1991), pp. 253-256.

¹⁶ “31. Memorandum From Michael V. Forrestal of the National Security Council Staff to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Hilsman), 19th February 1964, p. 8, *op.cit.*

¹⁷ Hilsman relinquished the position on 14th March 1964.

¹⁸ Forrestal, Michael V., member of the National Security Council Staff until April 1964; Secretary of State’s Special Assistant for Vietnam July 1964-1965.

¹⁹ Fn 4, “31. Memorandum From Michael V. Forrestal..., 19th February 1964, p. 8, *op.cit.*

²⁰ “45. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Indonesia, 29th April 1964”, p. 10, *op.cit.*.

²¹ Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian nexus*, pp. 238-239.

Knowing that the Tunku would be going to Ottawa after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in mid-1964, the Malaysian Embassy in Washington may have prompted the State Department. In any case, the Americans immediately extended an official invitation to the Tunku to meet with President Johnson.²² Their meeting on 22nd and 23rd July 1964 went off rather well and the US offered Malaysia military training as well as special credit sales of jet aircraft for the Royal Malaysian Air Force, although both sides were rather coy about all this being interpreted as “military aid”. The Malaysian media, on the other hand, desperately in need of stories of big power support for Malaysia against *Konfrontasi* went to town with the news.²³ At the first meeting on 22nd July, an American aide remarked that the two got on well together but it was suspected that “the Prime Minister was using his Washington visit as a platform for ‘tough anti-Indo talk’ ” and suggested “that the President should emphasize to the Tunku the need for care and restraint in relations with Sukarno”.²⁴

At their second meeting, on 23rd July, the Tunku allegedly complained about the Philippines for not having been more accommodating about settling their Sabah claim and having joined instead with Sukarno. As to the outbreak of racial riots in Singapore during the celebrations of Prophet Mohamed’s birthday that year, the Tunku is reported to have stated that it was not serious enough for him to have to cut short his overseas visit.²⁵ The Americans were in an awkward situation because they were increasingly worried that “Malaysia used Confrontation to hide other difficulties, especially the racial problem and the problem between the federal and the Singapore Governments”.²⁶ Ambassador Ong and his Embassy staff must have had a tough time in keeping a brave front in the face of the ugly state of Kuala Lumpur-Singapore relations as they knew that the Americans were well aware of the real situation. Given the high level of anti-Chinese feeling in both the Indonesian attacks on Malaysia and the political

²² *Ibid.*, p.256

²³ *Ibid.*, p.258

²⁴ Fn 2, “Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, 23rd July 1964”, *US/XXVI*.

²⁵ *Op. cit.* The Malaysian side was made up of the Tunku, Ambassador Dato’ Ong Yoke Lin and Dato’ Ghazali Shafie while the Americans comprised the President, William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern affairs, James D. Bell, American Ambassador to Malaysia (March 1964-July 1969), and R.W. Komer of the White House staff.

²⁶ Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian nexus*, p. 262.

in-fighting between the Malays in the Central Government and the Chinese-dominated PAP, it is quite extraordinary that none of the sources contain any reference to the fact of the Malaysian envoy in the US being a Malaysian of Chinese ethnic descent.

MALAYSIA WIDENS HER INTERNATIONAL POSTURE

The two critical events that created considerable fallout for the Malaysian Government internationally in 1965 were the separation of Singapore from the Federation on 9th August followed by the devastating coup and counter-coup in Jakarta shortly thereafter. Quite understandably, Malaysia's defence allies—namely, the UK, Australia and New Zealand—had been keeping a close watch of the bitter Sino-Malay wrangles and the increasingly tense communal relations with growing fears of their implications for the *Konfrontasi* situation. The Americans had been following the state of bilateral relations between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore closely, too, and when a suggestion had been made by the former British Foreign Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, on 29th June 1965 to Dean Rusk that Lee Kuan Yew be invited to the US, the State Department firmly opposed it.²⁷ An internal National Security Council memorandum dated 16th August concluded that the NSC continued “to share State's relatively sanguine view of the Singapore-Malaysia divorce. The previous arrangement had become intolerable.”²⁸ A reading of these published documents from British, Australian and US sources makes it abundantly clear that Lee Kuan Yew's obstinacy and, to a lesser extent, Malaysian Minister of Finance Tan Siew Sin's uncompromising position on financial matters were contributory causes of the inevitable separation.²⁹ Men such as Ong Yoke Lin in Washington must have had a difficult time in explaining the basis of the ill-will between the two sides and the NSC's comment is a form of confirmation that the Malaysian Embassy had done its job well above what could have been expected.

²⁷ “No 266, Telegram from the Department of State to the Consulate in Singapore, Washington, 21st July 1965”, *USXXVI*. Among other things it said quite categorically to the American Consul: “You should do nothing to encourage Lee to consider [a] visit to the US at this time”. It went on: “Lee's objective in any trip to [the] US [is] likely to be less to learn about US and its policies than to campaign intensively to win [the] support of US leaders, press, public for himself and his views along [the] lines [of his] recent visits to the UK, Australia and NZ”.

²⁸ Fn 4, “No. 267, Telegram from the Embassy in Malaysia to the Department of State, Kuala Lumpur. 9th August 1965”, *USXXVI*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

In the light of the changed geo-political circumstances once Singapore's separation had been effected, Malaysia showed increasing interest in establishing links with parts of the hitherto-“closed” communist world. As an American intelligence report in late 1965 noted, “Malaysia and Singapore have taken the initiative of indicating to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that they would welcome trade missions and news agency representatives in their respective countries”. It concluded that both countries (Malaysia and Singapore) were “headed in the same direction with regard to their foreign policies: toward closer relations with nonaligned and Communist countries”.³⁰ William Bundy, the American Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern affairs, dropped in for tea at the Residency in Kuala Lumpur on 9th March 1966. The Tunku decided, on the spur of the moment, to take Bundy and his party on a personally guided tour of the National Mosque, once he heard that the visitor had not visited the newly completed building.³¹ The police security detail must have been horrified by the Tunku's impulsive act, throwing caution to the wind. Just the day before, left-wing demonstrators, egged on by Opposition parties like the Socialist Front, had stoned the American International Assurance (AIA) building in Jalan Ampang where the US Embassy was then located. It had caused great embarrassment to the Government and Tun Razak had condemned the anti-Vietnam War agitators as “hooligans”.³² There is no evidence to indicate what role Ambassador Ong and his staff had played in arranging Bundy's visit but, by that time, it was well known that the Malaysians had established close personal relations with influential circles both inside the Administration and among the media corps.

THE PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON VISIT TO MALAYSIA

Throughout 1966 the central role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in promoting Malaysia's name in international circles became more and more evident to a populace that was largely rather parochial in its outlook. Thus, when President Lyndon Johnson made a short two-day visit to the country after attending the SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organisation) conference in Manila on 30th October, it really marked the coming of age of the new nation. In a memorandum

³⁰ “No. 270, National Intelligence Estimate, Washington, 16th December 1965”, *USXXVI*.

³¹ *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vols. 1-35, (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1966-2004), [Hereafter referred to as *FAM*], *FAM*, I/1, 1966, pp. 34-36.

³² Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian nexus*, pp. 263-264.

to the President that Dean Rusk prepared, prior to the visit, he wrote: "Malaysia has become something of an economic and political showpiece in Southeast Asia, despite the drag of its troubles with Indonesia." He also drew attention to the three areas in which Tun Abdul Razak had previously indicated to the US as Malaysia's immediate priorities in their bilateral relations: "(1) military assistance; (2) support for Malaysia's five-year development plan; and (3) restraint in United States Government rubber and tin stockpile disposal programs." It was, therefore, specifically recommended "that, prior to the Manila Conference, the United States Government should announce that for 1967 disposals from the United States Government rubber stockpile will be at an annual rate of 120,000 tons."³³

However, despite these promising developments in the public American attitude toward Malaysia, the Malaysians were to find out that, in reality, the US would not be a substitute for a reduction in British and Commonwealth aid to the country. They, no doubt, "felt proud, honored (and somewhat surprised) that [the] President of [the] U.S., [a] country which had not previously paid special attention to Malaysia, included Kuala Lumpur on [his] Far Eastern itinerary which otherwise embraced only U.S. allies".³⁴ The reality was that the Americans would, at best, only show some favours in military sales and selected sectors of economic and commercial support. Even though there was "a tumultuous airport welcome by 20,000 Malaysians" [at the old Subang airport], the occasion was partly marred by left-wing anti-Vietnam War demonstrators fighting with the police outside the USIS office that resulted in one death and 127 arrests.³⁵ On a more practical level, it was a real test of the organisational and professional capacity of Wisma Putra (the new name of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to handle such a major event that included even a quick visit by Johnson and his entourage to a FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) scheme close to the capital.³⁶

³³ "No. 274, Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson, Washington, 15th October 1966", *USXXVI*.

³⁴ "No. 276, Telegram from the Embassy in Kuala Lumpur to the Department of State, Kuala Lumpur, 17th November 1966", *USXXVI*.

³⁵ Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian nexus*, p. 264.

³⁶ The FELDA settlement in Labu, Negeri Sembilan was re-named "Kampung LBJ" to mark the President's visit.

An examination of the photographic collection at the National Archives of Malaysia (*Arkib Negara Malaysia*) revealed that the Johnson visit was the culmination of Ambassador Ong's continuous efforts to develop Malaysia's economic and political links with the US. As early as November 1963, he had accompanied a delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on a visit to KL. Later in 1965, he had been instrumental in arranging for a US loan to the Malaysian Government which the Finance Minister, Tun Tan Siew Sin, went to Washington to sign. Another highlight in March 1966 was the meeting that he had arranged between Malaysian Cabinet members and the Special Adviser to the President on Southeast Asia, Mr Eugene Black, in Kuala Lumpur. Clearly then, here was an Ambassador who was kept on his toes attending to a wide variety of mutual interests in the advancement of Malaysia-US bilateral relations with his constant toing and froing between the two capitals.³⁷

TUN OMAR'S NEW INITIATIVES IN ECONOMIC AND OTHER MATTERS

Economic issues have always been an integral part of every nation's foreign policy, and Malaysia was no exception to this rule as trade representatives were invariably placed in the missions abroad where bilateral commercial relationships were of particular significance. However, by the late 1960s Malaysia's heavy dependence on international commodity prices over-exposed the country to the vagaries of market forces, especially so in the case of rubber when prices fell to an eighteen-year low in 1967 due to the competition with synthetics. Obviously, the responsible bodies in Kuala Lumpur realized that they would have to plead with the US authorities to reconsider the sales from the American rubber stockpiles in order to save the situation. However, the President's Special Assistant, W.W. Rostow, complained that "without any discussion with us, they announced that their Finance Minister was coming to Washington to discuss with you, if possible, the 'serious problem' posed by sales from our rubber stockpile". He thought that "this is nonsense" as the US had, in fact, cut down their stockpiles sales since 1966 from 170,000 tons to 70,000 tons,

³⁷ See 2001/0020351; 2001/0029892; 2001/0031244, *Koleksi Gambar-gambar* [Photographic Collection], ANM. Ambassador Ong invariably accompanied the various American officials during their visits to Malaysia and his personal triumph, as it were, was when he was there to welcome the President himself.

all of which was for their own use and, therefore, would have no effect on world prices. Rostow was quite biting in his recommendation to President Johnson not to entertain any Malaysian request for its Finance Minister to meet with him as it would be “beneath the dignity of your office to get involved in this exercise in futility”.³⁸

By this time the insiders in the White House were fully alive to the special links that the Malaysian Ambassador had with key members of the Administration and it was not surprising that Rostow should have warned the President. He wrote: “...I expect Malaysian Ambassador Ong will make strenuous efforts to arrange the appointment through the back door, once he finds the front door is locked. This memorandum is intended to ‘cut him off at the gulch’ “. ³⁹ The President minuted “Approve” on this memorandum and it was planned that only Rostow would see the Malaysian Minister of Finance when he turned up in Washington.⁴⁰ This was where Ambassador Ong’s special connections came into play vitally. By a sheer stroke of fortune, Ambassador Ong⁴¹ had a personal friend on the White House staff who arranged Ghazali Shafie’s meetings. This was Ernie Goldstein, a Special Assistant to the President specialising in domestic issues, whom Ong had met years ago in Texas. He was a regular guest at the Ambassador’s residence and usually brought along with him other members of the administration for social events organised by the Ongs.⁴²

Faced with this stone-walling by the Presidential staff, Ambassador Ong turned to the good offices of his friend Ernie Bernstein who arranged for Dato’

³⁸ “No. 280, Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, Washington, 14th September 1967”, p. 27, *US/XXVI*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Fn 2, *ibid.*

⁴¹ He explained to the author that he not only travelled the length and breadth of the United States to make Malaysia better known, but also developed personal friendships with the “inner circles” of the American Government in the capital, Washington, D.C. Many of them including the top brass were regular guests at his residence for meals and a round of poker. Personal interview with Tun Dato’ Seri Haji Omar Yoke Lin Ong at his residence in Taman Duta on 26th October 2007. See “Those were the days—Tun Omar Ong reminisces on his colourful past” by Jacqueline Ho, *Malaysian Business* (Kuala Lumpur), 16th-31st December 1992, pp. 37-39.

⁴² Personal interview with Datuk K.T. Ratnam, 8th December 2006, at his residence in Petaling Jaya. Ambassador Ratnam was then serving as Minister Counsellor at the Malaysian Embassy in Washington and was personally involved in this whole episode.

Ghazali Shafie, who had already arrived as an “advance party”, to meet with Marshall Wright, a senior member of the National Security Council Staff (1967-1968). In a memorandum to Rostow dated 30th September, Wright reported that, “prior to the meeting with Ghazali in Ernie Goldstein's office Malaysian Finance Minister Tan was planning to follow his meeting with the President with a speech in New York in which he would call for complete suspension of our sales from the rubber stockpile”. Further, the Americans concluded “that exposure to reality in Ernie's office has led the Malaysian Government to order the suspension of G[overnment] O[f] M[alaysia] statements attributing the rubber price decline to U.S. stockpile releases”. This was considered to be a “move in the right direction”, as it would avoid “the danger of connecting the President with the rubber problem”. It also emphasized the need for the Americans to be “courteous but [with] complete candor” in dealing with the Malaysians.⁴³

In his meetings at the State Department (and also with staff at the National Security Council), Ghazali Shafie is reported to have made an eloquent case for Malaysia being supported over the question of the release of the US rubber stockpile. He laid particular stress on the communist propaganda that US rubber sales were badly affecting the lives of the poor rubber smallholders in Malaysia and that the communists were trying “to poison US/Malaysian relations”. “Ghazali stresses that, for the time being, concrete steps are not as important as the atmospherics of a presidential meeting.”⁴⁴ Dato' Ghazali's intervention appeared to have created a breakthrough. Rusk himself wrote to Johnson recommending that he meet with Tan (who had arrived in late September as special emissary of the Prime Minister) although by then the Malaysians were quite clearly made to understand that they would receive nothing more than the normal courtesies.⁴⁵ The upshot of the meeting between the President and Tun Tan Siew Sin that took place at the White House on 10th October was that serious consideration would be given to the Malaysian request while Kuala Lumpur would in return

⁴³ Fn 2, “No. 281. Memorandum from Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow), 29th September 1967”, pp. 28-29, *US/XXVI*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “No. 282, Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson, Washington, 9th October 1967”, *US/XXVI*. See “Catching up with... The Patriot with the golden heart” by V. Selvarani, *New Sunday Times*, 17th December 2006.

substantially increase its military training and logistics support for the South Vietnamese Government.⁴⁶

As a further sign of the special value that the US attached to Malaysia's welfare, Vice President Hubert Humphrey stopped in Kuala Lumpur after the Presidential inauguration in Vietnam and met the Tunku and the entire Malaysian Cabinet on 2nd November 1967. Indonesia's economic recovery and the Philippines' claim to Sabah were discussed and Humphrey pointed out that it was the unbridled media in Manila that was stirring up the issue. Turning to Malaysia's economic problems, they discussed "increasing rice production, financing low-cost housing, and how to solve the problem of rubber, especially in the face of synthetics." For his part, Humphrey "encouraged the Cabinet to consider economic diversification".⁴⁷ At the same time, back in Washington, the President was made more fully aware of Malaysia's contributions to the Vietnamese. These were described as "considerably greater than [what] was described to you in the meeting with the Finance Minister",⁴⁸ and Dean Rusk told Ong Yoke Lin in a letter dated 27th October that the President had been duly informed.⁴⁹

There is no doubt that the Malaysian Ambassador had played a sterling role in advancing his country's interests using his own special social talents. Ambassador Ong's remarkable ability to get along with influential Americans in Washington is further corroborated by the personal experience of a former

⁴⁶ "No. 283, Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, October 10, 1967, Subject: Rubber and Malaysian Role in Viet-Nam", *US/XXVI*. Besides the President, the American side comprised Rostow, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Special Assistant to the President, James D. Bell, American Ambassador to Malaysia, and Robert W. Barnett, Deputy Assistant Secretary, State Department. The Malaysians at the meeting, apart from Minister Tan, were Ambassador Ong and Ghazali. Ernie Goldstein later reported to Johnson that as a result of the meeting the Malaysians "had a 'more realistic appreciation of the complexities and burdens' of the President's position". Fn 4, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ "No. 288, Editorial Note", pp. 31-32, *US/XXVI*.

⁴⁸ "No. 289, Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, Washington, November 1, 1967", p. 32, *US/XXVI*. The following were listed: "Over 5,000 Vietnamese officers trained in Malaysia; Training of 150 U.S. soldiers in handling Tracker Dogs; A rather impressive list of military equipment and weapons given [to] Viet-Nam after the end of the Malaysian insurgency (for example, 641 armoured personnel carriers, 56,000 shotguns; a creditable amount of civil assistance."

⁴⁹ Fn 5, *ibid.*

Cabinet Minister, Tan Sri Chong Hon Nyan. Malaysian food was routinely served at the official residence including satay and fried noodles which the Americans simply loved.⁵⁰ Datuk K.T. Ratnam, who was the senior Wisma Putra man at the Mission, told the author about the regular poker parties at Ong's place which had a following among some of the Americans.⁵¹ Lately the author learnt from Nik Ahmad Kamil's son, Tan Sri Nik Ibrahim, who was studying at Georgetown University at that time and was "looked after" by Ong that he had personally witnessed the most senior staff members of the White House being entertained at the Ambassador's residence. In fact, he said that at the height of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 during President John Kennedy's tenure there were actually several top-ranking Americans, both civilian and military, having a party at Ong's place while receiving urgent telephone calls from the White House and the National Security Council.⁵² Another younger officer at the Malaysian Embassy of that time stated that Ong "was a master at cultivating the power centres in Washington".⁵³ All this suggested that Wisma Putra genuinely wished to keep on the right side of the US, even though the Malaysians were at the same time courting not only the Eastern European bloc but the USSR itself for trade and commercial opportunities.⁵⁴ The compilers of the US documents for this period in American relations with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have, however, concluded that Johnson, Hubert Humphrey and other senior men in the Administration "identified most closely with Lee Kuan Yew".⁵⁵ This was despite the pleasantries regularly mouthed by everyone from the President and below that Malaysia was "a model of what may be done by determined and farsighted men in Southeast Asia".⁵⁶

⁵⁰ See "Catching up with...The Patriot with the golden heart" by V. Selvarani, *New Sunday Times*, 17th December 2006.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Datuk K.T. Ratnam on 8th December 2006 at his residence in Petaling Jaya.

⁵² Telephone conversation with Tan Sri Nik Ibrahim bin Tan Sri Nik Ahmad Kamil, 21st November 2007.

⁵³ Personal interview with Tan Sri Hasmi Agam on Tuesday, 3rd July 2007, at IDFR. He was then First Secretary and rose to become Malaysian Permanent Representative at the UN from 1998 to 2003. He is currently Executive Chairman of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Kuala Lumpur.

⁵⁴ See "Statement by Tan Sri M. Ghazali, Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia on the signing of the Soviet-Malaysian Trade Agreement" [3rd April 1967], and "Malaysia/Yugoslavia Relations: Joint Communiqué" [6th May 1967], FAM, I/6, (September 1967), pp. 43, 54.

⁵⁵ See Preface to *US/XXVI*.

⁵⁶ "560. Remarks [by President Johnson] at the State Dinner in Parliament House, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 30th October 1966", *Collection: Public Papers of the Presidents* (Washington: Federal Register, annual).

Thus, the amazing diplomatic feats of Tun Omar Yoke-Lin Ong in bringing about a unique level of bilateral relations with the United States of America during his decade-long tenure of the appointment in Washington remains to be told in much greater detail. Why he had been specially selected in those times of great uncertainty as to the regional outlook in Southeast Asia and the continuing role of the big powers remains a complete mystery as we have no authoritative sources to turn to. The fact that the Tunku had even thought of Dato' Suleiman Abdul Rahman, whom the Tunku had a special liking for, as a potential successor to Nik Ahmad Kamil is in itself rather revealing. By that time it was also thought that the UN Permanent Representative's post should go to another senior person as the "heavy work load" would be too much for Suleiman who was himself not in the best of health. But nothing seems to have come of this before the fateful decision to send Ong to man both positions in Washington, D.C. and New York.

Asia–Pacific Challenges for Diplomacy

Ramesh Thakur

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ABSTRACT

There has been a threefold change in the world of diplomacy and diplomats: in the *levels* of diplomatic activity,; in the *domain and scope* of the subject matter or content; and in the *numbers and types of actors*. In consequence, the business of the world has changed almost beyond recognition over the last century. In the classic formulation, the overriding goal of foreign policy was the promotion, pursuit and defence of the national interest. The overriding goal of foreign policy in the contemporary world is to forge issue-specific coalitions with like-minded actors through issue-specific ‘network diplomacy’.

The world of international relations too has changed dramatically since 1945, including the Cold War and its ending, decolonisation, the rise of the human rights and environmental protection norms and the advancement of international humanitarian law, shifts in the locale, nature and victims of war and armed conflict, a progressive shift from national to human security as analytical framework and policy template, and globalisation. The end of the

Cold War had different results in the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific theatres. The structure of power relations in Asia-Pacific is more fluid and complex than in Europe, resting on five powers: America, China, Japan, Russia and India. Regional diplomatic challenges include managing nuclear risks in South and Northeast Asia; the intersecting strategic triangles of China-Japan-US and China-Japan-India as the anchors of regional stability, security and prosperity; becoming norm entrepreneurs and setters, not just norm takers and spoilers; and embedding regional norms and best practices in resilient institutions.

New Age diplomacy is increasingly about issue-specific and goal-directed partnerships between different actors. Asia-Pacific is no exception to this rule. The diplomatic challenge is to form coalitions of the winning to achieve sustainable resolutions to disagreements, disputes and conflicts. This article proceeds in five parts. I will begin with a brief overview of the changing world of diplomacy and diplomats, then canvass changes in the world at large since 1945, followed by the lagged changes in Asia-Pacific. Fourth, prompted by North Korea's nuclear test last year, the unprecedented nuclear deal between India and the United States, and the continuing crisis over suspicions about a clandestine nuclear weapons program in Iran, I will take up the theme of the anomalies undermining the global governance of nuclear weapons. Finally, I will conclude with a catalogue of challenges to diplomacy in Asia-Pacific.

I. Changes in the World of Diplomacy and Diplomats

There has been a threefold change in the world of diplomacy and diplomats:

- i) In the *levels* of diplomatic activity, from the local through the domestic-national to the bilateral, regional and global;
- ii) In the *domain and scope* of the subject matter or content, expanding rapidly to a very broad array of the different sectors of public policy and government activity; and
- iii) In the rapidly expanding *numbers and types of actors*, from governments to national private sector firms, multinational corporations, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and regional and international organizations.

The business of the world has changed almost beyond recognition over the last century. Four decades ago the influential French theorist Raymond Aron argued that ‘the ambassador and the soldier *live* and *symbolize* international relations which, insofar as they are inter-state relations, concern diplomacy and war’.¹ Today, alongside the hordes of diplomats and soldiers, the international lawyer, the multinational merchant, cross-border financier, World Bank technocrat, UN peacekeeper and NGO humanitarian worker jostle for space on the increasingly congested international stage.

In the classic formulation, the overriding goal of foreign policy was the promotion, pursuit and defence of the national interest. The über-realist Hans Morgenthau defined diplomacy as ‘the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly’.² The four core tasks of the diplomat were to *represent* his³ country’s interests, *protect* his country’s citizens visiting or residing in his accredited country, *inform* his own and host government and people about each other, and *negotiate* with the host country.⁴ This was conducted in a world of ‘club diplomacy’ (and occasionally the even more intimate ‘boudoir diplomacy’).⁵ Because of the threefold changes identified above, the overriding goal of foreign policy in the contemporary world is to forge issue-specific coalitions with like-minded actors. China and India teaming up with Brazil and South Africa to ensure that any Doha accord will be a development outcome in reality and not just in rhetoric is a good example.

The matching core task of diplomacy is to engage in issue-specific ‘network diplomacy’.⁶ The latter has more players than club diplomacy, is flat rather than

¹ Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, translated from the French by Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 5; emphasis in original.

² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 135.

³ Women diplomats were a rarity.

⁴ The classic formulation was Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁵ Jorge Heine (at that time the Ambassador of Chile to India), *On the Manner of Practising the New Diplomacy*, Working Paper No. 11 (Waterloo, Ontario: Centre for International Governance Innovation, October 2006), p. 5n8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–12.

hierarchical, engages in multiple forms of communication beyond merely the written, is more transparent than confidential, and its 'consummation' takes the form of increased bilateral flows—of tourists, students, labour, credits, investments, technology, and goods and services—instead of formal signing ceremonies. The motto of new diplomacy could be: networking to promote welfare and security by managing risk and reducing vulnerability in a world of strategic uncertainty, increasing complexity and rapid globalisation.

Those attached to the old world of pomp and pageantry, rituals and procedures, are increasingly detached from the real world of modern diplomacy, and are the less effective for it. Not only can presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers go over the ambassador's head directly to their counterparts in other countries; often so can business executives, trade union leaders, journalists and NGOs. The bigger departments from the home country's bureaucracy, better staffed and resourced, often place their own personnel in overseas embassies: not just defence, but also agriculture, education, and so on. The agenda-setting capacity of NGOs—Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – is greater than that of many governments. If, therefore, the diplomat wishes to escape from Peter Ustinov's withering description as 'nothing but a headwaiter who is allowed to sit down occasionally',⁷ then he and she must learn to engage and communicate with the full range of social, economic and political actors, across all domains of subject matter, and at all levels of interactions.

Ambassadors' lives no longer consist, if it ever did, of equal parts of protocol, alcohol and geritol. They must engage with the host society in which they live, not merely negotiate with the government to which they are accredited. No longer is the ambassador an honest man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country, in the famous epigram by Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639); prime ministers and presidents manage to do that quite well at home directly. Instead, in attempting to navigate the shoals while exploiting the opportunities of a globalised and networked world, the diplomat must cultivate all manner of constituencies in

⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 10.

home, host and sometimes even third countries. That is the key to network diplomacy: cultivating all relevant constituencies.⁸

II. A Changed World

The world of international relations—the ‘field’ in which diplomats operate—has also changed substantially since 1945. We operate today in a global environment that is vastly more challenging, complex and demanding than the world of 1945. Just consider the vocabulary and metaphors of the new age: Srebrenica, Rwanda, DRC, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, East Timor, Darfur; child soldiers, ethnic cleansing, blood diamonds, 9/11, regime change, Islamophobia, HIV/AIDS, global warming, climate change; Microsoft, Google, iPod, Blackberry; metrosexual, heteropolitan, localitarian—the list is endless.

The issues and preoccupations of the new millennium present new and different types of challenges from those that faced the world in 1945. With the new realities and challenges have come corresponding new expectations for action and new standards of conduct in national and international affairs. The number of actors in world affairs has grown enormously, the types of actors have changed very substantially, the interactions between them have grown ever more dense and intense and the agenda of international public policy has been altered quite dramatically in line with the changing temper of the times.

1. THE COLD WAR

The celebrations and joy at the ending of World War II soon turned into a dark and sombre mood as the iron curtain descended down the middle of Europe and the two blocs’ rival armies, backed by formidable arsenals of nuclear weapons and doctrines of nuclear deterrence, eyeballed each other through what John Gaddis appropriately labelled the long peace.⁹ One axis of the Cold War consisted of the

⁸ In 1948–49, a young Pierre Trudeau set out on a backpacking adventure across Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. He found overseas Canadian diplomats to be aloof, disdainful and condescending – an experience he never forgot and an attitude he reciprocated as prime minister two decades later. See John English, *Citizen of the World: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Volume One: 1919–1968* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2006), pp. 180, 190. A cautionary tale for young consular officials: the ragged and dreadlocked young backpacker seeking your assistance today could be your minister in years’ time.

⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

mutual hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers; the second axis was a transcendental conflict of ideas and values that divided the world into two groups of states. The Cold War was a global struggle centred on and dominated by two superpowers who were able to structure the pattern of international relationships because of a qualitative discrepancy in military capacity and resources. And the conflict was transcendental because it involved a clash of ideologies: the existence of a strong Marxist and capitalist state that could not accept permanent relations with each other, believing instead in the eventual destruction of the other.

The end of the Cold War terminated the US-Soviet great-power rivalry, brought victory for the liberal over a totalitarian ideology, and marked the triumph of the market over the command economy model. We are the better for the Cold War having been fought, for how it was fought, and for who won. As a benign hegemon that is rare if not unique in great power history, the United States underwrote world stability and prosperity and embarked upon an ambitious and largely successful agenda of regional and global institutions, including the United Nations, built as part of a great liberal normative enterprise.

The elimination of countervailing power to check the untrammelled exercise of US power did not just produce a unipolar world; it also ushered in a quasi-imperial order. Imperialism is not a foreign policy designed to promote, project, and globalise the values and virtues of the dominant centre, but a form of international governance based on an unequal hierarchy of power.¹⁰ The reality of inequality structures the relationship between the imperial centre and all others. This is not a matter of malevolence on the part of a particular administration in Washington, but an artefact of the reality of a unipolar world that will shape the foreign relations of any administration.

This is perhaps the biggest challenge for diplomacy at the global level: how to interact with a unipolar Washington that views itself as uniquely virtuous,

¹⁰ 'We treat UN Security Council members like ingrates who offend our princely dignity by lifting their heads from the carpet'; speech by Senator Robert C. Byrd, 'The Arrogance of Power', 19 March 2003, available at <http://byrd.senate.gov>.

resistant to ‘Gulliverisation’ (that is, the giant tied down by innumerable threads of global norms and treaties), exempt from restrictions that apply to all others, oscillating between neo-isolationism and neo-conservatism. The challenge is as acute for Finland and Germany as it is for China and India. If friends and allies are to be useful, they must avoid both slavish obedience and instinctive opposition; be prepared to support Washington when right despite intense international unpopularity; but be willing to say no when America is wrong, despite the risk of intense American irritation. A second and related challenge is how to interact with one another without always routing relations through Washington in a hub-and-spoke model.

2. DECOLONISATION

One of the historic phenomena of the last century, powerfully championed by Washington in the decade after World War II, was the emergence of large swathes of humanity from colonial rule to independence, even if for many the reality of oppression did not materially change, or at least not for long. The first great wave of the retreat of European colonialism from Asia, Africa and the South Pacific was followed by the collapse of the large land-based Soviet empire and a fresh burst of newly independent countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There has been something of a revival of the enterprise of liberal imperialism which rests on nostalgia for the lost world of Western empires that kept the peace among warring natives and provided sustenance to their starving peoples. This is at variance with the developing countries’ own memory and narratives of their encounter with the West. Typically, their communities were pillaged, their economies ravaged and their political development stunted. Afro-Asian countries achieved independence on the back of extensive and protracted nationalist struggles and then engaged simultaneously in state building, nation building and economic development. The parties and leaders at the forefront of the fight for independence helped to establish the new states and shape and guide the founding principles of their foreign policies, including a strong anti-colonial impulse. The experience of the former Soviet satellites is not all that different in essence, with the one significant exception of the abiding sense of gratitude towards the United States for unstinting support in the long shadow of Soviet oppression.

There are several resulting diplomatic challenges. For most former colonies, from the South Pacific to Southeast and South Asia, the triple challenge of national integration, state-building and economic development remains imperative. We also need to avoid state collapse and failure and the resulting humanitarian emergencies, from Pacific Island states to East Timor, North Korea, Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and some others. Former colonial powers and settler societies have to be sensitive to the foreign policy input of historical trauma, while former colonies must make an effort to escape the trap of viewing current events and motives from a historical prism. One of the clearest examples of the dual danger is in relation to providing international assistance to victims of atrocities inside sovereign borders.¹¹

3. CHANGING NATURE AND LOCALE OF ARMED CONFLICT

The number of armed conflicts rose steadily until the end of the Cold War, peaked in the early 1990s, and has declined since then. The nature of armed conflict itself has changed, with most being internal struggles for power, dominance and resources rather than militarised inter-state confrontations.¹² Battle lines, if they exist at all, are fluid and shifting rather than territorially demarcated and static. Because they merge seamlessly with sectarian divides, contemporary conflicts are often rooted in, reproduce and replicate past intergroup atrocities, thereby perpetuating hard-edged cleavages that are perceived as zero sum games by all parties. Thus all sides are caught in a never ending cycle of suspicions, atrocities and recriminations.

Until the Second World War, war was an institution of the states system, with distinctive rules, etiquette, norms and stable patterns of practices.¹³ In recent times the line between war as a political act and organised criminality has become increasingly blurred. The locale of warfare has also shifted. Today we have more wars, and more UN peace operations, in Africa than the rest of the world combined. Often, wars of national liberation leading to the creation of new countries were followed by wars of national debilitation as the new states faced

¹¹ See Ramesh Thakur, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹² See Andrew Mack et al., *Human Security Report 2005* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹³ See Kal J. Holsti, *War, the State, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

internal threats to their authority, legitimacy and territorial integrity by secessionist movements.

Even most 'internal' conflicts have regional and transnational elements. Civil conflicts are fuelled by arms and monetary transfers that originate in the developed world, and in turn their destabilising effects are felt in the developed world in everything from globally interconnected terrorism to refugee flows, the export of drugs and the spread of infectious disease and organised crime.

The net result is that noncombatants are now on the frontline of modern battles. The need to help and protect civilians at risk of death and displacement caused by armed conflict is now paramount. Diplomats will be judged on how well they discharge or dishonour their international responsibility to protect.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS

The multiplication of internal conflicts was accompanied by a worsening of the abuses of the human rights of millions of people. International concern with human rights prior to the Second World War dwelt on the laws of warfare, slavery, and protection of minorities. In 1948, conscious of the atrocities committed by the Nazis while the world looked silently away, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The two covenants in 1966 added force and specificity, affirming both civil-political and social-economic-cultural rights without privileging either set. The United Nations has also adopted scores of other legal instruments on human rights

Human rights advocacy rests on 'the moral imagination to feel the pain of others' as if it were one's own, treats others as 'rights-bearing equals', not 'dependents in tutelage', and can be viewed as 'a juridical articulation of duty by those in zones of safety toward those in zones of danger'.¹⁴ The origins of the Universal Declaration in the experiences of European civilisation are important, not for the reason that most critics cite, but its opposite. It is less an expression of European triumphalism and imperial self-confidence than a guilt-ridden

¹⁴ Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, edited and introduced by Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 163.

Christendom's renunciation of its ugly recent record; less an assertion of the superiority of European human nature than revulsion at the recent history of European savagery; not an effort to universalise Western values but to ban the dark side of Western vices like racial and religious bigotry.

The challenge for diplomacy, therefore, is how best to interpret and apply universal values with due sensitivity to local contexts and Asian sensibilities. Far from cross-cultural divisions, the loss of a son killed by government thugs unites mothers of all religions and nationalities in shared pain, grief and anger. A challenge for Asia's diplomats is how to convince Western governments and people that the Palestinians are not exempt from the universalism of human rights, and that occupied Palestine should not be declared a human rights-free zone.

5. RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The rise of environmental consciousness, the need to husband resources more frugally and nurture our fragile ecosystems more tenderly as our common legacy for future generations, was another great social movement of the last century that contributed greatly to the greening of the agenda of international affairs. The concept of 'sustainable development' was one of the major norm shifts, with the Brundtland Commission being the midwife.¹⁵ How best to operationalise the concept in concrete policy and actual practice remains intensely contentious and thus a major diplomatic challenge.

Nothing illustrates this better than climate change. There is substantial agreement among scientists that the rate of climate change driven by human activity dwarfs the natural rates of change. Yet much of the media has preferred to give 'equal' time to contrarians whose scepticism is sometimes supported by the fossil fuel industry. 'Balanced' coverage reflects, not the balance of scientific consensus on the subject, but rather the ability of special-interest groups to capture media and political attention. The failure of major countries to participate

¹⁵ For a study of the role and impact of international blue ribbon commissions, see Ramesh Thakur, Andrew F. Cooper and John English, eds. *International Commissions and the Power of Ideas* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005).

in the Kyoto Protocol undermined its effective implementation and delayed the international effort to slow down carbon emissions of the industrial countries. The Stern report issued a deadly sober warning. Without urgent action, global output will fall by some 20 percent, producing economic devastation and social dislocation on a scale comparable to the great depression and the two world wars. Some have argued that given scientific uncertainties built into the climate change models and the high costs of action that may ultimately prove surplus to requirements, the prudent policy is to wait, see and adapt if necessary. Sir Nicholas Stern reversed the argument: given the same uncertainties and the relatively much lower costs of acting now rather than later, the best policy is immediate action. Delayed action will cost more and deliver fewer benefits.¹⁶

The speed and amount of global warming will be determined by the increase in greenhouse gases and will in turn determine the rise in sea levels. The gravest threat of climate change for all living species, including humans, lies in the potential destabilisation of the massive ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland. If carbon dioxide emissions continue to increase at current rates for another fifty years, temperatures are predicted to rise by 2-5 degrees centigrade by mid-century and 3-10 degrees by the end of the century. In this scenario, we will continue to exploit fossil fuel resources without reducing carbon emissions or capturing and sequestering them before they warm the atmosphere. Life may survive, but on a dramatically transformed and far more desolate planet. In the alternative to the business-as-usual scenario, carbon emissions stabilise within one decade before falling over several decades, first gradually and then rapidly, helped by curtailed consumption patterns, revenue-neutral taxes that reward consumers who save while charging consumers who prefer not to change their lifestyles, and new abatement technologies. Temperatures will still rise, but by 1-2 degrees centigrade, buying time to develop coping strategies.

Kofi Annan commented that climate change sceptics are 'out of step, out of arguments and just about out of time'.¹⁷ The award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize jointly to former Vice-President Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel

¹⁶ Sir Nicholas Stern, et al., *The Economics of Climate Change* (2006); www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

¹⁷ Kofi Annan, 'Climate change to test our adaptability', *Japan Times*, 10 November 2006.

on Climate Change (IPCC) for their championing of the need to address the urgent and critical threat of climate change underscores the intensity of the diplomatic challenge. Effective programs for tackling what may well be the gravest challenge confronting humanity require active partnerships among governments, scientists, economists, NGOs and industry. The traditional paradigm of value-maximising national interest is simply irrelevant.

6. HUMAN SECURITY

Its irrelevance has been accentuated also with the rise of the human security paradigm which puts the individual at the centre of the debate, analysis and policy. He or she is paramount, and the state is a collective instrument to protect human life and promote human welfare. The fundamental components of human security – the security of *people* against threats to personal safety and life – can be put at risk by external aggression, but also by factors within a country, including ‘security’ forces, acid rain, forest fires, rising sea levels, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis.

The reformulation of national security into human security is simple, yet has profound consequences for how we see the world, how we organise our political affairs, how we make choices in public and foreign policy, and how we relate to fellow-human beings from many different countries and cultures. To many poor people in the world’s poorest countries today, the risk of being attacked by terrorists or with weapons of mass destruction is far removed from the pervasive reality of the so-called soft threats: hunger, lack of safe drinking water and sanitation, and endemic diseases. These soft threats kill millions every year—far more than the so-called ‘hard’ or ‘real’ threats to security. A major diplomatic challenge is to recalibrate the balance between national and human security and reallocate human and material resources accordingly.

7. GLOBALISATION

National frontiers are becoming less relevant in determining the flow of ideas, information, goods, services, capital, labour and technology. The speed of modern communications makes borders increasingly permeable, while the volume of cross-border flows threatens to overwhelm the capacity of states to manage them. Globalisation releases many productive forces that can help to uplift millions from poverty, deprivation and degradation. But it can also unleash destructive forces –

‘uncivil society’—such as flows of arms, terrorism, disease, prostitution, drug and people smuggling, etc. that are neither controllable nor solvable by individual governments. Because global capital is not self-governing, stability in financial markets requires the judicious exercise of public authority; maximising global allocative efficiency cannot be the only goal of international financial policy. Questions of legitimacy and distributive justice are as important as allocative efficiency, currency convertibility and capital mobility.

The growing interdependence under the impact of globalisation is highly asymmetrical: the benefits of linking and the costs of delinking are not equally distributed between all partners. Industrialised countries are highly interdependent in relations with one another; developing countries are largely independent in economic relations with one another; and developing countries are highly dependent on industrialised countries. There has been a growing divergence, not convergence, in income levels between countries and peoples, with widening inequality among and within nations.¹⁸ Assets and incomes are more concentrated. Wage shares have fallen while profit shares have risen. Capital mobility alongside labour immobility has reduced the bargaining power of organized labour. The rise in unemployment and the accompanying casualisation of the workforce, with more and more people working in the informal sector, has generated an excess supply of labour and depressed real wages. Joseph Stiglitz in particular highlights the unequal distributional consequences of a restricted labour market with an increasingly deregulated market for flows of investment and capital.¹⁹ The ease of capital movement leads to threats of exit unless taxes, wages and worker benefits are reduced, and accommodating such demands of capital feeds the growing inequality in incomes within and disparity between countries.

Financial crises of the 1990s in Asia, Latin America and Russia showed how much, and how quickly, regional crises take on systemic character through rapid contagion. They also highlighted the unequal distribution of costs among the victims of financial crises. The international financial institutions (IFIs) embed

¹⁸ Deepak Nayyar, ‘Globalisation, history and Development: a tale of two centuries’, *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 30:1 (January 2006), pp. 137-59, at pp. 153-56.

¹⁹ Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

unequal market power relations in global financial governance; the promotion of free capital mobility as a universal norm reflects the market dominance of the major economic powers; and outbreaks of financial crises in the emerging markets highlight the role of the IFIs as 'global' norm enforcers. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is both the symbol and the agent of the unequal distribution of economic power and the resulting asymmetric distribution of the risks of international financial flows and the costs of adjustment. Hence the claim by Michel Camdessus, the former managing director of the IMF (1987–2000), that to the duty of domestic excellence and rectitude we must add the ethic of global responsibility in the management of national economies. He goes on to describe the widening inequality within and among nations as 'morally outrageous, economically wasteful, and socially explosive'.²⁰

Even the industrial countries are now experiencing something of a blowback effect of globalisation. The phenomenon of outsourcing (where the rich countries outsource jobs to the Indias and the Philippines of the world, while the latter outsource their brains) and the rise of challenges from China and India, including takeover bids, is giving the Western world a taste of the dark side of globalisation. The powerful global labour arbitrage generated by globalisation has put unrelenting pressure on the income earning capacity of high-wage workers in the industrial economies like Japan and Canada. At the same time, and indeed partly in reaction to globalisation, communities are beginning to re-identify with local levels of group identity.

The challenge of diplomacy is how best to harness the productive potential of globalisation while muting the disruptive forces, taming the destructive forces and protecting (ethno)national identity.

8. NONSTATE ACTORS

NGO-led sceptical dissenters in the streets offer an antidote to the unbridled enthusiasts of global capital in boardrooms and treasuries. Governments can satisfy only a small and diminishing proportion of the needs of human beings as

²⁰ Michel Camdessus, 'The IMF at the beginning of the twenty-first century: Can we establish a humanized globalisation?' *Global Governance* 7:4 (Oct.–Dec. 2001), pp. 363–65.

social animals. 'Civil society' refers to the social and political space where voluntary associations attempt to shape norms and policies for regulating public life in social, political, economic and environmental dimensions. The new actors have brought a wide range of fresh voices, perspectives, interests, experiences and aspirations. They add depth and texture to the increasingly rich tapestry of international civil society.

The net result of expanding global citizen action has been to extend the theory and deepen the practice of grassroots democracy across borders. We are likely to witness increasing issue-specific networks and coalitions. Global policy networks can constitute highly effective *coalitions for change* that bridge the growing distance between policy-makers, citizens, entrepreneurs, and activists.

Civil society operating on the soft and well-lit side of the international street poses fewer and lesser problems than 'uncivil' society: nonstate actors operating among the shadows on the rough and dark side of the international street who too have become increasingly globalised and interlinked in their operations, funnelling drugs, arms, hot money and terrorists across state borders. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were dramatic proof of the democratisation of the means of violence, as a result of which a motley collection of fanatics was able to inflict on the US homeland casualties on a scale that has been beyond the capacity of any state actor since 1941.

The threefold challenge for diplomacy is how to counter uncivil society, give voice to civil society, but neither a vote nor a veto to them: for that would be an abdication of responsibility to govern on behalf of all citizens. Some Asian-Pacific governments complain about the activities of international NGOs as interference in their internal affairs and view them suspiciously as instruments of 'soft' Western intervention. They are surely right in the implied belief that NGOs augment foreign policy tools. The US is indeed a more powerful world actor for being able to draw on a rich civil society, a depth of scholarly knowledge and a media that has market dominance and reaches into the farthest nook and cranny around the world.

But this begs the question: instead of keeping NGOs at arms' length, should not governments learn how best to strengthen civil society in their own countries and enter into partnership with them in the pursuit of shared international goals? Even more crucially, why is it that non-Western governments complain about biased coverage by Western media instead of doing something constructive? Journalists are censored, manipulated, harassed and sometimes even imprisoned and liquidated. To be sure, English is the dominant medium of global communication, and the BBC and CNN are truly global brands in the world of media. Yet today they are being challenged by Al Jazeera, to the point where Washington has had a strained if not antagonistic relationship with the group in relation to their coverage of Afghanistan and Iraq. Of the large and well-established Asian democracies, India and Japan could easily by now have supported the emergence of truly global media brands as well. Quite a few Indian journalists have world recognition but, almost without exception, they work for Western print and electronic media. In its desperation to control information, news and analyses, the Indian government has effectively aborted the rise of independent Indian news services with the authority and credibility to command a global following. The BBC provided the model; is it the West's fault that Indians failed to emulate such a positive example? The net result is that India does indeed lack a key agent of international influence and a crucial ingredient of soft power in the modern networked world. In this respect, sadly, India is a metaphor for all of Asia.

The challenge for enlightened national interest diplomacy, therefore, is how best to nurture civil society and credible media so that they help to project local values and perspectives to a receptive international audience.

III. A Changed Asia–Pacific

The framework for the world order resting on superpower rivalry was adopted at Yalta in 1945. Reflecting the two theatres of the Second World War, that order had two geographical components: Europe and Asia–Pacific. The kaleidoscope of cultures, cleavages and conflicts in Asia–Pacific does not permit a simple intercontinental transposition of the Euro–Atlantic security architecture. The Yalta-based order has crumbled in Europe but not Asia–Pacific. Here, walls have not come tumbling down, Korea is still divided, empires have not dissolved nor

come apart, and armies have not gone marching home. Internal developments in the former Soviet Union had immediate and far-reaching consequences for Eastern Europe but lacked a similar resonance in the Asian communist countries.

There is a greater variety of political systems in Asia–Pacific, ranging from robust and explosive democracy, fragile democracies and something less than full democracies to communism. Many countries are characterised by socio-economic fragility and regime brittleness and some suffer from enduring low-intensity insurgencies. The disparities in social and economic indicators are greater. Terrorist cells are feared to have taken deep root in parts of Indonesia and the Philippines, while Northeast Asia is the setting for such other non-traditional security concerns as worsening water and energy scarcity, environmental degradation and human trafficking.²¹

The mantle of being the most heavily militarised region—entailing massive armies, fortified and mined borders, heavy long-range weapons systems and nuclear weapons—has passed from central Europe during the Cold War to Northeast Asia today. Intensive militarisation is proof of the persistence of the national security paradigm across Asia–Pacific. Yet the challenge posed by the massive earthquake and devastating tsunami of 26 December 2004 was a vivid illustration of the advantages of conceptualising security within the inclusive framework of human security.

The structure of power relations is more fluid and complex, resting on five powers: America, China, Japan, Russia and India. Even while attempting to improve relations with one another, they are also jockeying for advantages in case relations should deteriorate sharply, for example in their control over sea lanes of communication and choke points through which critical and potentially very vulnerable energy supplies transit.

In summary, US influence and prestige have fallen due to Iraq's demonstration of the limits to American power, its perceived hostility to the Muslim world and its relative retreat from engagement with Asia–Pacific, but it

²¹ See Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman, eds., *Broadening Asia's Security Discourse and Agenda: Political, Social, and Environmental Perspectives* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2004).

remains the most influential external actor; Japan's has continued to decline, albeit slowly over the decades rather than precipitously as with the US; Russia is marking time, still; India is starting to recapture the region's and world attention and interest; and the real winner is China with an ascendant economy, growing poise and self-confidence and an expanding array of soft power assets in regional diplomacy.

The corresponding diplomatic challenges are how to dampen prospects for conflict among the major powers of Asia-Pacific and promote cooperation instead as a regional public good; how to encourage policies by the major economic players that will cushion economic shocks for others and draw them into region-wide economic expansion and prosperity; how to promote trade policies, practices and arrangements that are inclusive, open and market-led but also fair and equitable; and how to cope with the growing list of non-traditional security threats like energy and water scarcity, drug and human trafficking, and pandemics, for example by creating an Asian energy grid.

IV. Nuclear Weapons, Anomalies, and Global Governance

India was the first country to break out of the nuclear arms control regime centred on the NPT with a nuclear test in 1974 and then several more in 1998. In doing so, India challenged not just the NPT but also the system of global governance. Last year North Korea did the same and now even Iran is throwing down the gauntlet, yet again, to a basic inconsistency in our definition of the problem. Is it nuclear weapons, on the ground that their very destructiveness somehow makes them so evil that they should be proscribed for all? Or is it rogue states, whose behaviour is so bad they cannot be trusted with weapons which are tolerable, if not desirable, in more mature and responsible hands?

Sensible policies to deal with the problem cannot be devised if our understanding of the problem is itself riddled with conceptual confusion. Even an administration that prides itself on moral clarity fell into the trap of conflating the two by saying that we cannot tolerate the world's most destructive weapons falling into the hands of the world's most dangerous regimes.

It truly is remarkable how those who worship the most devoutly at the altar of nuclear weapons are the fiercest in threatening to excommunicate as heretics others

queuing to join their sect. If the problem is not nuclear proliferation, but nuclear weapons, then the solution is not nonproliferation, but disarmament through a nuclear weapons convention. The core nonproliferation-disarmament bargain of the NPT is based on the assumption of nuclear weapons being the problem. From this follows the compelling conclusion that the logics of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament are essentially the same. The focus on either nonproliferation or disarmament to the neglect of the other ensures that we get neither.

The quadruple crisis today arises from non-compliance with NPT obligations by some states engaged in undeclared nuclear activities; other states that have failed to honour their disarmament obligations; states that are not party to the NPT; and nonstate actors seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. The only way to escape the trap is to think outside the NPT box.

The world has managed to live with five, followed by eight, nuclear powers. Over the course of four decades, however, six significant anomalies have accumulated and now weigh it down close to the point of rupture.

First, the definition of a nuclear weapon state is chronological—a country that manufactured and exploded a nuclear device before 1 January 1967. India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, Iran or others could test, deploy and even use nuclear weapons, but cannot be described as nuclear powers. In principle, Britain and France could dismantle their nuclear edifice—what is life without hope?—and destroy their nuclear arsenals, but would still count as nuclear powers. This is an Alice-in-Wonderland approach to affairs of deadly seriousness. But can the NPT definition be opened up for revision through a formal amendment of the treaty with all the unpredictable consequences?

Second, even as the threat from nonstate actors has grown frighteningly real, the NPT can regulate and monitor the activities only of states. A. Q. Khan's underground nuclear bazaar showed how porous is the border between private and state rogue actors.²² A robust and credible normative architecture to control

²² See Christopher Clary, 'Dr. Khan's Nuclear WalMart,' *Disarmament Diplomacy* 76 (March/April 2004), pp. 31–35; and Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, 'Those Nuclear Flashpoints Are Made in Pakistan,' *Washington Post*, 11 November 2007.

the actions of terrorist groups who can acquire and use nuclear weapons must be developed outside the NPT.

Third, North Korea's open defiance, spread over many years, shows that decades after a problem arises, we still cannot agree on an appropriate response inside the NPT framework. It is impossible to defang despots of nuclear weapons the day after they acquire and use them. The UN seems incapable of doing so the day before. If international institutions cannot cope, states will try to do so themselves, either unilaterally or in company with like-minded allies. If prevention is strategically necessary and morally justified but legally not permitted, then the existing framework of laws and rules—not preventive military action—is defective.

The fourth anomaly is lumping biological, chemical and nuclear weapons in the one conceptual and policy basket of 'weapons of mass destruction'. They differ in their technical features, in the ease with they can be acquired and developed, and in their capacity to cause mass destruction. Treating them as one weapons category can distort analysis and produce flawed responses. There is also the danger of mission creep. If nuclear weapons are accepted as having a role to counter biochemical warfare, how can we deny a nuclear-weapons capability to Iran which was actually attacked with chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein?

Fifth, the five NPT-licit nuclear powers (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States) preach nuclear abstinence while engaged in consenting deterrence. Not a single country that had nuclear weapons when the NPT was signed in 1968 has given them up. Can the country with the world's most powerful nuclear weapons rightfully use military force to prevent their acquisition by others? Such behaviour fuels the politics of grievance and resentment. It is not possible to convince others of the futility of nuclear weapons when the facts of continued possession and doctrines and threats of use prove their utility for some. Hence the axiom of nonproliferation: as long as any one country has them, others, including terrorist groups, will try their best (or worst) to get them. If nuclear weapons did not exist, they could not proliferate. Because they do, they will.

The final paradox concerns the central doctrine underpinning the contemporary Westphalian system, which holds that sovereign states are equal in effectiveness, status and legitimacy. In reality, states are not of equal worth and significance, neither militarily, economically, politically nor morally. The nonproliferation hawks lump India, Iran, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan together without discriminating between their respective records, but do discriminate between nonproliferation and disarmament. It seems unlikely that in the eyes of most people and countries, nuclear weapons in the hands of Britain and North Korea are equally dangerous. The logical policy implication is either to condemn nuclear weapons for everyone, or to distinguish bad and rogue from responsible behaviour and oppose regimes, not the weapons. But that threatens the core assumption of the NPT, that nuclear weapons are immoral for anyone.

Like Iran's insistence on its NPT-based right to peaceful nuclear development, North Korea's test was a symptom, not the cause, of the NPT being a broken reed.²³ The same is true of the now-stalled India-US agreement on civil nuclear cooperation.²⁴ So how do we articulate a post-NPT vision?²⁵

V. Conclusion – The Unfinished Diplomatic Agenda

Like Iran, the nature of the North Korean nuclear challenge and possible ways of responding illustrate, only too well, the threefold change that I began with. With regard to levels of activity, efforts have to range from Iran and North Korea to bilateral relations, Middle Eastern and East Asian regional diplomacy, and the United Nations. The domain and scope have to include not merely national security issues directly and narrowly, but also issues of energy security, technology transfers, food supplies, recognition of North Korea as a 'normal' country and, at the opposite end, criminalisation of North Korea as an actor that has carried out state kidnappings of Japanese nationals in Japan and taken them to North Korea and exported proliferation-sensitive material and equipment.

²³ See Ramesh Thakur, 'Nuclear bombs: Is the nuclear nonproliferation deal broken?' *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 11 October 2006; and Ramesh Thakur, 'US, Iran play with fire', *Boston Globe*, 4 October 2007.

²⁴ See Ramesh Thakur, 'Aiding India's nuclear industry may help prevent proliferation', *Canberra Times*, 20 August 2007.

²⁵ See Ramesh Thakur, 'Nuclear double standards', *Times of India*, 15 October 2007.

The expanded range and number of actors is also relevant. For example, a nuclear weapons convention as the meta-solution will likely involve a similar coalition of governmental and NGO actors as produced the Ottawa Convention banning antipersonnel landmines and could emulate the Chemical Weapons Convention in involving the private sector.²⁶ And of course with respect to threats, there is considerable anxiety about nuclear weapons falling into the hands of and being used by terrorists. The prospect highlights a major shortcoming in the normative architecture of arms control and the use of force, namely, that they are signed by and regulate the activities of state actors only. Any solution to the challenge will require creative and innovative thinking.

The old world order has faded. The new world order is not yet set. The contours of Asia–Pacific are changing. Items for continuing discussion include:

- The economic recovery of Asia–Pacific;
- The short, medium and long-term roles of China, Japan, the United States, Russia, India and the Central Asian states;
- The immediate future of fragile states like the Solomon Islands, East Timor, North Korea, Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc;
- The medium and long-term future of Taiwan;
- The future of the two Koreas;
- The integration of Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar into the Southeast Asian mainstream;
- The nature of links between ASEAN, ARF, APEC and European countries;
- The place of Australia and New Zealand in Asia–Pacific: should the East Asian community take the form of ASEAN+3 (Japan, China and South Korea—China’s preference) or ASEAN+3+3 (Australia, New Zealand and India—Japan’s and US preference);
- The proliferation of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements and other preferential trading arrangements;

26 See Ramesh Thakur and William Maley, ‘The Ottawa Convention on Landmines: A Landmark Humanitarian Treaty in Arms Control?’ *Global Governance* 5:3 (July–September 1999), pp. 273–302; and Ramesh Thakur and Ere Haru, eds., *The Chemical Weapons Convention: Implementation, Challenges and Opportunities* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2006).

- The new security agenda of international terrorism, illicit arms and narcotics flows across borders, human trafficking, pandemics, the looming food, water and energy scarcity, and climate change; and
- The nuclearisation of Asia and the Pacific.

In the main, Asians have been norm takers rather than the setters and enforcers of regional and global norms.²⁷ They urgently need to learn the art of being norm entrepreneurs and setters instead of playing the role of spoilers, for example with respect to whaling, nuclear weapons, climate change, and the new norm of the responsibility to protect. Even better, they need to develop regional skills in articulating regional norms as global ones and embedding them in regional and global conventions and regimes. The Europeans in particular excel at this. That Asia punches well below its weight in international forums like the United Nations, reflecting the fact that it is less cohesive and united than any other regional grouping, should be no more acceptable to governments than to peoples.

They could begin by addressing the need to adapt the classical tenets of sovereign statehood to modern-day realities. Else they will be forced into reactive and defensive positions, yet again. National sovereignty is the mother of all anomalies, befuddled by empirical and conceptual challenges alike, for example with respect to nuclear weapons. We know that many of the most intractable problems are global in scope and will most likely require concerted multilateral action that is also global in its reach. But the policy authority for tackling them remains vested in states, and the competence to mobilise the resources needed for tackling them is also vested in states. The very strength of the United Nations, that it is the common meeting house of all the world's countries, is a major source of weakness with respect to efficient decision-making. For diplomats dealing with Asia and the Pacific, the biggest challenge is to fashion regional responses to the accumulating anomalies of a state-based order with respect to nuclear weapons, human rights abuses and humanitarian atrocities, environmental degradation and resource depletion, the pursuit of national security amidst multiplying human

²⁷ See Ramesh Thakur, 'Global Norms and International Humanitarian Law: An Asian Perspective', *International Review of the Red Cross* 83: 841 (March 2001), pp. 19–44.

insecurities, the rise in numbers, activities and influence of nonstate actors both good and bad, and the march of globalisation that respects no passports.

The optimistic scenario postulates continuing strengthening of cooperative security relations embedded in regional institutions in Asia–Pacific. Enhanced interdependence through increasing intra-regional flows of people, goods and services will foster and nest a growing sense of community. The pessimistic scenario is of intensified volatility, turbulence and conflict beyond the managerial capacity of the embryonic regional institutions. The prophets of doom fear the re-emergence of old power-political rivalries, or else the rise of new security threats rooted in energy, food and water scarcity.

The East Asian Community: A ‘Community of Nations’ or ‘A Concert of Nations’?

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ABSTRACT:

The East Asian community (EAC) idea was formally adopted at the Japan-ASEAN summit in December 2003. The proposed community brings together China, Japan, South Korea and the ASEAN countries within an institutionalised framework for closer political and economic ties. At face value the EAC is a logical extension of the ASEAN+3 framework, as much as driven by the pragmatic realities of globalisation and the growing strength of the Euro-zone and NAFTA’s expansion beyond northern America. Proponents are quick to point to the economic merits of a region-wide trading regime, and indeed the regionalist agenda is focused primarily—although not absolutely—on creating economic synergies. Witness the ASEAN Free Trade Arrangement (AFTA) and Japan’s economic partnership agreements with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. This paper contends that the ‘regionalist project’ focusing exclusively on political and economic regime creation has fallen short of the stated goal of forging a community. This calls for a reexamination of strategies to bring about the realisation of the EAC. Crucial to the concept of a

‘community’ is the sense and feeling of togetherness and ‘one-ness.’ We argue that a ‘soft’ approach would yield payoffs that would enhance regional understanding and discourse. This approach targets the masses and aims to bridge the social and cultural distances that had heretofore prevented closer ties. People-to-people diplomacy supplements the hard approach through the cultivation of an East Asian identity and the formation of a region wide sense of interconnectedness.

(Keywords: East Asian community, community-building, regionalism, EAEC/IG, integration)

The inaugural Kuala Lumpur East Asia Summit (EAS) in December 2005 marked an important milestone in the establishment of the East Asian community (EAC). In retrospect, the institutionalisation of this long-standing idea seems logical given the high levels of trade and political cooperation among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its neighbors—Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. However, the road to the EAC is anything but smooth. Although the sixteen EAS summiters have maintained close ties—notably through ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia-Pacific Cooperation (APEC) frameworks—the region has resisted multilateral activities that might conjure any elements of exclusivity. This was one of the major reasons the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad’s East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG) proposal in December 1990 failed to take off. Worried that American economic and political interest might be imperiled, the U.S. applied pressure on Japan against supporting the EAEG (later renamed the East Asian Economic Caucus). The imminent establishment of the EAC is the result of intense deliberations among regional actors and demonstrates the region’s commitment toward a united East Asia.

This paper argues that efforts toward community-building that had hitherto focused on functionality, especially in the areas of economic and financial cooperation, had neglected ideational considerations resulting in a fragile sense of ‘community-ship.’ This paper is divided into three sections. The first explains the rationale leading to the birth of the community proposition. The second section deals with the imperative to forge an East Asian identity and the importance of

ideational factors in bonding the diverse nations and cultures into a single entity. Lastly, the paper concludes by exploring if EAC is rightfully called a community of nations or concert of national interests.

IMPETUS FOR INTEGRATION

Regional integration has had a long and storied history in Southeast Asia. The rationale of unity in strength was evident as far back as the 1960s when Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand agreed to form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Membership was later enlarged to ten states with Cambodia joining the fold in 1999.¹ This is an important landmark in the region's history as it was the first time that all Southeast Asia nations were linked under a common umbrella. Enlargement brought *quantitative* change—in terms of membership—to ASEAN, but it brought little, if any, *qualitative* progress for the organisation. While ASEAN was grappling to find its footing in the new politico-strategic and economic structure following the end of the Cold War, Europe and North America were making strides to secure their economic futures by consolidating the European Union (EU) and establishing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) respectively. ASEAN lacked the capacity to effectively deal with these unions given Southeast Asia's relative economic position vis-à-vis the combined resources and potential of EU and NAFTA. Peter Katzenstein notes that the EAEG proposal served, among others, as “a counter to emerging economic blocs in the West” (Katzenstein & Shiraiishi 1997, 20). Thus, regionalism was a defensive strategy to hedge against the Western economic dominance. Regional integration was driven by the fear and concern of American (and European) economic hegemony and the region's corresponding lack of ability to face this challenge.

Regionalism got its second wind with the institutionalisation of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Modeled along an informal dialogue, ASEM brings together members of the EU (including the European Commission) and the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) states. Without a common platform, Asian participants often found themselves holding diverging positions, in stark contrast

¹ Brunei joined ASEAN in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995 and Laos and Myanmar in 1997.

to their European counterparts. Asian diplomacy within the ASEM framework was hampered by the absence of a unified policy when negotiating with Europe. Asia lacks the mechanism to deliberate and draft common policies, which puts it at a distinct disadvantage against a better organised Europe. In 2004, the Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, related the East Asia Summit (EAS) project to regional empowerment. He noted that,

[a]s for the imperative of regional empowerment, this is nothing more and nothing less than the need to ensure that East Asia's voice, East Asia's weight and East Asia's role should be enhanced in the years to come. We need to be more empowered in the world of economics, in the world of politics and in the world of ideas and culture (Abdullah Badawi 2004).

The need for Asia to speak with one voice is an important motivation for East Asia to deepen cooperation. With this in mind, the synergistic benefits of aggregating individual national energies to buttress the region's diplomatic position has strong currency across the region.

The 1997 economic crisis infused a new sense of urgency for regional integration. Hadi Soesastro of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta noted that "East Asian countries felt that the United States could not be relied upon in a financial crisis and that they would have to establish their own self-help mechanisms for financial cooperation" (Hadi 2003, 3). It was not coincidental that the ASEAN+3 (APT) meeting was inaugurated in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997. Hitherto, the regionalist project was confined to economic cooperation among ASEAN members. Japan, which has high economic stakes in the region, has established an expansive network of manufacturing capacities through the region, but was otherwise politically unconnected. But the 1997 crisis brought home the stark realities that the fortunes of the region are inextricably tied to each other. The 'contagion effect' aptly maps out the interconnectedness of the region's national economies. It also exposed ASEAN's inability to aid the affected nations. Furthermore, most countries in Asia, despite the rise in their internal economic connections to one another, still draw heavily on capital from outside the region, especially from European banks, and depend heavily on the United States as their major export market (Pempel 1999, 71). The

1997 crisis highlighted the necessity for intra-regional capacities to deal with emerging problems. With “the deterioration of the economic situation and prospects for financial crisis in some of its key countries, ASEAN felt there was a need to expand linkage with Northeast Asia countries, particularly Japan and China” (Han 2001). Reacting to the International Monetary Fund’s slow and ineffective response to the crisis, Japan proposed the setting up of an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF). Although AMF failed to materialise—again because it fell foul of American interest—Asian nations took tangible steps towards closer economic cooperation through the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI). Nevertheless, results of economic integration have been, thus far, muted. For the year of 2004, intra-ASEAN trade exports accounts for only 22.5% of trade (ASEAN 2006, 33). Conversely, 45% of ASEAN exports for the corresponding year were shipped to Japan (12.2%), the European Union (10.5%), the U.S. (9.3%), China (7.5) and Hong Kong (5.5%) (ASEAN 2006, 36). The weight of extra-ASEAN trade underlines the importance of extra-regional ties to the economic health and prosperity of ASEAN members. The high degree of ASEAN member’s dependency on extra-regional markets provides a compelling rationale for the former to consolidate and deepen ties with its northeast neighbors which accounts for 32% and 33% of its export and import sources respectively.

For the past decade, there has been a flurry of attempts to convince an economically diverse and politically skeptical region on the necessity for closer integration and cooperation. The preceding paragraphs sketched a brief outline of the forces that underpin regionalism. It is evident that East Asian regionalism has been defensive in nature. The region was reacting to the collusion of forces in Europe and North America, and turned to regionalism as a mechanism to level the playing field vis-à-vis EU and NAFTA. However, in the wake of the Asian economic crisis, regionalism took a decidedly inward focus. Attempts to create institutions and regimes aimed at improving indigenous capacities to deal with macroeconomic instability marked a shift that places a premium on intra-regional cooperation. There is also another discernable change. Kanishka Jayasuriya argues that new regionalism is *passé*. He explains:

This new regionalism, as opposed to the old forms of regionalism, was directed at the integration of regional economies within the global economy

through a variety of programmes, but chiefly through trade liberalization. In the Asia-Pacific region, this new regionalism was largely driven by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) strategy of open regionalism. However, in the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis, the core ideas and institutions of open regionalism has been seen as inappropriate in the circumstances of the global economy in the first decades of the twenty-first century (Jayasuriya 2004, 1).

The economic motivation that informs regionalism in Asia cannot be totally dismissed, but Jayasuriya is right in that the current regionalist agenda is broader and more ambitious. The East Asian *community* covers a diverse range of issues, including but not exclusively relating to economics.

THE ROAD TO KUALA LUMPUR: FROM EAEG TO EAC

The East Asian Economic Group idea was first mooted by former Malaysian premier, Mahathir Mohamad in 1990. Central to the idea was a need for an institutionalised forum to articulate and represent Asian views on regional and global issues. Identity and cultural affinity were important constructs that gave meaning to the EAEG. It follows that “[m]embership in EAEG, [...] would be open only to those countries with populations of Asian origin—a ‘Caucus without Caucasians’ as one wit dubbed it” (Ravenhill 2001, 107). The U.S. and the Oceanic states, namely Australia and New Zealand, strongly resented being sidelined. According to one analyst,

[a]lthough the objectives of EAEG were not explicitly spelt out, the launch of this initiative at a time when the WTO Uruguay Round negotiations appeared to be running into a stalemate raised concerns that it was conceived as an alliance of the East Asian states to counter emerging trade blocs in Europe and North America (Yip 2001, 106-111).

Seen as anathema to American interests, Washington applied pressure on Japan and South Korea against supporting the proposal. Lacking the vital support of Japan, the face saving measure of incorporating EAEG within APEC was adopted. EAEG was downgraded to a caucus within the ambit of APEC. Nevertheless, Mahathir’s stirring of Asian consciousness and solidarity remains a

powerful force that cannot be easily subdued. Richard Higgott and Richard Stubbs write that “[t]he EAEC expresses more clearly ideas about inherent cultural conflicts between ‘East’ and ‘West’ than does APEC, which gives expression to a regional identity that is more open to global influences” (Katzenstein & Shiraishi 1997, 10).

Washington won the battle and successfully neutralised the formation of nascent Asian regionalism. Asian states were kept within the confines of ASEAN and APEC, but the spirit of Asianism was kept alive. In fact, analysts are quick to point out that the EAEG had indeed been formed—albeit informally and without much fanfare. A case in point is the formation of the ASEAN+3 (APT) framework in 1997. The membership of the APT parallels that of the original EAEG proposal. The APT is also a conduit for regional cooperation such as the establishment of a currency swap mechanism through the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) in 2000 and the setting up of the Asian Bond Market Initiative (ABMI) in 2003. Thus, although an Asian-wide arrangement failed to materialise due to extra-regional intervention, the manifestations of such cooperation and integration were evident and gaining momentum. The strategy of ‘integration by stealth’ appears to be bearing fruit.

The APT framework was instrumental in the lead up to the Kuala Lumpur summit in December 2005. It was at the 1998 APT summit that President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea renewed interest in regional integration. He stressed the “need for a blueprint to map out measurable ways by which East and Southeast Asia could unify into a single grouping more concretely” (Jayasuriya 2004, 195). The result was the formation of the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and the East Asia Study Group (EASG) respectively in December 1998 and November 2000. The former was tasked to study the forms and mechanism of regional cooperation and the latter sought to provide “assessment of the recommendations of the EAVG and assessment of the implications of an East Asia Summit” (East Asian Study Group 2005). Furthermore, “the EAVG recommended the evolution of the annual summit meetings of ASEAN Plus Three into the East Asia Summit (EAS)” (East Asian Study Group 2005), and at the 2004 Vientiane Heads of Government Meeting ASEAN leaders agreed to hold the inaugural EAS in the 2005 Kuala Lumpur ASEAN meeting. The study group had also extensively explored the idea

and implications of an EAS. Through in-depth study and discussions, the EASG finds that East Asian cooperation is both inevitable and necessary, that the deeper integration of an East Asian community is beneficial and desirable, and that such integration in East Asia will evolve over time (East Asian Study Group 2005).

The 2003 ASEAN-Japan summit culminated in the Tokyo Declaration which formally declared the intention of the signatories to form the East Asian Community. While supporters of regionalism like Malaysia would see the Kuala Lumpur summit as a triumph, the EAS is but the first step in the long road to creating an East Asian community.

THE 'MISSING LINK' IN THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY PROJECT

In his keynote address at the Second East Asia Congress in June 2004, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi made an impassioned plea for the region to close ranks and enhance cooperation to pursue the goal of an East Asian community. He noted:

I believe that we in the region have dallied long enough. It is now time to take the process of building our East Asian Community to new heights and in new directions. I believe it is high time to launch, in all earnestness, our historic East Asian peace project—the building of the East Asia Peace Community (EPC). It is time to launch in all earnestness, our historic East Asian Economic project—the building of the East Asia Economic Community (EEC); and it is high time to launch, in all earnestness, our historic East Asian Diplomatic project—the building of the East Asian Diplomatic Community (EDC) (Abdullah Badawi 2004).

In addition to Abdullah Badawi's outline of the emerging East Asian community, the EASG's final report offers more details on the common vision shared by Asian political and bureaucratic elites. The 65-page report recommended 17 concrete short term and 9 medium and long-term measures for consideration and adoption by the APT. These measures cover a wide range of issues, including politics, economics, trade, finance, healthcare, non-traditional security concerns, the protection of cultural heritage and energy security. There was only one specific mention with regard to the cultivation of an Asian identity.

The report suggested collaborative efforts “with cultural and educational institutions to promote a strong sense of identity and an East Asian consciousness” (East Asian Study Group 2005). Community-building is focused primarily on constructing structures geared towards enhancing regional trade and commerce. The economic imperative of regional integration is echoed by Kotera Akira, a faculty Fellow at Japan’s Research Institute for Economy, Trade and Industry:

It is said that economic integration in East Asia has proceeded smoothly as seen in the expansion of cross-border trade and investment within the region. This is not the case of institution-led integration but the result of active cross-border investments by multinationals—primarily Japanese companies—and the subsequent expansion of intraregional trade. That is to say, economic integration in East Asia has been driven by economic reality, not by institutions (Kotera 2005).

Similarly, Asian states have been preoccupied with Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and trade liberalisation which constitutes what I term as hard approaches. Witness Japan’s economic partnership agreements with Brunei (2007), Malaysia (2005), the Philippines (2006), Singapore (2002) and Thailand (2007). In the meantime, China and Japan are working separately with ASEAN with the intention of establishing free trade areas. These bilateral arrangements are regarded as building blocks toward the formalisation of a region-wide trade arrangement.

The economic underpinnings of regionalism are hard to refute. At the same time, non-tangible dimensions of community-building are equally important and should be given due consideration in the EAS blueprint. Indeed, the whole notion of ‘community’ itself is problematic. Han Sung-Joo, who chaired the EAVG, revealed that “ASEAN members were rather allergic to the term community lest calling anything else by that name should dilute the solidarity of ASEAN itself, because ASEAN being only an association they didn’t want to call either APEC or any East Asian entity a community” (Han 2001). Therefore, the EAVG navigated this political landmine by adopting the nomenclature ‘community’ with the ‘c’ in lowercase, instead of being capitalised. This convention has since been adopted by the EAS. For example, the Chairman’s Statement at the First East Asia Summit made two specific mentions to the East Asian community and in both

instances employed the “less formal” noun. Putting aside the polemics associated with nomenclature, it is evident from the First and Second East Asia Summits that EAS members were able to find meaningful and practical ways to forge collaborative links notwithstanding how the community is styled. Two such efforts are the Declaration on Avian Influenza Prevention (2005) and the Declaration on East Asian Energy Security (2007). This is a reflection that EAS has shelved—at least temporarily—the debate on nomenclature and is focusing on the substance and tangible aspects of community-*building*.

In the field of sociology, a community conjures an idea of familiarity, closeness, intimacy and dense interaction. This is hardly the case with East Asia. It lacks an identity. Masaki Hisane of the Council of East Asian Community cautions that “[f]rom the start, prospective members of the proposed community need to squarely face up to the question of how to foster an East Asian identity among the people in the envisaged community” (Hisane 2005). He adds that “[s]trengthened social, educational and cultural exchanges will be the key to laying a solid foundation for a harmonious, peaceful, stable and prosperous East Asian village. Any community built on a weak foundation would simply be a house of cards” (Hisane 2005). Political scientists may point out that East Asia is in fact a *pluralistic security* community. Through the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), East Asian nations—including Australia, India and New Zealand—pledged to rule out the use of force to settle outstanding disputes. TAC’s impact on regional strategic stability does little to forge a *sense of community*. What is lacking in East Asia is the feeling of ‘one-ness.’ Responding to suggestions to transform APT into an East Asia summit, former Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong spoke of the importance of the leaders of the thirteen countries to start thinking as East Asians (Hadi 2003).

Community-building involves a two-pronged approach aimed at the elites and the masses. The regionalist project, thus far, has been elite-driven. Discussion on the parameters of the emerging community is restricted to policy makers, business leaders, scholars and involved politicians. The aspect of people-to-people diplomacy is under-developed, and it is this aspect that forms the ‘soft-belly’ of the regionalist agenda. Masaki had earlier remarked that a community constructed without a soul or common identity is analogous to a house of cards. The growth

of civil society and open political spaces are drawing more citizens into political discourse. Thus, it is imperative that community-building efforts reach out and incorporate stakeholders, namely the citizens of East Asia, to sustain the momentum and to carry forward the EAC project to a higher level.

Central to the success of people-to-people diplomacy is mutual understanding and density of interaction. East Asia is a kaleidoscope of various cultures, religions, ethnicities and languages. The bonds of community can only be established when there is an adequate level of understanding and appreciation of other societies. This could be achieved through exchanges at the grassroots level, and more importantly the introduction of an expansive curriculum at all levels of education to improve and deepen understanding of other states and societies. Concomitantly, at the 2007 Cebu Summit in the Philippines, leaders pledged to strengthen regional educational cooperation. India's Nalanda University was singled out in the Chairman's Statement at the Second East Asia Summit for its efforts "to improve regional understanding and the appreciation of one another's heritage and history" (ASEAN 2007). At the same meeting, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, speaking on behalf of other EAS leaders, warmly embraced the proposal of a "Dialogue among East Asian Cultures, Societies and Faiths." These efforts are vital building blocks toward enhancing regional understanding and affinity, which in the long run translates into a cohesive and dynamic community.

At the same time, efforts to encourage intra-Asian travel and tourism should also be encouraged. While some analysts focus on the importance of an East Asian identity, one must ask if this objective is achievable or indeed desirable. A common identity is not crucial to community-building. In comparison, the cultivation and sustenance of a sense of inter-connectedness is integral to community-building. The development of a sense of familiarity and affinity toward each other would buttress ties in other functional areas such as trade, diplomacy and security. Measures directed to solidify the social bases of community building through the dissemination of information, fostering cross-cultural communication and interaction and the creation of dense socio-cultural networks across borders constitutes the core of what I term as 'soft approach.' The referent point in this approach is the citizenry and it is intended to capture the hearts and minds of the masses.

CONCLUSION: COMMUNITY OF NATIONS OR CONCERT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS?

The East Asian community project is a noble cause, and if successful would bring enormous benefits to the region. The 2005 Kuala Lumpur summit was a symbolic manifestation of the region's intention to solidify and deepen ties. The notion of a community draws on the yearning to 'think and act' as one. In reality, the picture is less rosy. Singapore's Eric Teo poetically labels the problems in the run up to the inaugural summit as "birthing pains." Among others, the region is divided on inviting 'extra-regional' states such as India and Australia to the summit. Malaysia's proposal to create an APT secretariat was summarily dismissed by Indonesia and Singapore. Both countries—in some measure—see the APT secretariat as a potential rival to the ASEAN and APEC secretariats which they currently host. A Japanese study group led by Shiraiishi Takashi made the observation that "ASEAN is becoming less 'one' and more 'one by one,' [which constitutes] a grave state of affairs" (Japan Forum on International Relations 2005). Han also points to the endemic leadership problem in the proposed community. He comments that "ASEAN countries would like to maintain the myth, as well as the reality, that it is a meeting where ASEAN is keeping the driver seat, serves as host and China, Japan and Korea are invited as guests" (Han 2001). These are hardly the building blocks for community-building.

Historically, "Asian regionalism was characterised less by equality and similarity of national economies and more by a complementary economic hierarchy of unequals," (Pempel 1999, 71) and there is no reason to expect this to change in the foreseeable future. Community-building faces a Herculean task. Asian regionalism is centered on a convergence of interests—be it containing communism or as a means to hedge against the rise of economic powers like China. *Realpolitik* and instrumental considerations have been the prime movers of regionalism. The Indonesian and Singaporean reservations on the formation of an APT secretariat are signs of an intra-ASEAN jostle for power and influence. Regardless of creed or color, states are 'genetically programmed' to put their national interest above others. Therefore, states are naturally resistant toward overtures to subvert individual interest for the larger good. Is the emerging East Asian community a 'community of nations' or a 'concert of national interests?' At this juncture, it appears that the appeal of the gravy train—economic payoffs—is

the prime driver to move the EAC beyond the conceptualization stage into a tangible and practical entity. “[T]he biggest hurdle for EAC is to engender trust and cooperation between China and Japan and to convince them and other stakeholders that integration could provide gains for all parties” (Tang 2006, 209). “Community-ship” is a secondary goal or, at best, functions as a means for the grouping to achieve their individual goals through a collective mechanism. In all likelihood the EAC would survive its “birthing pains” and mature as long as it is able to incorporate and cater to the members’ interests. The battleground for community-building, thus, resides outside the boundaries of the state and more in the hearts and minds of the people. Thus, the EAC project should operate on a two-pronged strategy. The first is aimed at creating synergies to sustain the interest and cooperation at the state level, and the second targeted at the grassroots level to enhance and deepen cross-cultural understanding and interaction. In this regard, the soft approach of establishing a social base supplements the hard approach of institution and regime creation.

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Some Reflections on the Concept of Freedom of the Seas

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ABSTRACT

The concept of unhindered passage of ships of any nation to travel through the high seas and waters outside its own territory has been a sacrosanct principle in seafaring since time immemorial. However, developments of late have thrown some serious questions over the inviolability and the application of this principle which is enshrined in international law. The expansion of territorial waters and exclusive economic zones by the world's coastal nations, the delineation of maritime boundaries and the slew of potentially-explosive maritime territorial disputes, coupled with the changing perception towards multilateral engagements and increasingly aggressive assertion of unilateralism amidst today's post 9-11 security matrix, have combined to exert demand on the stakeholders to critically assess recent developments affecting freedom of the seas. Closer to home, the proposed Trans-Peninsula Pipeline project is set to alter the maritime landscape in Malaysia and could potentially affect the strategic balance in the surrounding region. The possibility of hostile naval maneuverings to counter the new dynamics arising from the pipeline project may even curtail freedom of navigation in the Straits of Malacca. This modest paper attempts to contribute to the discourse by first outlining the concept of

freedom of the seas and tracing the milestones in its development, and subsequently offering a prognosis of its future direction based on current events and recently introduced maritime security measures.

*“Love one another but make not a bond of love.
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls”*
(Khalil Gibran, 1883-1931)

THE NOTION OF FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

The mysterious allure of the ocean has inspired great poets to compose sublime phrases in praise of its wonders and to describe its enigma. Some, like Khalil Gibran succinctly did, articulate the virtues of the ‘moving sea’ to underscore its power to unite people.

Despite the storms at sea and the ordeals at the oceans, mankind continues to occasionally shun the comfort of *terra firma* to set sail. From the time ‘aspiring sailors’ in a much distant past awkwardly and uncertainly took to the waters with nothing more than carved logs, mankind has developed a fascination and—in the case of the brave few who have chosen offshore vocations—a lifetime love affair with the seas.

Such is the attraction of the enthralling mystery and the amazing bounty that the seas offer in abundance. Beyond those, one is tempted to attribute the sense of freedom that the borderless oceans symbolize as one of the features which continue to nurture mankind’s romantic notions towards the seas. Restricted by landscapes and borders on land, we continue to find salvation in the seas as the final frontier where the idea of absolute freedom in both movement and form, can be tested and savored to the maximum.

This impulse is realized in the form of the doctrine of freedom of the seas. The idea that vessels from any nation and flag may traverse through waters beyond territorial seas unhindered, as protected by the freedom of the seas concept, is one of the principles held most dearly in seafaring since time immemorial. It guarantees the privilege that all countries in the world may, in times of peace, have access to the seas in an unrestricted manner for naval and commercial purposes. It

fits mankind's notion that the abundance of the seas and the seemingly endless expanse of the oceans are there for all to share and peruse, in pursuit of livelihood, recreation, challenge and, perhaps, the ultimate freedom.

While the seas do not feature national borders, checkpoints and partitions that litter the world's landscape, the concept of unhindered travel in the oceans has come under scrutiny and severe examination of late. Recent developments are threatening to besiege this premise, which represents mankind's last few luxuries of unfettered movement on earth. Hence, the cherished sanctity and applicability of the concept of freedom of the seas warrant closer inspection in the context of today's security obsessed and increasingly divisive world.

It is indeed a complex subject for a short article to cover, but it is hoped that the ensuing discussion can contribute to the growing discourse on the potential threats faced by the notion of freedom of the seas. It hopes to shed light on the subject by first constructing a conceptual framework of the thought based on its chronological development as a basis for understanding the premise of freedom of the seas. This is followed by an analysis of the key issues and developments affecting the current and future application of the notion of freedom of the seas.

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF FREEDOM OF THE SEAS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

It has been well documented that freedom of navigation, one of the principle pillars of freedom of the seas, is "the cornerstone of international intercourse"¹ and is "one of the oldest and most widely recognized principles of international law".² Well-established international legislations accord ships with this freedom and the rights of innocent passage,³ without which, in all likelihood, international trade and civilization in general would not have flourished. In developing an understanding of the concept and its ideals and application and an appreciation of how far the idea has progressed, it would help to construct a conceptual

¹ Lapidoth, R., *Freedom of navigation and the new Law of the Sea*, Israel Law Review, Vol.10, 1975, p.456.

² Ibid, p. 458.

³ Innocent passage means the right of merchant and fishing vessels and warships to pass without warning the territorial states in a manner not prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of those states.

framework by tracing and discussing major events in the chronological development of the freedom of the seas concept.

In all probability, mankind—true to form—must have started bickering over the rights over the use and ownership of the seas since the early days of cross-oceanic seafaring. Perhaps, the seeds of maritime disputes were sown from the time when the Egyptians first undertook what could be construed as the earliest form of international sea travel in the Mediterranean Sea on rafts made of papyrus. Over time, mere bickering worsened to full-blown diplomatic stand-offs between nations over the seas' riches and territories, with some leading to naval wars.

Literature points to the time of the Roman Empire in tracing the origin of the concept of 'freedom of the seas' as it is known today. In the modern era, the principle is enshrined and exercised in international law, under the conditions laid down by no less than the United Nations (UN) and other international legislations governing the oceans. A review of those laws reveals various interpretations on the meaning of freedom of the seas but, all the same, it is an ideal based on the principle tenet that outside a sovereign nation's territorial waters, it may not claim sovereignty over the seas, except with respect to its own vessels.⁴

From the late 15th century to the beginning of the 19th century, the major naval powers of the era—namely Spain, Portugal and Great Britain—tried to impose their supremacy at sea by restricting the passage of their trade and mercantile rivals from accessing certain parts of the open seas. Their attempts were hotly disputed and protested by other nations, demonstrating their seriousness not only in protecting their interests at sea but in preserving the ideals of freedom of navigation. Such protestation led to a revived understanding, definition and subsequent acceptance of the notion of freedom of the seas among the major sea powers and the world at large.

The emergence of the American-based Mahanian doctrine of *whomsoever controls the seas, controls the land* had a massive impact on the development of the

⁴ See the *Carriage of Goods by Sea Act*, the US act governing ocean shipment of cargo to and from the US.

concept of freedom of the seas.⁵ Subsequent to the introduction of this school of naval warfare thought, the US led the initiative to set a new course on which the freedom of the seas concept would develop. The American-led revision of the concept resulted in the international acceptance that freedom of the seas cannot be legally restricted, except by way of international agreements such as those regulating fishing activities or those governing the right of visit and search onboard ships.

An important milestone in the development of the freedom of the seas concept is the sinking of the *RMS Lusitania* during World War I.⁶ Emanating from the incident, belligerents have since asserted limitations of the right of search to facilitate the conduct of hostilities. Among the subjects of contentions in respect of such conduct include the rights to seize neutral properties and persons aboard enemy ships, the laying of mines in sea lanes, and the exclusion of neutral vessels from enemy ports by way of naval blockade.

American position with regard to freedom of the seas changed dramatically during World War II. For the first time in its history, it became a neutral unperturbed by the protection of its rights at sea during the war. This was despite the persistent efforts of the US then to promote the doctrine of “free ships make free goods” which accords the immunity to private properties at sea. By way of enacting a series of legislations enacted prior to the war, the US relinquished its position of pushing its brand of freedom of the seas concept for international acceptance, especially with respect to the protection of belligerents. With this development, the rights of neutrals during the outbreak of naval war were no

⁵ The principle, so influential in shaping naval warfare strategies to this day, was propagated by Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), an American naval officer and historian. Under the doctrine, Mahan believed that control of the seas would grant the power to control trade and the resources required to wage wars. It espoused the strategy of “command of the sea” by concentrating naval forces at decisive points to destroy the enemy’s fleet, block its ports and disrupt its maritime communications and links. His groundbreaking work, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History 1660-1783* to this day remains a must-read for students of naval warfare.

⁶ *RMS Lusitania* was a British ocean liner owned by Cunard Steamship Line Shipping Company. She was sunk by a German U-boat torpedo in 1915, an incident that triggered a serious overhaul in the way the US perceived unrestricted submarine warfare as practiced by Germany during World War I. According to historians, the event acted as a major catalyst for American involvement in the war. See for example, among many exhaustive and fascinating accounts of the ship, Preston, D. (2002), *Lusitania : An Epic Tragedy*, Waterville : Thorndike Press, and O’Sullivan, P. (2000), *Lusitania : Unraveling the Mysteries*, New York : Sheridan House.

longer protected. There was suddenly a void in leadership in preserving this critical privilege of seafaring.

In reaction to this undesirable situation, two UN Conferences on the Law of the Sea were convened in Geneva in 1958 and 1960 to find an amicable and accepted universal law governing the seas and to address weaknesses in the old concept of freedom of the seas.⁷ This was followed by another conference in Caracas in 1974, during which the US pushed for the adoption of a 12-nautical mile limit for territorial waters⁸ and a 200 nautical-mile limit for Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)⁹ on condition that freedom of navigation and of the pursuit of scientific research in the EEZ was guaranteed for all countries. However, several nations showed their displeasure about ceding their sovereign rights in the EEZ, hence no agreement could be reached during those meetings.

The impetus to unchain the deadlock came in the form of a speech made by Arvid Pardo, Malta's Ambassador to the UN, during a UN General Assembly meeting in 1967. He made an impassioned plea for the world's nations to take note of the potentially disastrous consequence of the rivalry between superpower nations to the oceans and mankind's devil-may-care attitude towards the seas. Pardo warned that the battle for superpower supremacy could spill over to the seas and unchecked plundering of the oceans' riches could result in dire and irreversible consequences to the maritime environment. He further called for the formation of "an effective international regime over the seabed and the ocean floor beyond a clearly defined national jurisdiction". He impressed upon the UN General Assembly that such a regime could well be mankind's only alternative to avoid the inevitable "escalating tensions" and their impact on the seas should there be no change to the *status quo*.

⁷ See the United Nations webpage at www.un.org for a complete account of the development of UNCLOS 1982 and for the treaty's full text.

⁸ Territorial sea is the sea area up to 12 nautical miles beyond the baseline. Article 2 of UNCLOS 1982 extends the sovereignty of a coastal state "beyond its land territory and internal waters" to the territorial sea, subject to the Convention and any other rules of international law.

⁹ The EEZ is a maritime zone extending up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured. See UNCLOS 1982, Article 57.

Pardo's arguments, coming at a time when rapid technological innovations, intensifying use of the seas and growing superpower rivalry were threatening to spillover to the ocean and seabeds, struck a chord with the international community. His urging also coincided with a growing realization of the need to update the freedom of the seas charter to take into account new elements, issues and influences affecting the oceans. It galvanized the UN members to undertake a series of actions with wide-ranging and significant implications on the way the seas are used, managed and even perceived today. In the years following Pardo's landmark address, a flurry of activities took place, including the establishment of the UN Seabed Committee, the signing of a treaty banning nuclear weapons on the seabed, and the General Assembly declaration of the resources of the seabed beyond the territorial waters of nations being the common heritage of mankind.

Another UN conference was convened in New York in 1973, which set the motion for diplomats and representatives of over 160 countries to engage in marathon discussions over the critical issues related to the seas. Eventually, a comprehensive, unprecedented agreement known as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) treaty was reached in 1982,¹⁰ aimed at regulating all aspects of the uses of the seas and their resources.

The treaty establishes the 12 nautical-mile limit for territorial waters and the 200 nautical-mile EEZ limit propagated earlier by the US (see Figure 1). This historic agreement also designates the world's oceans as "the common heritage of mankind", signaling a drastic departure from the previously held notion that the seas were free territories on the basis of their boundlessness. Under the UNCLOS 1982 regime, the seas are perceived to represent a realm of interdependence in which all the world's nations, including landlocked ones, have a stake.

Among the important features of UNCLOS 1982 are the provisions relating to freedom of the seas including navigational rights, territorial sea limits, and the

¹⁰ Although agreed upon in 1982, UNCLOS did not come into force until 1994. It was adopted as a "package deal" to be accepted as a whole without any exception or reservation on any of its aspects. Signatories to UNCLOS are obligated not to take any action deemed to frustrate its objectives and aspirations, and ratification or accession to the convention expresses the consent of a signatory state to be bound by its provisions.

passage of ships through narrow straits. *Article 87* of UNCLOS 1982 guarantees freedom of the high seas as follows:

“The high seas are open to all States, whether coastal or land-locked. Freedom of the high seas is exercised under the conditions laid down by this Convention and by other rules of international law. It comprises, inter alia, both for coastal and land-locked States:

- a) freedom of navigation;*
- b) freedom of overflight;*
- c) freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines;*
- d) freedom to construct artificial islands and other installations permitted under international law;*
- e) freedom of fishing; and*
- f) freedom of scientific research.*

These freedoms shall be exercised by all States with due regard for the interests of other States in their exercise of the freedom of the high seas, and also with due regard for the rights under this Convention with respect to activities in the area.”

Deemed by the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar as “possibly the most significant legal instrument of the 20th century”,¹¹ the UNCLOS 1982 treaty has been influential in determining maritime affairs amongst the world’s nations and the management of the world’s oceans. Most importantly, the convention enshrines the notion of freedom of the seas in a legislation agreed upon and observed by the international community, in a manner that acknowledges its ideals and inviolability.

ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

While the philosophy behind the freedom of the seas concept remains cherished, it is a matter of debate if its application remains viable and its ideals continue to be respected amidst present-day security scenario, geopolitical realities and geostrategic matrix.

¹¹ Jesus, J.L. (2002), *The ocean’s wealth is not inexhaustible – Reversing the loss of environmental resources*, UN Chronicle, December 2002.

Several developments that have taken place in the past 50 years or so have threatened to form a noose around the neck of the precious principle of independent voyage at sea and the rights it guarantees. At no other time than the present that the notion has found itself so embattled. The luxury of unobstructed travel that freedom of the seas affords is being impeded by a series of events that are fast unfolding before the world. Some are happening on a scale and magnitude that may have irreversible impacts on the way that sea voyage is managed, and may have serious repercussions on the way freedom of seas is perceived, interpreted and applied. Among the influential developments, in no particular order of importance, are:

I) EXPANSION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS AND MARITIME BOUNDARIES

In the decades that have passed before and after the introduction of UNCLOS in 1982, many coastal states have sought to define their territories and boundaries at sea. This has led to overlapping claims of areas and islands, and subsequently to actions that can potentially impede the application of freedom of the seas.

Although UNCLOS 1982 has been a boon for ocean management and has led to better regulation in the use of its resources, it has not managed to curtail the tendency of nations to carve up the sea to suit their personal interests. In fact, it can be argued that UNCLOS 1982 has unleashed a sort of 'anarchy at sea' manifested in the form of various cases of maritime disputes. They emerged as a result of the over-eager expansion of territorial waters and maritime boundaries by many coastal countries.

To the credit of the architects of UNCLOS 1982 though, the treaty provides various useful avenues to resolve such differences in a pragmatic, peaceful manner. Even in the case of hotly disputed and keenly contested cases, the international maritime management system provides the means for a mutually agreed settlement in the form of the International Court of Justice. However, there are many outstanding maritime territorial and boundary demarcation issues the world over, several of which are close to home in the Asia Pacific. In recent times, the issues have resulted in tense posturing, even near skirmishes between navies of the nations involved. The stand-off between the Malaysian and Indonesian navies

during the Ambalat dispute in Sulawesi Sea provides a stark reminder that even the strong friendship between mutually dependent neighbors can nearly succumb to the tension arising from such a disagreement. The row between Australia and Timor Leste over access to energy sources in the Timor Sea is another example of how diplomacy, so essential in the settling of disputes, can take a backseat over commercial and state interests.

Prior to the introduction of UNCLOS 1982, many nations were already scrambling to delineate their 200 nautical-mile EEZ with some speed. With the formal demarcation of EEZ under UNCLOS 1982, the EEZ is no longer regarded as the 'high seas'. This effectively gives coastal states the exclusive rights to the resources such as fishery and minerals and allows them to exert full control of the activities within their EEZ realm. With an estimated 90% of the world's fish stocks are now within the national jurisdiction of coastal states, and an estimated one-third of the world's oceans are presently defined as belonging in the EEZ of coastal states. All these underline the socio-economic significance of the EEZ, hence explaining the eagerness of coastal states to demarcate their EEZ areas.

Beyond economic, political and strategic interests, history plays a big role in motivating nations to expand their territorial waters and maritime boundaries. Disputes over some small islands in the South China Sea involving several regional countries have a historical basis. This is despite the fact that from a legal perspective, claims based on historical rights are not strong enough on their own in staking claim of ownership.

ii) AGGRESSIVE UNILATERAL POSTURING OF NAVIES

The role of the navies in keeping peace at sea is indispensable, but sometimes, even the expanse of the seas cannot guarantee that navies can keep at arm's length from one another. Not unlike in the wilderness where there is bound to be a contest between two lions in the savannah over territorial rights, the mere presence of a naval force in one part of the high seas can stoke tension with other navies. One naval cat-and-mouse maneuvering too many may lead to aggressive, even adversarial, actions : naval blockade, radar jamming, guns pointing in anger at one another. All these can negate the spirit of the freedom of the seas.

It is only natural for powerful nations to project their power at sea as much as they do on land and air. In addition to such power projections, the expansion of naval forces among developing countries is a reflection of their newfound wealth and confidence, and growing maritime ambitions. Some maritime disputes can even arise from the aggressive posturing of navies of certain countries, or even the mere perception of such.

The end of the Cold War saw the decline in defense expenditures by many countries. However, nations in the Asia Pacific region have bucked this trend and have gone on a rapid and almost astonishing spending binge to upgrade their militaries, especially their naval forces. The modernization of several Asia Pacific nations is noteworthy for their ambition, cost and scale of offensive platforms involved. While such a development has valid deterrent value, there is also a notable strategy of aggressive posturing in the expansion of some of the regional navies. Outstanding and potentially explosive issues such as the tension in Taiwan Strait, potential conflict involving North Korea, overlapping maritime jurisdiction claims and the threat of piracy and terrorism have demanded naval forces in the region to be alert and well-equipped to meet the multi-faceted challenges posed by those issues.

Excessive maritime claims—many contrary to international law—by some nations have led to the imposition of restrictions on free passage on the high seas in various means and ways. In the case of the US, it has instituted a policy on Freedom of Navigation to neutralize such excessive claims.¹² The policy represents the willingness and resolve of the US to protest excessive coastal claims and to exercise its navigation and overflight rights in the disputed regions. American military units have been actively involved in asserting the ideals of the Freedom of Navigation policy against several countries.

Besides being a reflection of growing geopolitical stature and unilateral resolve of nations to keep peace at sea, the aggressive posturing of navies can be attributed to several other factors. Countering the rise of another naval power and attempting to “keep up with neighboring navies” can lead to such a situation. The

¹² See the US Freedom of Navigation text on the US Department of Defense homepage at www.dod.mil

reduced presence of a major naval power in a particular region—or even the mere perception of such—may goad other navies to fill in the vacuum left behind, leading to over-eager presence and antagonistic maneuvering at sea. Even the basic need and right of nations to safeguard their sovereign integrity and to enforce national jurisdiction over maritime domains as provided for in UNCLOS 1982 can also make navies appear hostile to others.

iii) INTRODUCTION OF POST 9-11 MARITIME SECURITY MEASURES

The shadow of 9-11 and the possibility of terrorist attacks on maritime interests have driven security planners and agencies to pursue various initiatives to mitigate the security risks. The measures have had an indelible impact on the concept of freedom of the seas. It is hence essential to provide an overview of those security schemes as a prelude to assessing their implications on the ideals of unimpeded voyage at sea and to evaluating the manner the concept is perceived and implemented.

A year after the 9-11 attacks in 2001, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) introduced a wide-ranging set of regulations outlining security standards for ships and port facilities. The underlying principles of these guidelines, known as the *International Ship and Port Facility Security Code* (ISPS Code), are to strengthen maritime security and prevent and suppress acts of terrorism against shipping. The introduction of this Code marks a milestone development in the maritime sector and has wielded a significant impact on the way ships and ports operate. ISPS Code provides an all-encompassing framework for evaluating risk and provides security agencies with the leeway to suit the threat perception with matching security measures for ships and port facilities. More than any other post 9-11 maritime security measures, the Code has played a catalyst role in altering the archaic perception of maritime security from being reactive to threats to a more anticipative stance.

The implementation of the *US Maritime Transportation Security Act 2002*, the US equivalent of the ISPS Code is aimed at protecting its ports and waterways from terrorist attacks. The Act requires vessels and port facilities to conduct vulnerability assessments and develop security plans in achieving this objective. This was followed by the introduction of its *National Maritime Security Strategy*

September 2005 which represents a comprehensive national effort to promote global economic stability and to prevent hostile and illegal acts within the maritime domain.

The *24-Hour Rule* is a regulation implemented by US Customs since 2003 requiring Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs) to provide it with details of the contents of US-bound sea containers 24 hours before being loaded onboard ships, preferably via electronic means. The rule allows US Customs officers to analyze the information of the containers' contents and identify potential terrorist threats before they arrive at American ports.

96-Hour Advance Notification of Arrival is a security screening procedure introduced in 2001 by the US Coast Guard and the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. In accordance with the procedure, all vessels bound to US ports must provide a Notification of Arrival (NOA) 96 hours in advance of their arrival. The notice require ships approaching US ports to declare their cargo, crew and passengers 96 hours prior to arrival. The US Coast Guard also introduced the *International Port Security Program* in 2004, which engages US trading partners worldwide to evaluate and align security of their ports to comply with ISPS Code and other international maritime security standards.

A more contentious initiative called the *Proliferation Security Initiative* (PSI), announced by US President George Bush in 2003, aims to create an international framework that would allow the US and its allies to board and search vessels carrying cargo of suspect nature and seize weapons of mass destructions or missile technologies. It marks a bold approach by the US to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in a more dynamic and proactive fashion. New measures outside the ambit of existing international treaties are required to fulfill PSI's objectives, including the interdiction of foreign vessels on the high seas. This aspect of PSI lends some controversy to it and has invoked the ire of some nations worried that it might impinge on their sovereignty.

A scheme related to PSI, the *Regional Maritime Security Initiative* (RMSI) is another US-led plan to address concerns regarding the threat of criminal or

terrorist activities at seas. Its main objective is to develop a regional networking among like-minded nations to identify, monitor and intercept trans-national threats at sea under the sphere of existing domestic and international laws. While PSI operates on a global scale, RMSI focuses especially on the Asia-Pacific region.

With the US bearing the brunt of the 9-11 attacks, and given that seaports act as critical gateways for the movement of its international commerce,¹³ it should not come as a surprise that most of these maritime security initiatives are US-initiated and US-centric. Having introduced and promoted many anti-terror measures that have since been internationally adopted worldwide, the US is poised to be at the forefront in steering the direction of maritime transport security in the years to come.

Not even the fiercest critics of excessive maritime security would deny the need for better protection from the scourge of piracy, the dastardly intent of terrorists and the non-conventional threats of activities such as the smuggling arms, people, drugs and dangerous materials. However, the measures introduced have raised concern whether the notion of freedom of the seas would be able to withstand the onslaught of the restrictions imposed by those initiatives.

iv) CHANGING PERCEPTION TOWARDS MARITIME MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

Even the most casual observers of world events would not fail to notice the almost dramatic shift in the perception of the world towards multilateral engagements of late. While many complex dynamics were, and still are, at play in bringing this turnaround, the most distinct turning point came after the 9-11 attacks.

¹³ Underlining the strategic importance of ports to the US, more than 95% of its non-North American foreign trade, and 100% of certain commodities such as foreign oil, on which the country is heavily dependent, arrives by ships. See *Port Security – Nation Faces Formidable Challenges in Making New Initiatives Successful*, statement of JayEtta Z. Hecker, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) testimony before the subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, House Committee on Government Reform, 5 August 2002, p.3.

One of the most notable consequences of the 9-11 incident is the drastic shift in the direction of the US in its approach towards global issues and in its relationship with the world at large. The nature and impacts of the 9-11 attacks and the ensuing international reaction have combined to promote a new line of thinking in Washington about the need to engage the international community to face the new dynamics and realities resulting from the incident. While the US, rightly or wrongly, was deemed to be disengaged in global affairs prior to post 9-11, multilateralism¹⁴ has become the new mantra on Capitol Hill and an indispensable approach to counter the threat of terror, which is unconventional and trans-national in nature.

Led by the prompting of the US, certain maritime issues such as navigational safety and security have taken center stage in the wake of the 9-11 attack. The possible threat and have galvanized the actors in the maritime theater to engage in more multilateral actions at sea to secure maritime infrastructures and interests and to beef up the security of seafarers. Most of the multilateral security initiatives discussed earlier have been carried out with the acquiescence and support of the international community. The new spring in the step in multilateral engagements is evident in many security-related activities involving multinational cooperation, even when not involving the US. Efforts such as the joint, coordinated patrols involving the navies of the littoral states of the Straits of Malacca and the 'Eyes in the Sky' air patrols over the Straits are such examples. Regional maritime security is now viewed with a multilateral lens by ASEAN and China, as evidenced during the China-ASEAN dialogue held in Nanning in China's Guangxi Province in October 2006.

It has been argued that an effective policy of multilateralism requires reform at the global level.¹⁵ With US providing the leadership and impetus to initiate the kind of reform needed for international bodies to face the challenges of a new world order, many such institutions have undergone a transformation in the way they operate. Regulatory bodies have not escaped this trend, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the UN body which oversees the affairs of the

¹⁴ In its simplest term, multilateralism refers to the collaboration among nations in tackling a particular issue.

oceans. The significant changes in approach and philosophy undertaken by IMO to meet new challenges in ocean governance are best symbolized by the addition of the word “secure” in its new motto of “safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans”. The emphasis on security not only represents a new vigor in the focus on maritime security issues after the 9-11 incident, but also signals IMO’s acceptance of the call for multilateral engagements by the US for—in the words of former US State Secretary Colin Powell—“virtually every nation on earth” to join the fight against the menace of terrorism.

v) BLOCKADE OF SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION AS A
‘CONTAINMENT’ STRATEGY

The world’s major sea lines of communication (SLOC) figure prominently in the calculations of naval powers to ‘contain’ their adversaries. The concept of SLOC as potential ‘chokepoints’ to deny the enemy critical sea access accords the world’s strategic waterways such as the Straits of Malacca and the Straits of Hormuz the status of SLOC or key ‘maritime highways’. Such passageways facilitate the vast trade flows critical to global economic prosperity and are exposed to various elements that threaten their security and access. These elements include military concerns involving threats emanating from the conflicts between nations and from sea mines as well as non-military elements including natural disasters, navigation-related accidents, pollution, piracy, terrorism and the “creeping jurisdiction” of regional states surrounding such waterways.

Take the Straits of Malacca, for example. The Straits is a sea-lane of immense strategic, political and economic importance, not only to the littoral States—namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore—but also to the international community. Regional economic powerhouses such as China, Japan, and Korea view security in the Straits, through which much of their trade and energy imports are transported, from a strategic standpoint. China for example, depends on the Straits to carry much of its international trade and much of its energy imports, largely from the Middle East. Given such dependency, it is little wonder that

¹⁵ Such argument was made on the basis that international bodies were operating under increasing workload using archaic approach ill-suited to confront the new realities of post 9-11 world, hence requiring a good shake-up. See *The United States in the golden age : The case for multilateralism*, a policy paper by the Center on International Cooperation at www.fesny.org

China and many other energy-dependent countries in the region have an increasingly huge interest in keeping the Straits secure and safe.

As an example of the geo-political rivalry and multiple interests at work in the Straits, China is concerned that the US may adapt a 'containment' policy that seeks to deny Beijing crucial energy supplies by controlling access at chokepoints in the Straits. In the event of hostility breaking out between the US and China, it is foreseeable that the Straits will become the theater for the two states' maneuvers, naval and otherwise, to neutralize each other. The imposition of a blockade by the US against China in the name of gaining a strategic upper hand at sea will go against the sanctimonious principle of freedom of the seas.

This highlights the prominence of the Straits of Malacca as one of the world's most crucial and strategic energy transportation routes. Geopolitical and economic developments have put the Straits into the spotlight as a sealane of immense global importance.

The possible strategic calculations arising from the ambitious plan to build an oil pipeline across the northern region of Peninsula Malaysia may also affect freedom of navigation in the Straits of Malacca. The proposed Trans-Peninsula Pipeline will provide a shortcut for oil transportation from exporting countries in the Middle East to importing East Asian nations. It will bypass the Straits—one of the world's busiest trade and energy shipping lanes—and provide a cheaper and shorter route for oil shipment between them.

The project is steadily gaining currency with the passing of time and the emergence of new economic, geo-strategic and political realities. Recent reports of international support for the pipeline have added fresh impetus to the proposal. By the look of it, the project is no longer a question of *if* but *when*. From a maritime perspective, the project is foreseen to have several impacts including :

- Reducing the number of oil tankers traversing the Straits of Malacca, hence lessening the potential for accidents, ship-based pollution and attacks the vessels.
- Lowering the cost and time to transport oil from the Gulf to the Far East, hence possibly reducing oil price per barrel.

- Decreasing the volume of oil cargo handled at ports along the Straits.
- Reducing activities at existing refineries and the demand for ancillary services supporting the maritime transportation of crude oil along the Straits.
- Altering the patterns of maritime trade and infrastructure development related to oil transport in the Straits' region.
- Opening up the possibility of new naval calculations in the Straits by outside powers wishing to counter the strategic and geo-political impacts and to capitalize on opportunities arising from the pipeline.

Media reports have mentioned support towards the project from East Asian economic giants, namely China, Japan and Korea. This is not at all surprising as those countries depend on oil imports from the Gulf to fuel their economic engines. The chokepoints along the Straits of Malacca, in times of conflict, could be easily blocked to stop the flow of energy supplies to those countries. Countering this possibility provides a strong motivation for them to support the proposal of creating an alternative route to the Straits for oil shipment.

China's emergence as the world's second largest oil consumer after the US has heightened the need for the rising economic superpower to secure its energy imports. It is therefore not surprising that China—along with other energy-hungry East Asian economies such as Korea and Japan—has expressed support to invest in the pipeline. The reliance of these countries on the Straits of Malacca to transport much of their energy supplies lends the project a very high strategic value to them. In the case of China, it is rightly worried that its access to chokepoints along the Straits would be blocked in the not unthinkable event of military hostility with the US, hence denying it of crucial energy supplies. Clearly, the alternative route offered by the pipeline would provide a means for Beijing to lessen its dependency on energy import shipped through the Straits, thus relieving it of the strategic disadvantage arising from this dependence. But should demand for Gulf oil from China and other East Asian economies cool off due to factors such as slower economic growth, economic recession, persistently high oil prices, or increased used of alternative energy such as gas and nuclear, the pipeline would run the risk of being underutilized.

Investment from Iran has been reportedly lined up to help finance the cost of the pipeline, leading to speculation that the pipeline will be fed with oil from Iran, among other sources. It is anybody's guess how the current tension between the US and Iran will pan out, but should the US impose a naval embargo on Iranian oil exports and impose a blockade at the northern tip of the Straits, the impact on the pipeline would be adverse. This would severely curtail the freedom of ships transiting the Straits of Malacca, which is recognized by international law as an international strait. One shudders to think of the consequence should the embargo is met with defiance by China or other East Asian countries. In such an event, the pipeline would unwittingly find itself as a chessboard in the high-stake strategic calculus involving the adversarial parties, and Malaysia would inadvertently find itself caught in the diplomatic crossfire. The tense rumbling of hostility among big powers would reverberate through the length of the pipeline, putting it in a precarious position.

No matter what the arguments in favor of and against the pipeline, there is no doubting that its implementation would turn the dynamics of energy transportation and the maritime and strategic order in the Straits of Malacca and the surrounding region on their heads. The actions and counter-actions in the Straits arising from the existence of the pipeline will also put the freedom the concept of freedom of the seas under stern test.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING FREEDOM OF THE SEAS AND FUTURE TRENDS

One of the few unintended—and rather unfortunate—outcomes of UNCLOS 1982 is that it has radically altered the traditional freedom of access to the seas enjoyed by all. The introduction and implementation of the convention has unwittingly created a cacophony of complexities at sea. This is manifested by of overlapping maritime boundary claims, overly aggressive maritime territorial expansion and some hotly contested disputes over islands. All these have the potential to impair the principle of freedom of voyage at sea as a result of the imposition of obstacles to assert the disputing parties' positions.

Some outstanding maritime disputes highlight the fact that although multilateral engagements are on the rise, no amount of goodwill within the international

community can mask the glaring fact that without specified boundaries, the effectiveness of a regime of international cooperation at sea will be compromised.¹⁶ The recent flurry of maritime security initiatives, reform of international bodies and increasing international cooperation in ocean governance have given rise to optimism for better conduct in the oceans, particularly in the preservation of the notion of freedom of the seas. However, the security measures can also lead to misunderstanding and anxiety that will cause nations to react in a manner contrary to the principle of unimpeded oceanic travel. As such, the importance of the drawing of boundaries by coastal nations cannot be overemphasized to provide for “good order at sea” plus “jurisdictional clarity and certainty”¹⁷ in order to avoid and resolve disputes that may lead to actions that are not in keeping with the cherished tradition of free access at sea for all.

While it would take a romantic to expect nations to retreat from pushing their maritime boundaries to limits that test the threshold of tolerance of others anytime soon, there is cause to be optimistic for amicable solutions to maritime disputes. More cases are being heard, argued and settled cordially at the International Court of Justice and through other arbitral channels. This development gives much hope for more diplomatic and peaceful solutions and less gunboat diplomacy in settling differences of opinions concerning the oceans. The establishment of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and increasing international cooperation in critical sealanes such as the Straits of Malacca, add further dose of optimism for better order at sea in the future, which is conducive to the safeguarding of the freedom of the seas concept.

Aggressive posturing of navies is an inevitability arising from growing political, economic and military clout and increasing confidence of nations to assert power seawards. It is an organic development stemming from the need of countries to promote their political, strategic and economic interests. A rising powerbroker such as China is understandably bound to assert its maritime ambitions to protect its

¹⁶See Cozens, P., *Some reflections on maritime boundary and territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific with a focus on the South China Sea*, in Ho, J. & Raymond, C.Z, eds. (2005), *The best of times, The worst of times : Maritime Security in the Asia Pacific*, Singapore : IDSS, p. 123.

¹⁷ Cozens, P. (ibid).

sovereignty and international trade in a manner which can be inadvertently seen as aggressive or threatening by other nations. The application of the Mahanian doctrine is such that a naval power which is able to impose restrictions and interrupt free navigation at sea, especially along critical sealanes, would inevitably be perceived as posing a significant threat to the security of others. Naturally, nations which depend on unimpeded access to sealanes to facilitate the transport of their international trade and imported energy supplies would feel most aggrieved by such actions. With navies of developing nations increasing their capacity and improving their capability at a frightening pace and scale, it is indeed a cause for worry that their newfound naval swagger would lead to actions that would adversely impact the right of freedom of navigation for others.

The maritime sector, being one of the most vulnerable sectors to potential sabotage and attacks—given its international nature and long supply chain linkages—has felt the stranglehold of such measures. In the post-9-11 security matrix, it is inevitable and even necessary to beef up security in this crucial sector. However, the need for tighter security needs to be balanced with the need to keep the maritime supply chain and global trade flowing smoothly. More security initiatives result in more checks and restrictions, which in turn hamper freedom of movement at sea. More than ever, security initiatives are threatening to undermine the dearly held ideals of freedom of the seas so painstakingly developed over the centuries. It is therefore crucial that security measures in place are constantly reviewed and future ones carefully thought out to ensure that their design and application do not contradict and compromise the privilege that the concept of freedom of the seas accords to seafarers and their vessels.

The proliferation of multilateral engagements reflects a fresh realization of the importance of a cooperative and collaborative approach in security-related maritime initiatives. Although this can be looked upon as a positive development on the outset, rising multilateral initiatives at sea may invite a backlash from parties perceiving such development as hostile to their interests. A clear example is the maneuvering in the seas of the Asian region where China's growing military clout, as underlined by the rapid enhancement and modernization of its blue water navy, is causing anxiety among its neighbors who are wagering on the continued involvement of the US in the region to "contain" China's approach. This may lead to a potentially unhealthy cycle whereby

a China which is anxious of US involvement in the region and wary of its professed “China containment” policy will continue its rise as a hegemonic power to check growing multilateralism engagements which it deems threatening to its interests.

Obviously, it is in the interest of all sides to avoid a major confrontation at sea, but in the course of asserting naval presence and dominance, there is bound to be actions taken that will run afoul of the spirit of freedom of the seas. If the Mahanian doctrine holds sway in the event of a face-off between China and the US, the bet is on either one or both of them imposing blockade and denying access to parts of the theater of conflict to gain strategic advantage at sea.

Based on the above analysis, there is cause to be both optimistic and pessimistic about the fate of the concept of freedom of the seas and about its resilience in the face of the wave of changes sweeping before it. That mankind faces serious challenges—some of which are asymmetrical in nature and require a whole new way of thinking and radical approach to counter - in protecting the purity of the notion is undeniable. But there is an increasing worldwide awareness that uncontrolled disputes, unchecked interests, unrealistic claims and unsustainable unilateral approach involving the use and the recovery of riches of the seas may lead to a battle of attrition in which few nations stand to gain and many stand to lose. This alone should inject a sense of rationale in the handling of maritime issues and should spur the international community to manage the oceans in a more sensible and responsible fashion.

CONCLUSION

In the wake of evolving developments in the realms of security, geopolitics and in the maritime sector—whether organic or forced—the notion and application of freedom of the seas have come under intense investigation. Quite clearly, the concept of unfettered oceanic travel is increasingly under siege from the effects of various developments. More than ever, serious questions are being asked if this treasured principle can be defended amid the avalanche of changes in today’s dynamic world.

The sign is clear : there are more policies and actions intended to restrict rather than to enlarge the rights of nations on the seas at the moment. The imposition of restrictions against free passage on the high seas in reaction to increasingly aggressive expansion of territorial waters and boundary claims continue to seriously threaten the

concept. While the right of nations to protect their sovereign integrity and jurisdictional interests should never be denied or even questioned, some of the actions they take in doing so may be at the expense of free passage at sea for other nations. They may in turn cause others to react in a manner threatening to the spirit of freedom of the sea. Such a trend, if not kept in check, will clip the sails of freedom of the seas, and even worse, will threaten to render the notion as inapplicable or irrelevant someday.

The challenge ahead of us calls for understanding and cooperation among nations and the stakeholders of the sea to ensure that actions today will not compromise the much esteemed ideals and aspirations of freedom of the seas tomorrow. In their determination to assert presence and protect interests at sea, nations must not ignore the virtues of diplomacy and compromise in seeing to the greater common good over individual states' objectives. While it is easier said and done, the spirit of cooperation and understanding, as propagated by multilateralism, should take precedence over antagonistic positions and aggressive behaviors in settling the many maritime disputes that threaten the philosophy of freedom of the seas. The job to enforce and preserve its principles is best carried out on a platform of international cooperation. A collective approach in managing oceanic affairs would be more in keeping with spirit of the designation of the oceans as the common heritage of mankind, as enshrined in international law.

This great challenge before us will test our resolve and ingenuity to find equilibrium between protecting the multiple maritime interests and preserving the precious notion of free flow of unhindered travel at seas. Failure to do so will sabotage mankind's hope of preserving the final frontier for free movement on this planet and curb the 'moving sea' from uniting the 'shores of our soul'.

A Jihad against Corruption and for the Enhancement of Integrity among Muslim Countries

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INTRODUCTION

The OIC must be applauded for taking the right and proper step in organizing this inaugural forum.¹ It is also instructive that this Forum is in line with the recommendation of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons that we need “to

¹ Paper presented at the First OIC Anti Corruption and Enhancing Integrity Forum at Kuala Lumpur Convention Center 28-30th August 2006.

emulate and implement universal good practices including combating corruption, and promoting accountability and transparency in the public and private sector.”² The fact that Malaysia decided to host this first Forum on such an important matter is also a positive indication of the commitment and seriousness of Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his government to address the problem of corruption and lack of integrity in the Muslim world, which have caused real damage to the overall development of our nations.

THE PERCEPTION OF OUR PRESENT CONDITION

Corruption in the full Islamic sense is very comprehensive. It covers not only economic, bureaucratic, and social aspects, but also the very reality of man and his soul as well as his environment.³ The term which Allah SWT uses is *fasad*. The men and women who lack integrity will cause comprehensive corruption on Earth. As the Quranic verse states, *zaharal fasadu fil-barri wal-bahri bi-ma kasabat aidi-l-nas: fasad* has appeared on Earth and on the seas because (of the evils) which men’s hands have done (al-Rum (30): 41).

However, the United Nations and its various agencies such as the UNDP and other organizations, especially Transparency International, have done well, since the 1990s, to identify certain aspects that are quite indicative of the level of corruption and lack of integrity in governments and other public institutions. Although the meaning of corruption and its indicators as understood by these important organizations are not comprehensive—lacking the religious and spiritual aspects—they still fall under the major religious-social crime of corruption (*rashwah*) and its branches.

Islam condemns all unethical, immoral and unlawful earning in very strong terms. Allah SWT has decreed in the Holy Qur’an:

“And eat not your property among yourselves in vanity (*bi’l-bathil*), nor seek

² As cited by Datuk Sri Zulkipli bin Mat Nor, Director General of the Anti Corruption Agency of Malaysia in his letter of invitation to me dated 12 July 2006. BPR/BPP:30/11/2.6

³ For a more detailed discussion on this meaning of corruption (*fasad*) as opposed to true development (*islah*), please see our work, *Pembangunan di Malaysia: Ke Arab Satu Fahaman Baru Yang Lebih Sempurna* (Development in Malaysia: Towards a Wholistic Understanding). Reprint of 2001 edition (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Academy University of Malaya, 2005).

by it to gain the hearing of the judges that ye may knowingly devour a portion of the property of others wrongfully (*bi'l-ithmi*)". (*al-Baqarah* (2):188)

Prophet Muhammad SAW underlines this strong position against everyone involved, even in these limited kinds of corruption, saying that "Allah SWT curses the giver and receiver of bribes in law".⁴ Thauban stated that the Holy Prophet SAW cursed the giver and receiver of bribes as well as the intermediary.⁵

Muslim countries as a whole have not done too badly on the Corruption Perception Index. In Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2004, although no Muslim nation ranks in the top 25 of 146 surveyed nations, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Malaysia and Tunisia are still included in the top quarter of nations perceived to have a low level of corruption. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Syria come in the second quarter; while all the other Muslim nations are perceived to be in the last two quarters with many in the last quarter.⁶ Hence, a lot still needs to be done to improve our standing in the world community.

A recent study by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on "Transparency and Accountability in the Public Sector in the Arab Region" which covered six representative countries (namely Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen) found that, among the three components studied—Financial management, Human Resource Management, and Information Management—the financial management aspect is the most developed. Good practices in human resources management and the relatively newly-introduced information management (both in public and private sectors) are not well implemented.⁷

⁴ *Hadith* narrated by Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban. Cited from Syeikh Muhammad Yusuf al-Qardhawi, *Halal wa'l-Haram fi'l-Islam. Halal dan Haram Dalam Islam*. Malay translation (Singapore: Muslim Youth Assembly, 1980) p. 456.

⁵ Narrated by Ahmad and Hakim. Cited from Syeikh Muhammad Yusuf al-Qardhawi, loc.cit.

⁶ See Johann Graf Lambsdorff, "Corruption Perception Index 2004". In Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report 2005. Special Focus: Corruption in Construction and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. Foreword by Francis Fukuyama (London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), Table. 9.1, pp. 235-238.

⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Transparency and Accountability in the Public Sector in the Arab Region". In Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report 2005. Special Focus: Corruption in Construction and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. Foreword by Francis Fukuyama (London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press 2005) p. 276.

Even in financial management, it was found that “although the legislative and administrative framework for financial transaction is in place, general financial controls are not highly visible”, “public competitive bidding for large contracts consistently does not lead to the best bids winning the contracts”.⁸

In human resource management, the Report found that “officially stated core values (mostly frequently defined as neutrality, fairness or equality) are enshrined in pertinent laws, but are not well communicated or demonstrated by the leadership”, “standards or conduct are not systematically reinforced”, “investigations, apart from criminal investigations carried out by the police, are not seen to be independent,” and “disciplinary procedures are clearly spelt out, but are not consistently applied”, “no country reported mandatory reporting of wrong doing or protection for wrong doers.”⁹

In the information management sector, it was found, for example, that “there are few independent and alternative sources of reporting on public information, apart from government-sponsored sources”.¹⁰

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION

There is no doubt that corruption is evil. We concur with Transparency International, that

“corruption causes social disintegration and distorts economic systems; it implies discrimination, injustice and disrespect for human dignity; it endangers the stability of democratic institutions, discriminates in the delivery of government services and thus violates the rights of the people, and the poor in particular. Where corruption reigns, basic human rights and liberties come under threat and social and economic contracts become unpredictable. Corruption remains thus one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable pro-poor development in support of MDGs. A

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Comprehensive attack on corruption remains a challenge for many countries, developing and developed alike.”¹¹

The UNDP document further notes, rather soberingly:

“...despite new legislation and the establishment of more anti-corruption and integrity institutions, overall results remain disappointing, with intentions still outnumbering accomplishments and tangible results remain sparse. The current wave of decentralization raises additional concerns that corruption will spread further to the local levels of government....Corruption is regarded a failure of institutions, in particular those in charge of investigations, prosecution and enforcement.”¹²

It has been widely acknowledged that nations must take stock of their unique historical and religious backgrounds in order to formulate their development programs, enhance integrity, and fight corruption. Otherwise all these efforts will lose their basic axiological depth and cultural authenticity, and will not be able to shape public opinion and create lasting and positive changes.

RELIGIOUS APPROACH: OUR STRENGTH

The understanding that corruption is wrong and therefore must be combated is very deeply-rooted in our religious and cultural consciousness, because corruption (*rashwah*) is a branch of spiritual-ethical dysfunction. The Prophet said in a very famous tradition, after returning from battle, that “now we are returning to a greater war: *jihad al-akbar*”, namely, the *jihad* or struggle against one’s animal or appetitive self.

Enhancing integrity is similarly rooted because integrity is the modern term for wholesome ethical-moral development. Again, the Prophet said, in a famous tradition, that he was raised among mankind in order to complete or enhance human ethical moral character, i.e., human integrity.

¹¹ UNDP, *Institutional Arrangements to Combat Corruption: A Comparative Study*. (Bangkok: UNDP Regional Centre, 2005) p.3.

¹² UNDP, *Institutional Arrangements to Combat Corruption: A Comparative Study*. (Bangkok: UNDP Regional Centre, 2005) p.3.

These two fundamental points connect us to the bigger framework, which define and shape our historical destiny among the community of nations: the middle ummah (*ummat wasat*), and the best ummah (*khair ummah*) because we enjoin what is good, forbid what is wrong, and believe in the Almighty Allah SWT.

Hence, enhancing integrity is a major form of enjoining what is good, and combating corruption is an excellent example of forbidding what is wrong.

We need to quickly and consistently use every means possible that we are now engaging in a *jihad* against corruption and for the enhancement of integrity.

In this *jihad* the religious approach seems to be relatively more effective. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons why religious bodies are perceived to be least affected by corruption compared to other sectors. Sectors that are perceived to be most affected by corruption, in decreasing order of negative perceptions (left to right), are:

- Political parties
- Parliaments/legislatures
- The police, legal system/judiciary
- Tax revenue
- Business/The private sector
- Customs
- Medical services
- Education system
- Registry and permit services
- Utilities
- The Military
- NGOs
- Religious bodies¹³

Most Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) in many countries worldwide have the legal mandate in the areas of investigation; prosecution; education and awareness-raising; and coordination. The success of ACAs depends not only the religious, moral-ethical and professional integrity of their leaders and staff but also, and of equal significance, all the leaders and key personnel of those institutions with which they have to deal. Hence we must take seriously the reminder of the UNDP report: “Corruption is regarded as a failure of institutions, in particular those in charge of investigations, prosecution and enforcement”.

¹³ Marie Wolkers, “Global Corruption Barometer 2004”. In Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report 2005. Special Focus: Corruption in Construction and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. Foreword by Francis Fukuyama (London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press 2005) p. 240.

All institutions, public or private, reflect the sincerity, God-consciousness, wisdom, will, courage, justice and professional abilities of the critical individuals within them. It is because of the ultimate importance of the individuals in the fate of institutions, societies and civilizations that Islam—and all major world religions for that matter—places the responsibility of eschatological accountability in the Hereafter on the shoulders of individuals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATION

From the perspective of Islam, the real damage of corruption is worse than all the social-economic and political effects that are described above, which is correctly linked to harm against others. Why?

It is because all forms of corruption, abuse of power, and lack of integrity are not only injustices against others who may not be directly known, or respected or cared by the perpetrators. Rather, and more significantly, these are really injustices against oneself (*zulm bin-nafs*).

Allah SWT in the Holy Qur'an states very emphatically that those who hurt others are really doing injustice against their own selves: "He who doth that (in this specific context doing injustice against their wives) has wronged his (own) soul. (*al-Baqarah* (2): 231). Similarly, those who transgressed the limits of Allah SWT, they have wronged their own souls. (*al-Talaq* (61): 1). The reality of committing injustice against one self is repeated in numerous places and contexts in the Holy Qur'an (see, for example *Ali Imran* (3): 117; *al-Nahl* (16):33 etc).

Thus, individuals who commit various acts of corruption and injustices forget about the true harm they do to themselves, not just to others. They forget their true selves because they have forgotten Allah SWT, and they have not become conscious of His Ever-Present, Ever-Knowing and All-Powerful Attributes.

Allah SWT reminds us: "Do not be like those who have forgotten Allah, for Allah causes them to forget their true selves!" (*al-Hashr* (19): 19)

This reality needs to be emphasized, besides the institutional, legal, social, and economic aspects because if corrupt individuals—the givers and the takers and their beneficiaries who are aware of the goings-on—confidently think that their corrupt practices will not be exposed or that they will be protected, they will continue with their activities and lifestyles.

All the great leaders of the Muslims who have demonstrated exemplary integrity in their personal and public life—from the Holy Prophet and his noble families as well as their veritable companions, and many of the later caliphs, sultans and leaders in all fields and in all *mazhabs*—all demonstrate this awareness and commitment and drive to govern with the highest ethical standards despite great worldly personal risks is to make oneself reach the spiritual station of *ihsan*, and to attain the pleasure of Allah Almighty.¹⁴

Deplorably, this personally and historically edifying worldview has been effectively corroded by another worldview and outlook that comes from a much more limited conception of human destiny and reality as a whole.

NARROW AND MATERIALISTIC WORLDVIEW¹⁵

The existence of many of the major world religions and moral philosophies within our countries should be taken advantage of. While we must be aware of the differences in theological, eschatological and ritual practices, we can benefit from the many overlapping moral and ethical principles and values. We should not be promoting any kind of religious pluralism in the sense that all religions are regarded as having equal theological validity; what we are underlining is something that Muslims have recognized and implemented in a large part of their history and even now in Malaysia that we can and must cooperate to build an ethical-moral order based on our respective religious worldviews.¹⁶

¹⁴ See for examples, Jalaludin al-Suyuti, *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*. History of the Caliphs. Translated from the original Arabic by H.S.Jarrett. Reprint of 1881 (Amsterdam:Oriental Press, 1970); Syed Abul Hassan Ali al-Nadvi, *Saviours of the Islamic Spirit*. Translated from Urdu by Mohiuddin Ahmad. 3 vols (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1983).

¹⁵ For some of the excellent works on this topic, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*. Reprint of 1978 edition (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), idem, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam:An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC),1995).

¹⁶ For details, see our work, *Pembangunan di Malaysia*, esp. pp. 57-66; 143-154.

Giving a more dominant role to religions should not be feared; what should really be feared are:

- 1) The extremist interpretation of religion that reduces religion to a mere set of laws and rituals; that any different and alternative interpretation of religion is not acceptable; and that mutual interaction and cooperation among the adherents of various religions is not necessary,
- 2) The narrow and materialistic view of reality and of human personality and development; that this present world is all there is to it; that all spiritual realities and meanings are personal beliefs with no epistemological grounding and relevance in public life; that ethical and moral values are relative and constantly changing because they are defined by historical, ethnic, socio-economic and gender factors; and that politics should only be concerned with matters in the present terrestrial existence.

These two trends are becoming influential in many of our countries which have gradually corroded our unitary conception and approach towards personal and societal growth and development. The materialistic worldview has progressively made all levels of our societies regard success and happiness primarily in the physical, social and economic sense, regardless of whether the means are illegal, immoral and unethical. Often times, what are grossly immoral and unethical are technically very legal. The materialistic consciousness has made young people and subordinates respect, admire and even want to emulate the so-called successful people who are also influential and celebrated.

On the other hand, the narrow minded religious would view the mastery of so-called non-religious knowledge and the proper acquisition of material advancement as secular, hence religiously frowned upon, forgetting that these are two of the basic requirements for the fulfilment of Man's purpose of creation as God's *khalifah* or vicegerent on earth.

The narrow and materialistic outlook has also made many of the educated elites in many professions regard the principles and values enshrined in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as highly theoretical and idealistic,

but may still be suitable for emotional fulfilment. Following this, the innumerable ethical examples of prominent scholars and scientists, statesmen, governors and generals are regarded as no longer relevant to our modern age, which is thought to be far more complex and rapidly changing. They choose to ignore that Western management experts are still digging into the wisdom from the writings of the Greco-Roman thinkers from 2500 years ago; and some even regard the philosophy and methods of Sun Tze and Genghiz Khan as being very relevant to modern managers.

Presently, in many Muslim countries, discussions on integrity and governance seem to proceed in an intellectual vacuum, not taking the right advantage of the numerous models of religious, ethical-moral and successful leaders of the past; whereas Muslim scholars in the past not only benefited from the evergreen wisdom and guidance of the Qur'an and the Prophet and early Muslim luminaries, they even benefited from the experiences, policies and sayings of great non-Muslim thinkers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and from non-Muslim political and military leaders from Alexander the Great to the great pre-Islamic Iranian rulers and statesmen such as Ardashir, Anushirwan and Buzurgmihr, Bahram and the mythical Faridun.¹⁷

It is clear that Muslim scholars and leaders of the past have never regarded justice and other ethical-moral virtues as a monopoly of Islam. In fact, they understood and benefited from the popular sayings of the Holy Prophet and other sages that a just government or Kingdom will endure even if it is not Muslim. In the same vein, they were guided too by another of the Prophet's warnings, namely, to be wary of the prayers of those who are unjustly treated even if they are non-Muslims.¹⁸

As already stated above, the materialistic outlook has also reduced human success, well-being and happiness only to the attainment of physical and social-economic needs. Thus, what is regarded as good and relevant are interpreted from

¹⁷ See, for example, Nizam al-Muluk al-Tusi, *Siyasal-Muluk/Siyasat Namah: The Book of Government*. Translated from the Persian by Hubert Drake (London/Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, *Nasihah al-Muluk: Counsel for Kings*. Trans. From the Persian by F.R.C Bagley (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, *Akblaq-I-Nasiri*. Nasrean Ethics. Trans from Persian by G.W.Wickens (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964); and Bukhari al-Jauhari, *Taj al-Salatin*. Edited and converted into Latinized Malay script by Khalid Hussein (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966).

¹⁸ For example, see Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi, *Book of Government*, pp. 124-126; al-Jauhari, *Taj al-Salatin*, pp. 104, 113

this narrow prism; the educational and developmental goals and programs that cannot be understood and operated from this perspective are rejected as idealistic, utopian, and irrelevant.

RAISING AWARENESS AT ALL LEVELS

Religious teachings on integrity and the abhorrence of all forms of corruption should be sown beginning from the family level, and must be continued to all levels of education. The media, religious and other social institutions must also be trained to play a more positive role in this endeavour. However, it must be strengthened at the university, professional and the highest levels of public and private organizations, because the products and personnel of these various institutions are directly and indirectly responsible for the maintenance and enhancement of integrity, and its opposites.¹⁹

A lot has been written and argued for the critical need to have political will in all countries to ensure the enhancement of integrity and the successful combating against all forms of corruption. Meaningful political will presupposes the prior existence of sincerity of purpose, requisite knowledge of the priority of matters and courage.

PERSONAL SHAME AND PUBLIC OPINION

The inculcation of a positive sense of shame or modesty (*al-haya*) is an important deterrent against immoral, unethical or unlawful acts. Our beloved Prophet SAW used to say that positive shame or modesty is part of faith, a gift from Allah SWT without which a man or woman would do whatever he/she pleases.²⁰

The former Prime Minister of Singapore made a very instructive observation on what he regarded as being the strongest deterrent to corruption in his country, which helps explain the possible reason his very small republic ranks very high on the anti-corruption perception index; he said that “a public opinion that censures and condemns corrupt persons and that makes corrupt behaviour so unacceptable

¹⁹ See our article, “Accountability Enhancement: Some Religious, Historical and Educational Considerations”, *Al-Shajarah*. Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). Vol. 5 no. 2, pp. 214-217.

²⁰ For details please see *ibid.*, pp.200-203.

that the stigma of corruption cannot be washed away by serving a prison sentence.”²¹

Enhancing integrity and combating corruption will not have meaningful effects if individuals who are perceived to be not having integrity and who are perceived to be corrupt continue to retain their position in private and public sectors.

However, nowadays many people no longer have a sense of shame when committing immoral-unethical acts. They not only flaunt them publicly but even go out to defend them as normal and correct and demand their right to be accepted.

This can only happen when the ethical-religious framework has been allowed to be treated as a historical product of individuals and communities of old that are no longer relevant.

PROTECTION OF WHISTLE BLOWERS

If corruption and all acts of non-integrity that affect public interests are crimes against society, it is logically and morally necessary that society must effectively protect those who take personal and professional risks to expose these crimes. In fact, it accords well with the teaching of our religion that whistleblowers should not only be protected but also be amply rewarded, according to the significance as seen by society, of the crimes reported.

Inculcating the religious worldview of Islam and its spiritual-ethical code of conduct is no doubt necessary to enhance integrity in our nation, but as we all know it is not sufficient without the right kind of political, legal, and institutional support and changes. It is here that the best practices and examples of other nations need to be seriously and continuously studied and assimilated.²²

²¹ Quoted in Jon S. T. Quah, *Comparing Anti Corruption Measures in Asian Countries: Lesson to be Learnt* Asia Review of Public Administration. Vol XI, no 2 Jul-Dec 1999, Cited in UNDP, *Combat Corruption*, p. 80.

²² Many useful examples have been provided in UNDP, *Institutional Arrangements to Combat Corruption: A Comparative Study*. (Bangkok: UNDP Regional Centre, 2005).

CONCLUSION:

Our mission and commitment to enhance integrity and to combat all forms of corruption should be a *jihad*, motivated by the worldview of Islam. This is because it is for the enhancement of our own stature with Allah Almighty to whom we are ultimately accountable, regardless of whether our efforts and struggles are properly perceived by others. If we are successful, perhaps some of the misconceptions and misperceptions about this great religion and its Ummah can be reduced so that Islam and the Muslims will be universally respected again.

At this point in time, it is possible that companies from non-Muslim nations would not be willing to seriously invest in our economies for an extended period of time, if people perceive that corruption is rampant and integrity is lacking in our respective countries. Perhaps this perception is also hampering intra-trading between Muslim nations. Even when large-scale natural and human crises occur within our nations, prospective contributors remain sceptical as to whether their contributions will reach the desired hands.

If we are not truly serious in this *jihad* against corruption of all forms and in enhancing integrity, the Qur'anic description of the elevated status of the Muslims that: "You are the best Ummah raised among mankind, you enjoin the good, forbid evil and believe in Allah SWT"²³ remains an echo from a glorious past, never again to be a reality.

²³ *Ali Imran* (3): 110.

Targeting “Terrorist Ideology”: Prospects and Pitfalls¹

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ABSTRACT:

Many government leaders, scholars and commentators call for counter-terrorism policies that include an 'ideological' approach. In broad terms, ideological approaches to combating terrorism involve initiatives to curb, refute or suppress the ideological factors supposed to be implicated in terrorist acts. One can distinguish different types of ideological approach and not all are problematic. However, this paper argues that several widely-endorsed ideological approaches are likely to be both ineffective and harmful, with the potential to damage both counter-terrorism objectives and some social-political agendas.

The first section of this paper describes the ideological approaches to defeating terrorism put forward by proponents in policy circles and shows that many define threatening ideologies very broadly, to include purist versions of Islam and hostility to the U.S. The second section shows that calls for an ideological approach frequently downplay or deny the grievances articulated by groups and individuals labelled as extremist or dangerously sympathetic to extremists. The third section explains how many ideological approaches rest on largely unproven assumptions about the causes of terrorism. Many ideological approaches are likely to backfire and risk creating

¹ This is a revised version of papers presented at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia's ISIS International Affairs Forum, 13 July 2007, and at the First Regional Workshop on “War Against Terrorism – People's Responses”, Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, 12-13 June 2006. I would like to thank Forum participants for their comments, but take full responsibility for the contents of this article.

further alienation and anger, in addition to jeopardising other agendas. The final section offers some alternatives."

As the global 'war on terror' has taken on an apparently unending cast, many government leaders, scholars and commentators have begun to call for counter-terrorism policies that include an 'ideological' approach. Ideological approaches to combating terrorism involve initiatives to curb, refute or suppress the ideological factors supposed to be implicated in terrorist acts. While intuitively appealing, this article argues that, as currently conceived, such approaches are likely to be both ineffective and harmful, with the potential to damage both counter-terrorism objectives and some social-political agendas.

This article begins with an examination of what those who advocate targeting 'terrorist ideology' actually mean by such an approach. It shows that proponents of taking an ideological approach to counter-terrorism define threatening ideologies very broadly, to include purist versions of Islam and hostility to the U.S. The second section shows that calls for an ideological approach frequently downplay or deny the grievances articulated by groups and individuals labelled as extremist or dangerously sympathetic to extremists. Many ideological approaches are thus likely to backfire and risk creating further alienation and anger, in addition to jeopardising other agendas. The final section offers some alternatives, making the case for more traditional counter-terrorism policies that emphasize police and intelligence work, along with concrete steps to address real grievances. The ideological component of counter-terrorism strategies should be limited to a narrow, focused application of laws prohibiting incitement to violence.

WHAT IS MEANT BY TARGETTING "TERRORIST IDEOLOGY"?

Calls for an ideological component to counter-terrorism strategies come from a wide variety of sources. Some prominent analysts working in the terrorism studies industry have proposed that the fight against terrorism be broad-based, and include an ideological component.² More scholarly and theorized accounts of

² For example, Rohan Gunaratna (2003), *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (revised edition), New York: Berkley Books; and (2005), 'Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism: Lessons from Combating Al Qaeda and Al jemaah Al Islamiyah in Southeast Asia.' CSRC Discussion Paper 5/42. Available at [www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Special/csrc_mpf.2005-10-17.5799702381/05\(53\).pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Special/csrc_mpf.2005-10-17.5799702381/05(53).pdf)2005.

terrorism which have identified religious factors as contributing to terrorist acts have also recommended ideological responses.³ And several policy-oriented analyses have also advocated targeting ideology and ideological ‘causes’ of terrorism as part of counter-terrorism strategy.⁴ In such analyses, is quite common to see the fight against terrorism depicted as struggle for ‘the soul of Islam’, and hence one that needs to take place in the realm of ideas and ideological influences.⁵

This perspective is endorsed at the highest levels of some governments, as leaders of countries at the forefront of the so-called global ‘war on terror’ have called in strong terms for ideological responses in a ‘war of ideas’ against the terrorists. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair presented this aspect of the war as crucial, and it has not been challenged by his successor. Blair argued in 2006 that, ‘terrorism will not be defeated until its ideas, the poison that warps the minds of its adherents, are confronted head-on’, echoing an earlier speech made shortly after the July 2005 London bombings, in which he claimed that:

‘What we are confronting here is an evil ideology. It is not a clash of civilisations—all civilised people, Muslim or other, feel revulsion at it. But it is a global struggle and it is a battle of ideas, hearts and minds, both within Islam and outside it.’⁶

United States President George W. Bush has frequently made similar claims. For example, in speech in November 2005 he maintained that, ‘The murderous ideology of the Islamic radicals is the great challenge of our new century.’ It was their extremist ideology that motivated terrorists, he said, as, ‘While the killers choose their victims indiscriminately, their attacks serve a clear and focused ideology—a set of beliefs and goals that are evil, but not insane.’⁷

³ For example, Kumar Ramakrishna (2004), ‘“Constructing” the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist: a preliminary enquiry’, Working Paper 71, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore; and (2005), ‘Deligitimizing Global Jihadi Ideology in Southeast Asia.’ *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27 (3): 343-69.

⁴ For example, Kim Cragin and Scott Gerwehr (2005), ‘Disuading Terror: Strategic Influence and the Struggle Against Terrorism.’ RAND Corporation. Available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG184.pdf.

⁵ For example, Barry Desker (2002), ‘Islam and society in Southeast Asia after September 11’, Working Paper No. 33, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, September.

⁶ Quoted in Tania Branigan (2006), ‘Challenging ideology of terrorists is key to foreign policy, says Blair.’ *Guardian*, 22 March; and BBC (2005), ‘Full text: Blair speech on terror.’ Available from www.bbc.co.uk.

⁷ Quoted in Howard Cincotta (2005), ‘Faith in Freedom Will Defeat Ideology of Terror, Bush Declares.’ 11 November. Available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/14-883226.html>.

In Southeast Asia, some government leaders and senior officials have defined the problem in the same terms. Thus, speaking in 2004, then Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong described the terrorist threat as stemming from ‘a religious ideology that is infused with an implacable hostility to all secular governments, especially the West, and in particular the U.S.’ His ‘most important conclusion’ was that, ‘Just as the Cold War was an ideological as well as a geopolitical struggle, the war against terrorism must be fought with ideas as well as with armies... Unless we win the battle of ideas, there will be no dearth of willing foot soldiers ready to martyr themselves for their cause.’⁸ A year later he maintained that ‘taking the battle for the soul of Islam to the terrorists’ was part of the ‘ideological struggle’ necessary to stem terrorism.⁹ As discussed further below, this declaratory emphasis on ideas as a key component in the fight against terrorism is not shared by all Southeast Asian leaders. Malaysian leaders, for example, have framed the problem in rather different terms.

Ideological approaches have an intuitive appeal. Whatever an ideological approach means, it sounds like something rather more benign than launching an invasion of a foreign country, aerial bombardment and indefinite detention of suspects in secret prisons and bases around the world, where torture and other abuses are known to have been employed.¹⁰ These military and coercive strategies employed in the American-led fight against terrorism have attracted both moral condemnation and charges that they do more to recruit potential terrorists than reduce the threat of terrorism. Studies carried out in Saudi Arabia and Israel, for example, that analyzed the backgrounds of those involved in violence in Iraq and attitudes since the invasion of Iraq have found that ‘most foreign fighters in Iraq were not terrorists before the Iraq war, but were “radicalized by the war” itself.’¹¹ Ideological approaches promise to at least offer an alternative to the failings of military strategies.

⁸ Goh Chok Tong (2004), ‘Beyond Madrid: Winning Against Terrorism.’ Speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, 6 May. Available from www.cfr.org.

⁹ Goh Chok Tong (2005), ‘After Amman: Uniting to Defeat Terrorism.’ Speech at the opening ceremony of East-West dialogue, Barcelona, 16 November. Available from www.mfa.gov.sg.

¹⁰ See, for example, Alfred McCoy (2006), *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation From the Cold War to the War on Terror*. New York: Owl Books.

¹¹ As reported in ‘Studies: War Radicalized Most Foreign Fighters in Iraq’, *Christian Science Monitor*, July 18, 2005.

Targetting terrorist ideology gains further appeal by claiming to be dealing with the problem at its roots, rather than simply confronting its consequences. Hence they can be presented as more far-sighted and effective than police and intelligence actions designed to catch terrorists. Ideological approaches hold out the promise of limiting the supply of potential terrorists, rather than reactively monitoring, arresting and punishing them after they have already emerged.

In reality, both of these apparently attractive features of ideological approaches are oversold and, in many applications, dangerous. Before enumerating the problematic assumptions and applications of ideological approaches, however, it is necessary to ask what exactly ideological approaches entail, in the view of those who propose them. In concrete terms, ideological approaches to fighting terrorism can mean a range of different things. Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain what exactly a particular proponent of taking an ideological strategy, or combating terrorism through a 'war of ideas', actually endorses in practice. What follows is an attempt to construct a picture of the measures involved, according to some of the principal advocates.

The first element of note is that virtually no-one advocates taking only an ideological approach, and some of those who have made the case for the 'war of ideas' in the strongest terms are also those who are actively engaged in carrying out other facets of the so-called war on terror. Hence the United States and key allies such as the United Kingdom both lead the military and intelligence actions justified under the banner of combating terrorism—such as the invasion of Afghanistan, the occupation of Iraq and the extra-legal imprisonment of suspects in Guantanamo and other bases abroad—and are outspoken advocates of ideological approaches. An ideological approach is therefore, in practice, proposed as an adjunct to other approaches, not as an alternative. In fact, as discussed below, in many forms ideological approaches can serve to augment the case for military and other physically coercive strategies.

If terrorism is the product of an 'evil ideology', what is this ideology? References to the 'ideology of suicide', the 'ideology of terrorism' or 'Al Qaeda's

ideology' are constantly repeated in current writings on terrorism.¹² What is this ideology? It could be interpreted narrowly, to mean attempts to promote and justify actual acts of suicide or terror. In fact, most proponents of targeting 'terrorist ideology' argue for an interpretation that is both broader and more specific than this. First, it is more specific than a general denunciation of suicide and terrorism, in being exclusively directed at terrorism carried out by Muslims in the name of Islam. While other terrorists may also be condemned in passing, the current focus of the 'war on terror' is with groups and individuals with a self-declared Islamic identity. Second, the interpretation of 'terrorist ideology' goes beyond justifications for actual acts of terror, to encompass a range of other beliefs, attitudes and goals.

What are these 'evil' beliefs, attitudes and goals? Very often, they appear in shorthand as 'radical' or 'extremist' Islam. In the words of Tony Blair, the struggle means 'not just arguing against their terrorism, but their politics and their perversion of religious faith.' According to him, such political and 'perverted' religious goals include the elimination of Israel and the establishment of Sharia law.¹³ Similarly, Singapore's then Prime Minister described the threatening religious ideology behind terrorism as aiming at the recreation of:

'the Islam of seventh century Arabia, which they regard as the golden age. Their ultimate goal is to bring about a caliphate linking all Muslim communities. Their means is jihad, which they narrowly define as holy war against all non Muslims, whom they call "infidels." The Arabs call this religious ideology *salafi*.'¹⁴

Support for Sharia law and Salafism thus appear, according to influential proponents of targetting terrorist ideology, as things to be defeated. As elaborated below, this morally unacceptable to many groups, who are likely to be alienated by leaders who take this approach.

¹² For a recent example, see Amitav Acharya and Arabinda Acharya (2007), 'The Myth of the Second Front: Localizing the 'War on Terror' in Southeast Asia.' *The Washington Quarterly* 30 (4): 75-90, which makes frequent reference to the notion of an Al Qaeda ideology, although local grievances are considered to be more important in motivating acts of terrorism in Southeast Asia.

¹³ See BBC (2005), 'Full text.'

¹⁴ Goh (2004), 'Beyond Madrid.'

American President George W. Bush has further identified such ‘helpers and enablers’ of terrorism, as ‘corrupted charities; intolerant strains of Islam; and elements of the Arab news media that feed on conspiracy theories and incites hatred and anti-Semitism.’¹⁵ Terrorist ideology is thus also taken to include other markers of radicalism, one of which is hostility to the west and, in particular, the United States and Israel, a construction that frequently occurs in scholarly analyses of terrorism.¹⁶ Paul Wolfowitz, for example, when serving as a senior member of the U.S. administration, claimed that victory over ‘the radical Islamic threat’ will require the West to ‘drain the swamp’ of disgruntled anti-Western Muslims.¹⁷ When the former British Prime Minister elaborated further on what he meant by challenging the ideology of terrorists he said: ‘I don’t mean telling them that terrorism is wrong. I mean telling them that their attitude to America is absurd, their concept of governance pre-feudal, their positions on women and other faiths, reactionary and regressive.’¹⁸

HOW IS A “TERRORIST IDEOLOGY” TO BE TARGETTED?

Another element in ideological strategies to combat terrorism that needs to be specified is how exactly is the battle of ideas to be carried out. This needs investigating at two levels, in terms of what is explicitly advocated and in terms of what actions this translates to in practice. What is advocated by proponents of an ideological approach is often vague but generally involves two broad lines of attack: one to counter the objectionable ideology and one to promote an alternative, preferred one. So how should the objectionable ideology be defeated? Frequently, concrete steps to this are not identified in policy speeches which limit themselves to describing the goal of confronting and defeating the ideology rather than specifying how this is to be done. In some versions, such as put forward by President Bush, faith in democracy and the future will just inevitably win out.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cincotta (2005), ‘Faith in Freedom.’

¹⁶ Natasha Hamilton-Hart (2005), ‘Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Expert Analysis, Myopia and Fantasy.’ *The Pacific Review* 18 (3): 303-325.

¹⁷ Quoted in Barry Desker and Kumar Ramakrishna (2002), ‘Forging an indirect strategy in Southeast Asia’, *The Washington Quarterly* 25(2): 161-176, 167.

¹⁸ Quoted in Branigan (2006), ‘Challenging ideology of terrorists.’

¹⁹ Cincotta (2005), ‘Faith in Freedom.’

Sometimes, advocates seem to call for open debate and refutation of deviant ideas by engaging their proponents in arguments through open contests in intellectual, religious and political arenas. Blair, for example, asserted that ‘it is by the power of argument, debate, true religious faith and true legitimate politics that we will defeat this threat’, and his government announced plans that included starting a debate to confront what they called ‘perverted’ versions of Islam.²⁰ Evidently, however, much of the objectionable ideology is beyond debate, as Blair also described challenging terrorism as, ‘a battle not just about the terrorist methods but their views. Not just their barbaric acts but their barbaric ideas. Not only what they do but what they think... No sane person would negotiate with them.’ In similar vein, Singapore’s Senior Minister described terrorism as a ‘war waged by fanatical Islamists against civilisation itself.’²¹ Descriptors such as barbaric, fanatical and uncivilised give away any pretence of debate – they imply there is no common ground or set of values on which the participants could agree, and therefore no hope of meaningful debate. It therefore follows that advocates of countering the ideology of terrorism mean that the ideology should be denounced, not debated. Recall that markers of this ideology are supposed to include Salafism, advocacy of Sharia law and hostility to the U.S., and thus it encompasses something much broader than advocacy of actual terrorist acts.

In tandem with denouncing or condemning objectionable versions of Islam, advocates of ideological approaches call for efforts to promote and disseminate moderate interpretations. There is wide agreement that both tasks—disputing ‘perverted’ or distorted versions of the faith and promoting proper views fall largely on members of the Muslim community. British anti-terrorism plans thus call for efforts to mobilize opinion and ensure that the ‘moderate voice of Islam’ prevails.²² ‘Moderate Muslims’ are constantly urged to speak up. Influential think tanks have argued for more resources and support to be channelled to moderate groups and countries.²³

²⁰ BBC (2005), ‘Full text’ and Michael White, Alan Travis and Duncan Campbell (2005), ‘Blair: Uproot this Ideology of Evil.’ *Guardian*, 14 July. et al. 2005).

²¹ Goh (2005), ‘After Amman.’

²² White, Travis and Campell (2005), ‘Blair: Uproot this Ideology of Evil.’

²³ Cragin and Gerwehr (2005), ‘Disuading Terror.’

In practice, these objectives have been pursued through a mixture of restrictive controls on objectionable views and dissemination of ‘appropriate’ views. The U.S. government is prevented by constitutional commitments to free speech from outright censorship domestically, but has used national security laws to prevent several Muslim intellectuals from entering the country—including scholars such as Tariq Ramdan, who has demonstrated commitment to inter-faith dialogue and understanding, but has also spoken out against U.S. foreign policy.²⁴ The U.S. government has carried out programmes to support the dissemination of desirable ideas directly, by establishing and funding television and news sources to air ‘moderate’ opinions and explain U.S. foreign policy. Through government aid and private foundations the U.S. has also channelled funds and other resources to ‘moderate’ groups in Muslim countries, including in Southeast Asia, and has directed aid to governments it describes as embodying ‘moderate Muslim’ views.

In countries where the legal framework is more accommodating, such as the United Kingdom, initiatives to combat ‘terrorist ideology’ have included tightening laws against ‘glorifying terrorism’, under which it is now a criminal offence to keep or write materials that the government considers to promote terrorism.²⁵ In 2007, the arrest of a young British woman for possession of ‘jihadist’ literature and poetry, and postings she had made on the internet gave some indication of how promoting terrorism could be interpreted. The U.K. has also passed laws to make it easier to keep those who incite hatred out of Britain and to deport those who are there, again in the interests of combating terrorist ideology.

In Southeast Asia, there have been a range of efforts and many exhortations to delegitimize terrorist ideology.²⁶ In practice, Singapore offers the most comprehensive example of concerted policy to suppress objectionable interpretations of Islam and promote favoured ones. Statements by the government board responsible for Muslim affairs, MUIS, on the risk of terrorism in Singapore outline a range of initiatives and systems to control the content and

²⁴ Abubakar Arman (2005), ‘Who is the ‘moderate Muslim’?’ *International Herald Tribune*, 11 November.

²⁵ White, Travis and Campell (2005), ‘Blair: Uproot this Ideology of Evil.’

²⁶ Ramakrishna (2005), ‘Delimiting Global Jihadi Ideology.’

delivery of religious teaching in the country.²⁷ To screen out extremist views, foreign preachers applying to enter the country must be approved by the immigration authorities, who ask for a seal of approval to be issued by MUIS. Islamic schools are subject to control by the government and numbers attending them are limited. MUIS also distributes sermons to be read at all mosques in the country, providing a further check on the dissemination of objectionable ideas and an opportunity to convey desirable ones. The governments of Singapore and Indonesia have also claimed some successes in ‘de-radicalising’ or ‘rehabilitating’ some suspected terrorists (in the case of Singapore) and some of those convicted of terrorism offences (in Indonesia).²⁸

Overall, therefore, most examples of ideological approaches in practice amount not to debate and dialogue but suppression of ideologies considered deviant or dangerous and promotion of preferred ideologies. Having defined an ideology as evil it is quite consistent to refuse to engage in debate with it. In fact, it is reasonable to maintain that engaging in a debate over an evil creed is not just fruitless, but wrong, as it might imply that there could be reasonable grounds for holding contrary opinions on these topics. The problem with ideological responses to terrorism is not only do they treat ‘terrorism’ as a clear-cut category of action that is necessarily and wholly evil, they go beyond targeting acts to condemn, in equally uncompromising terms, large sections of religious belief and some widespread political attitudes.

TARGETING IDEOLOGY: IGNORING GRIEVANCES?

By constructing the terrorist threat as something driven by a deviant ideology, leading proponents of ideological counter-terrorism strategies are able to deny that concrete grievances have anything to do with the problem. Not only is the opposing ideology barbaric, it is not a product of any grievance that could be understood in non-fanatical terms. In practice this frequently means denying that the foreign policies of the United States and its allies have contributed to the development of anti-U.S. hostility, destabilized societies or supported repressive

²⁷ MUIS (Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura) (2003) ‘Response to the White Paper on Jemaah Islamiyah.’ 10 January. Available at www.muis.gov.sg/english/Media_Releases/MR2003JAN17_1.aspx?pMenu=62003

²⁸ International Crisis Group (2007), ‘Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons.’ Asia Report No. 142, 19 November.

regimes, all of which could be associated with the emergence of terrorism. Further, it has been taken to imply a need to support foreign policy initiatives such as the war in Iraq, as an integral part of the effort to defeat not just terrorists but terrorist ideology.

British and American leaders have denied any role for legitimate grievances in the genesis of the terrorist threat, and this has been explicitly linked to their construction of terrorism as something with ideological roots. The former British Prime Minister, for example, has insisted that, 'We must reject the thought that somehow we are the authors of our own distress.' In fact, in his view, those who condemned terrorism but accepted that it had been prompted by the invasion of Iraq were encouraging extremism by pandering to it.²⁹ According to him, if terrorists articulate grievances, this is merely extremist propaganda which 'exploits the tendency to guilt of the developed world, as if it is our behaviour that should change... Their cause is not founded on an injustice. It is founded on a belief, one whose fanaticism is such that it cannot be moderated.'³⁰

This denial of any legitimate grievance mirrors almost exactly the position espoused by George W. Bush. In his view, grievances figure only as convenient rationales and subjects for manipulation, as terrorist networks 'thrive like parasites on the suffering and frustration of others.' Terrorists 'manipulate local conflicts, create a culture of victimization, and exploit resentful young people by recruiting them as pawns of terror.' He strongly denied that the United States was at all implicated: 'No act of ours invited the rage of killers—and no concession, bribe, or act of appeasement would change or limit their plans for murder.'³¹

In Southeast Asia, there is greater readiness to accept that real grievances do matter, even among those who argue for targeting what they see as the ideological drivers of terrorism. For example, Singapore's former Prime Minister has said that moderating Muslim views of the U.S. 'is essential if the ideological battle is to be won', but he argued this would not be achieved through propaganda efforts, as

²⁹ Branigan (2006), 'Challenging ideology of terrorists.'

³⁰ BBC (2005), 'Full Text.'

³¹ Cincotta (2005), 'Faith in Freedom.'

'the real issue is political policies, not public relations', citing the U.S. position on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.³² However, a year later he explicitly linked success in the struggle to supporting American military actions and presence in Iraq, as it was, 'a major front in the global struggle. The terrorists seek to achieve a demonstration effect there. If the American-led coalition and the democratically-elected Iraqi Government are defeated, terrorists all around the world will be emboldened.'³³ Not only does this position distort the nature of Iraqi opposition to the U.S. presence by conflating all opposition with acts of terrorism, the claims of Singapore's Senior Minister stand in contrast with many academic accounts which have linked the emergence of terrorism with longstanding patterns of U.S. and western foreign policy.³⁴

Other Southeast Asian leaders have taken a very different position on the issue of how grievances are linked to terrorism. Malaysia's former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, likened defeating terrorism to Malaysia's defeat of its communist insurgency, which succeeded because: 'we identified the causes for their disaffection and remedied them.' The picture of terrorism he presents is starkly different from those leading the call for defeating terrorist ideology: 'While we must condemn their acts of terror we must strive to understand the reasons for their anger and their reactions, irrational though they may be. We have to understand if we are going to tackle the problem. The terrorists of today are not wild-eyed, illiterate fanatics who merely obey the orders of their evil leaders. They are educated, well-off, normal people with wives and families to love and look after.'³⁵

Mahathir's successor, Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, has similarly maintained that grievances are more than simply material for propaganda and manipulation, they directly inspire anger and in some cases destructive action. In line with supporters of ideological approaches he has maintained that defeating terrorism cannot be achieved by military and coercive approaches alone. But rather than targeting ideology or pursuing ideological means, he has drawn a

³² Goh (2004), 'After Madrid.'

³³ Goh (2005), 'After Amman.'

³⁴ For example, Tariq Ali (2002), *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*. London: Verso.

³⁵ Mahathir Mohamad (2002), 'Islam, Terrorism and Malaysia's Response.' Speech to the Asia Society, New York, 4 February. Available at www.asiasociety.org/speeches/mahathir.html.

different lesson, again based on Malaysia's experience with its communist insurgency:

'We learnt that we could never defeat the enemy without addressing and neutralizing the factors that drove people to take up arms... We cannot defeat it without tackling the root cause and the grievances that nourished the movement. This is the "hearts and minds" battle strategy.' On the current terrorist threat, he argued that, 'So long as we continue to deny or to confuse the issues in order to avert attention from the real issues, insurgency and terrorism will persist... We must resolve the issues of Palestine and Iraq with careful thought and reasoning. We must end unlawful occupation, injustice, oppression and marginalisation of peoples wherever they exist.'³⁶

At least at the level of declaratory principle, therefore, it can be seen that Malaysia's approach to winning 'hearts and minds' rests on a fundamentally different diagnosis of the problem and a different view of the factors driving terrorism.

IS "IDEOLOGY" A CAUSE OF TERRORISM? CAN IT BE TARGETED EFFECTIVELY?

Ideological approaches to defeating terrorism identify ideological factors as significant independent drivers of terrorist behaviour. This section argues that such causal reasoning is in itself problematic, as well as laying the ground for dangerous applications. We do not, of course, have any uncontroversial theory as to the causes of terrorism, but we do have reasons to be wary of approaches that take individual commitment to a political or religious ideology as a precipitating factor worthy of being targeted.

At the most basic level, such approaches suffer from the problem the religious ideology they target is far more widely supported than terrorist behaviour itself. There is a wide area of overlap between the *goals* of groups labelled as terrorist and goals valued by many non-violent groups in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, some

³⁶ Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2006), Speech at the launch of the book "The Malayan Emergency Revisited 1948-1960", Kuala Lumpur, 9 May. Available at www.pmo.gov.my.

of whom should be labelled as dissidents, separatists or simply social activists, not terrorists.³⁷ As shown in the previous section, 'terrorist ideology' has been interpreted as including support for Salafism, Sharia law and purist revivals of Islam, as well anti-American anger and hostility to secular government. In these interpretations, which have been espoused by some influential power-holders, 'terrorist' beliefs and goals are thus shared by large numbers of non-terrorists. The beliefs may indeed be a 'risk factor' for terrorist behaviour, but they clearly do not predict it with any certainty at all. Targeting these beliefs is thus the equivalent of carpet-bombing a wide area in order to wipe out a single target.

The problem with carpet-bombing is not only that it is inefficient. Far more seriously, the collateral damage it involves tends to escalate hostility and undermine support for those doing the bombing. Ideological counter-terrorism approaches, as formulated by policymakers at the forefront of the war on terror, do just this. With their expansive definition of what is a deviant ideology, they create new enemies beyond the actual perpetrators of terrorist acts. They have announced their hostility to Muslims who describe themselves as Salafy, and to many others whose beliefs would qualify them as 'fundamentalist' or 'radical' in the eyes of those proposing ideological approaches. By denouncing hostility to the U.S. as 'rubbish', to use Tony Blair's term, not only are these proponents declaring debate over U.S. foreign policy to be illegitimate, they are extending the circle of potential 'deviants' even further. Far from gaining support for anti-terrorist strategies, this approach seems almost designed to alienate and anger substantial sections of the Muslim population. While this does not automatically translate into actual support for terrorism, it does taint the 'war on terror' and create grounds for an unwillingness to support it.

It also has the potential to strengthen terrorist groups themselves by confirming their most potent claim, the notion that Islam is under attack. By targeting the ideology of groups accused of terrorism, proponents of ideological strategies are providing evidence that they are hostile to Islam and that the war on

³⁷ For example, David Wright-Neville (2004), 'Dangerous dynamics: activists, militants and terrorists in Southeast Asia', *The Pacific Review* 17(1): 27-46.

terror is a war against Muslims. Claims of fundamental antagonism between the true adherents of Islam and the infidel world circulate prominently in the literature and worldviews of groups associated with terrorism and individuals who have been accused of terrorism. Presenting their cause as defensive and their religion itself, as well its adherents, as besieged are key elements of what has been called 'jihadi ideology', and the idea that Islam is under attack is a constant refrain not only in the 'global jihad' associated with al-Qaeda, but also among Southeast Asian groups associated with terrorism.³⁸ Of course, proponents of ideological approaches take pains to argue that they are not hostile to Islam, but to deviant interpretations of it – and that their efforts are directed to strengthening the 'true face' of Islam. However, what they have defined as deviant, their opponents have defined as true and faithful to the demands of their religion. Both sides declare that they hold the correct version of the faith, so by making religious beliefs the object of struggle, ideological responses to terrorism fulfil the predictions of those who believe that Islam is under attack.

Attempting to delegitimize radical ideology carries another danger. By systematically promoting as Muslim community leaders and teachers only those whose views on the Iraq war, American foreign policy, capitalism and the role of religion in government qualify them as 'moderate', or at least not 'radical', this approach narrows the options facing Muslims and marginalizes those who are dissatisfied with the status quo. Just as many scholarly accounts of terrorism define 'moderate' in these terms, so in policy and political circles it is, 'Muslim thinkers and activists who are apathetic or oblivious, or are supportive of the status quo are readily embraced as "moderates" while others, regardless of how moderate or liberal they might be, are declared radicals or terrorist sympathizers.'³⁹ This contributes to a crisis of leadership within the community. Young Muslims angry at injustice, corruption or support for what they perceive to be an illegitimate war do not find mentors and teachers whom they can respect among the 'moderates' targeted for enlistment in the war on terror.

³⁸ On Al Qaeda see, Faisal Devji (2005), *Landscapes of the Jihad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; On Jemaah Islamiyah, see Greg Barton (2005), *Jemaah Islamiyah: Radical Islamism in Indonesia*. Singapore: Ridge Books.

³⁹ Arman (2005), 'Who is the 'moderate Muslim?'; Hamilton-Hart (2005), 'Terrorism in Southeast Asia.'

Hardline religious purists are not going to be won over by advocates of 'liberal Islam', who in fact occupy a minority position in many Muslim countries. For example, while a proponent of winning the 'battle for the soul of Islam' in Indonesia might see counter-terrorism as a contest between 'liberal' and 'literal' Islam, the majority ground is very far from the views advocated by the country's Liberal Islam Network, which has been strongly condemned not just by 'hardline' groups but by major Muslim organizations and the national ulemas council.⁴⁰

If indeed 'fundamentalist' religious views make an individual susceptible to terrorism then it would make sense to enlist the support of those who have status among such believers to convince them of the proper interpretation of jihad or the illegitimacy of suicide bombing in scriptural terms. In purist circles, most of the moderate Muslim thinkers targeted for enlistment in the war on terror have absolutely no credibility; it is those in the Salafy community whose opinions could be persuasive.⁴¹ This of course is impossible, however, as long as those advocating an ideological approach include Salafism and support for Sharia as components of a terrorist ideology.

Attempting to delegitimize the goals, rather than just the tactics, of those accused of terrorism necessarily means pushing those who favour such goals to the margins of society and denying them any place in mainstream politics. This might be appropriate if terrorist behaviour sprang straightforwardly from a set of beliefs, as the tactic of first resort for holders of particular religious views. But this is clearly not the case for the majority of groups which have been labelled as terrorist both in the contemporary era and historically—most have used terrorist tactics when denied the opportunity to pursue their goals through other means, or as a calculated move to achieve specific aims in contexts where they face overwhelming conventional force.⁴²

⁴⁰ Desker (2002), 'Islam and society in Southeast Asia.'

⁴¹ International Crisis Group (2004), 'Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix', 13 September, ICG Asia Report No. 83, available at www.crisisweb.org.

⁴² Philip Jenkins (2003), *Images of Terror: What We Can and Cannot Know About Terrorism*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

In Southeast Asia, groups associated with terrorism in at least some accounts, from separatists in Southern Thailand and Mindanao in the Philippines to militants fighting in communal conflicts and open advocacy groups such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's Mujahidin Council (MMI) in Indonesia, a clear distinction can be made between these groups political and religious goals and their choice of tactics, which have included a repertoire of different strategies for achieving their ends depending on context and opportunities.⁴³

To the extent that terrorist tactics are an option of second, third or last resort, marginalization increases the likelihood that terrorism is employed, out of desperation, anger and frustration. Of course, if a group's goals are completely incompatible with those of the society in which they live frustration and alienation are likely, since civil and non-violent methods are unlikely to further their agenda.⁴⁴ But in the case of what has been described as 'terrorist ideology' in the current era, many of its elements actually resonate quite widely. It is perhaps telling that one alarmist account of the rise of Indonesia's Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) has presented the party as embracing the Islamist ideology of contemporary terrorists.⁴⁵ This account views the PKS as 'more dangerous' than the militant Jemaah Islamiyah, the group credited with the major terror attacks in Southeast Asia, because 'its apparent moderation is deceptive.' It argues that, from its position inside the government, the PKS threatens to put Indonesia on the 'same fundamentalist path that terrorist bombs tried to bring about.' Somewhere lost in this account is the fact that PKS has shown every sign of remaining within the law, operates according to the rules of Indonesia's democracy and has never advocated or supported the use of terrorist tactics or indeed of any form of unlawful violence. As a political party operating within the democratic system, the PKS has been able to give voice to an important

⁴³ Notable accounts include Tim Behrend (2003), 'Reading Past the Myth: Public Teachings of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir.' Available from www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/staff/index.cfm?S=STAFF_tbeh002; John Sidel (2006), *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Noorhaidi Hasan (2006), *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University.

⁴⁴ Wright-Neville (2004), 'Dangerous Dynamics.'

⁴⁵ Sadanand Dhume (2005), 'Indonesian Democracy's Enemy Within.' *YaleGlobal Online*, 1 December.

section of opinion.⁴⁶ Denying its legitimacy will not only be ineffective, it is almost certain to be counter-productive, as driving the aspirations it expresses underground is more likely to result in less civil modes of expression.

This does not mean that there is no place for promoting religious teachings and attitudes that seek to replace dogmatism with nuanced understanding, tolerance and openness to secular education. Depending, of course, on one's normative position, there is much to gain from developing and promoting a vision of Islam that is inclusive, progressive and open to internal contestation and debate. But if this is a desirable vision—for moral, religious, social, economic and political reasons—it makes it all the more prudent to divorce religious education from counter-terrorism initiatives. Current ideological approaches to combating terror are irredeemably tainted, both in terms of their content and their association with some of the most repugnant aspects of the war on terror. Formulations that promote peaceful and progressive religious values such as 'Islam Hadhari' in Malaysia or 'A Muslim Community of Excellence' in Singapore are worthwhile in themselves, and risk becoming tainted by association if pressed into service as explicit elements in the war on terror.

BETTER ALTERNATIVES

In this concluding section I offer some alternatives to the kind of ideological approaches described above. Rather than a focus on ideology, counter-terrorism strategies that focus on acts and concrete preparations for violence should take centre stage. This paper has argued that there is little prospect of separating terrorists from non-terrorists in terms of their religious ideology per se, even if it is the case that 'fundamentalist' religious views characterize those accused of terrorism. On this score, it is worth noting that many of those recruited as foot soldiers to carry out acts of terrorism have not been deeply immersed in any religious milieu, so it is clearly not the case that an extreme form of religiosity marks all terrorists. What more clearly separates terrorists from non-terrorists is

⁴⁶ Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy (2005) *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*, Lowy Institute Paper 05, Alexandria, NSW: Longueville Media for the Lowy Institute for International Policy; James Fox (2004), 'Currents in contemporary Islam in Indonesia', paper presented at Harvard Asia Vision 21, 29 April – 1 May, Cambridge, Mass.

not a function of any type of religious ideology but an attitude towards violence and the capacity to carry out acts of violence, and it is these factors which should be targeted in counter-terrorism strategies.

Largely, this can be done through conventional counter-terrorist strategies: police and intelligence work to identify, monitor and interrupt the actions of groups and individuals planning to engage in acts of violence. Evidence of preparing for, or advocating, concrete acts should be the focus of this kind of investigation, not thoughts or beliefs. With a very few exceptions, it is access to bomb-making materials, not books, that should be disrupted. It is the capacity to plan and execute acts of violence that should be disturbing from a counter-terrorism perspective, not broader world views or religious habits.

Addressing grievances is also another important area for attention, even if it is the case that for some terrorists these grievances function largely at the symbolic level, and hence even if the major injustices were dealt with there would no doubt still be terrorism. But resolute action to reduce the reasons for anger and frustration arising out of conflicts over Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya and other conflict areas—including in Southeast Asia's insurgencies and communal conflicts—can only reduce the pool of disaffected, angry and desperate individuals from which terrorists may emerge. In the case of the Southeast Asian conflicts, this means attention to issues of governance, justice and the political manipulation of communal conflicts.⁴⁷

Does this mean there is no role for any ideological approach? Explicit exhortations to carry out acts of indiscriminate violence, and deliberate and extreme propagation of inter-group hatred should certainly be delegitimized by both government and community organizations. If there is silence from those in positions of public or social authority in the face extreme, deliberate hate-mongering and incitement to violence, those who advocate such acts may gain an

⁴⁷ Mohamed Jawhar Hassan (2007), 'Terrorism, Insurgency and Religious Fundamentalism in Southeast Asia.' Paper presented at the 9th Asian Security Conference, New Delhi, 9-10 February. Available at www.isis.org.my/files/pubs/papers/TERRORISM_INSURGENCY_AND_RELIG_FUND.pdf; Sidel (2006), *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*; Acharya and Acharya (2007), 'The Myth of the Second Front.'

implicit legitimacy. There is little danger of this happening. Muslim authorities and institutions of many stripes—including groups that would be labelled as ‘radical’ in several accounts—have been actively engaged on this score. Few religious leaders or groups of any stature openly condone terrorism and by far the majority condemn most acts of terrorism.

What seems to be unsatisfactory in the eyes of those who urge the Muslim community to do more—a repeated theme pressed by advocates of confronting ‘terrorist ideology’—is that while there was near universal condemnation of acts such as the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 and the bombings in Bali and Madrid, there is equivocation, in some quarters, when it comes to suicide bombings by Palestinians and others in conflict areas, where these tactics can be argued to be the ‘poor man’s’ response to overwhelming force and major injustice. They may be condemned while simultaneously expressing some empathy with the perpetrators and support for their cause. They may be condemned while simultaneously condemning the apparent double standards of countries leading the ‘war on terror’, which has inflicted a civilian death toll far higher than that attributable to non-state terrorists. These are unavoidable issues confronting attempts to delegitimize terrorism. Unfortunately, those who lead in advocating targeting terrorist ideology have raised their sights against an elastic category of beliefs labelled ‘radical Islam’, while ignoring grey areas and perhaps unwelcome comparisons. If effective counter-terrorism is the goal, this is the wrong target.

Government Aims for Reconciliation in Thailand's South: Can the Sufficiency Concept Be Part of the Solution?

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ABSTRACT:

During the latter hours of 2006 explosions rocked downtown Bangkok, coupled with the deadly violence that continues to plague the southern part of Thailand. This convinced the government to continue following a course of action that departs radically from the hard line followed by the previous government of former Prime Minister Thaksin. The current effort is directed towards reconciliation and focuses on bringing about peace and security throughout the Kingdom's five southern-most provinces. These goals can be attained only if real, sustainable and shared economic growth and development

exist throughout the region. In the government's pursuit of economic progress, the Sufficiency Economy strategy has been proposed as a general foundation upon which community-based, sustainable material progress can be forthcoming. The strategy is important in general terms: it is an abstract roadmap that features grassroots development at the local, community and family levels wherein all people are free to pursue economic development. However, it lacks the specifics that Thailand's One Tambon One Product (OTOP) programme contains. Combining elements of each within an environment of reasonable stability offers a basis for pursuing material progress.

Keywords: Southern Thailand, Insurrection, Government, Reconciliation, Sufficiency

INTRODUCTION

Following the bombings that racked Bangkok during the New Year's Eve period of 2007, an immediate assumption shared by most Thais, was that the bombings reflected an extension of the violence that has plagued the country's south. Not only were government officials concerned about violence spreading to Bangkok and to other parts of the Kingdom, but there remained grave concern that if the violence was not contained, it could come to have regional and global linkages to insurrections taking place elsewhere.

The connection with southern violence was premature because, upon investigation, the bombs that racked the capital city were devices that did not match what had been used in the south and eventually non-southerners were identified as the suspected perpetrators. They were likely disgruntled Thais who continue to support Mr. Thaksin and who were frustrated with his departure and the demise of his political party, the Thai Rak Thai (TRT).

The story about the bombings gave the *Post* the opportunity to make the point that the military coups of 19 September 2006 could be a turning point in the government's strategy to deal with the violence that caused approximately 3,500 deaths since 2000, and 1,800 since 2004 and which tragically continues at a rate of two or three deaths per day. Bombings and other attacks persist on physical structures including schools, hotels, airport facilities, bus stations,

government buildings and military structures. Serious and dangerous frustrations persist throughout the south. Frustration is not only among extremists who are committed to separation from the Kingdom, but it is rampant among others throughout southern communities—particularly on the part of younger people—who are angry over relatively limited opportunities that they see before them in the form of education and economic opportunities. (*Bangkok Post*, 2007)

The previous administration followed a hard line against all southern ‘dissidents’ without making an effort to find out what caused their frustrations. The previous administration focused almost exclusively on acts of violence and nearly completely ignored whether dissident acts were based on valid complaints and on the lack of methods of expressing their frustrations in politically effective ways. For example, after Prime Minister Thaksin won re-election in a landslide victory (excluding the Kingdom’s southern parliamentary districts) he identified certain “red star villages” located in these districts and deprived Thai citizens living in them of support under the country’s national village development programme. In addition, he gave police and the military authority to take harsh measures that ultimately included taking the lives of many people—some of whom were shot while protesting and others who were smothered as they were stacked in trucks and taken to prison outside the southern part of the country. The policies of the Thaksin regime only engendered more antagonism and frustrations resulting in persistent anti-government violence. (Curry 2005, 1-12).

The current government has taken far less radical and more measured steps and actually has sought to bring about national conciliation. First, it created the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC) which allows, and indeed promotes police, government administrative personnel and soldiers to work with local people and their institutions to try to create peace throughout the region. Second, government dismissed some cases involving ‘suspected’ protestors/dissidents, respected Islamic leaders and known separatists who appear not to be violent. Third, the current government approved a special economic development plan for the Kingdom’s five southern-most provinces. (*Bangkok Post*, 2007)

The plan aims at bringing about peace through sustained and broad-based economic development throughout the southern region via sincere efforts on the

part of the government. However, predictably, radical elements in the south are countering with more hostile and cruel acts of violence against local people (both Buddhists and Muslims) as well as government representatives, even teachers. The *Bangkok Post* reported that “security officials argued that these violent actions are the last resort of separatist movements that are being defeated by the government’s peaceful solution, and the government must be patient enough to overcome them or else it could face a huge loss.” (*Bangkok Post*, 2007)

Government patience is exhaustible—current Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont recently said that “my government is insisting on a peaceful solution to resolve the problem, but if the situation is not improved in the next three months, the government may have to adjust the strategy.” (*Bangkok Post*, 2007) An adjustment could spell the end of reconciliation as an over-riding public policy strategy, and a reversion towards the failed approach employed by the Thaksin government.

There is great urgency in bringing about economic progress in the south. Not only can violence move out of the south to other parts of the Kingdom, but the south could be a seed-bed in which external Islamic extremist elements can find support for their specific versions of *jihad*. Writers at the *Post* sense this urgency; in a subsequent article they cautioned that continuing violence and political uncertainty continue to threaten the government’s economic development plans that are meant to lessen the frustrations upon which radical insurgency in the south are based. Knowledgeable observers are of the opinion that southerners, “...many of who are rubber tappers and farmers should move to a sufficiency economy rather than rely on rubber sales, tourism and state promises of tax breaks to attract investors to special economic development zones in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Satun. Businessmen (and women) and economic experts in the South believe the concept could be easily applied in the south if insurgents stop fanning the flames of unrest.” (*Bangkok Post*, 2007)

The sufficiency economy strategy has become an integral part of many aspects of the government’s national economic policies. The purpose herein is to go beyond the concept’s basic requirement and explain in detail sufficiency’s essence to an essentially non-Thai audience and to argue for its programmatic applicability to the south. Whether that applicability will become possible remains a question—one

based on the ability of the current government to overcome the mistakes of its predecessor administration in the face of the mounting violence that the Thaksin regime helped to engender.

Economic development is difficult to bring about and fostering material improvement requires a serious and sustainable commitment in the form of economic and technical assistance as well as flows of needed resources. Within this context, in addition to a sufficiency economy approach, other elements of the government's strategy must include providing more educational opportunities for young southerners, providing additional technical and financial official government assistance to projects that will strengthen the physical infrastructure through the southern provinces, and encouraging additional private sector investments into the region.

THE SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY STRATEGY

The sufficiency economy concept is associated with the work of Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej. It is administered by the Sufficiency Economy Unit of the National Economic and Social Development Board (Piboolsravut 2004, 127-134). The concept's two-fold theme holds that Thailand should pursue independence in economic sectors where it has resource bases and comparative advantages and limit, to the extent possible, reliance on the global economy. It also embraces the need for community participation based upon individual freedom so that families, without exclusion, can be part of community-based, grass roots efforts to improve human skills, strengthen worker attributes and improve both market participation and access. The Sufficiency Economy strategy provides a 'road-map' to national development that is based upon grass roots, community-based and family involved creation of local institutions that enhance village labour's ability to contribute to national development. (Panthesen 1999)

The concept's initial essence was articulated in the Royal Speech of December 1974 in which His Majesty warned that economic development must be done step by step and should begin by strengthening the country's economic foundation in order to assure that the majority have enough on which to live. Once reasonable progress has been made, people should pursue more advanced levels of economic development but *only if* advanced and rapid economic growth

is the type that is appropriate for all people *and* the strength of the country. If not, it will inevitably result in imbalances, which will lead to socio-economic failures that, in turn, will result in crises. (Royal Speech 1974)

The King expanded upon his warnings in the Royal Speech given in 1994. Based upon the ideas it contained in 1999, during the onset of the Thai (and Asian) financial crisis, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) called upon some of Thailand's leading social thinkers to construct a more precise definition of the concept. Their definition began with the contention that the concept applies to conduct at the family, community and national levels. Via the influence of Buddhist thinking, the group agreed that sufficiency calls for moderation, reasonableness, prudence and moral fibre at all these three levels of society, particularly on the part of political and public officials, businessmen and women and academicians who are in responsible positions. However, leaders must at all times understand that the concept's effective implementation requires the full participation of each person who is both politically and economically free to pursue what is in the interest of families, communities and the nation. (Royal Speech 1994)

Sufficiency also requires that leaders and people generally possess the breadth and thoroughness of knowledge necessary that enables them to plan and implement local initiatives that are moderate, reasonable and flexible. It also requires that honesty, diligence, integrity and a commitment to sharing govern the planning and implementation processes. Sufficiency supporters argue that the concept's principles should be applied to the proper management of land and marine resources. Proper management embraces the idea that local community resources should be used wisely in order to enhance the material lives of people living within the community.

The application of these principles is referred to as 'The New Theory of Agriculture' wherein the thematic purpose of the New Theory, then, is to improve the general well-being via enhancing the productive attributes of human beings in putting into use their local resource base. This is done by developing more self-reliance through more effective management of the land and other physical resources, by seeking improved access to financial capital, and by integrating them with the use of local physical and human resources. (Wong Cha-Sum 2001)

Effective land management is the key variable and its economic resilience is based upon land tenure rights, self-reliance and sustainability. This requires a holistic (*viz.*, an integrated-thematic) approach to land management where practices have multiple benefits to those who work the land and/or who process its products. Among these practices is the use of inter-relationships like insect and weed control, water and soil management, integrating livestock and crop production and the use of non-crop species of plants for nutrient cycling and soil protection. Beyond the technical aspects, sufficiency mandates a holistic social approach that begins at the grass-roots level. It features collaborative and cooperative activities that are often in the form of productive enterprises such as cooperatives, community savings groups, community education and health-care centres. It also favours creating safety nets for groups with special needs such as older citizens and single parents—often young women. These include a cluster of business development in the same locality with similar activities so that economies of scale might be achieved. (Eaeswriwong 2000, 78-86)

Sufficiency-based efforts are local, which necessitates that community leaders reach out nationally to established financial institutions for funding, to proven channels of market access and to public service sectors whose missions are to generate local employment and income-earning opportunities. In order to take optimal advantage of the holistic technical and social linkages, a Community Development Plan (CDP) must be put into place so that community members can organise a consultative committee in order to acquire and share information. A CDP must explore information and knowledge that point out how to proceed based upon community meetings. This allows all to participate in a discussion about what should be done; it would be an example of democracy in action because the idea is to attempt to encourage each member of the community to be part of the decision-making process. (Piboolsravut 2004, 127-134; and Piboolsravut and Nakorn 2003; and Wasi 1999)

In effect, the Sufficiency Economy concept provides a roadmap toward economic development that is broad-based in its outcome in terms of distribution, grass-roots in its organisation and open to all. Participation in economic activities is encouraged at the local and community levels in which all are free to pursue the economic interests of individuals, families and communities. The essence of

participation is wise decision-making based upon knowledge and honesty on the part of community leaders. These are general themes and they coincide with the structures of society and economy and the principles of the culture that is shared by people who live throughout the country's south.

THE MEANING OF SUFFICIENCY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Two lingering questions are directed at the practicality of the Sufficiency Economy strategy. First, the question of precisely what does this very general and broad-based concept mean; and second, is the strategy practical; that is, can it be implemented? During the past year a substantial number of official and/or academic meetings have been held with the intention of giving more direct meaning to the general sufficiency concept. From these discussions, a consensus is emerging on precisely what the concept means, but a precise and specific meaning remains elusive. With this limitation in mind, the following is a list of four main points that lie at the heart of the consensus.

First, sufficiency is a middle way between a complete dedication to globalisation and an absolute rejection of the phenomenon. At issue is the degree of either accepting or rejecting the consequences of the terms and balance of import and export trade, the nature and impact of direct foreign investments, and the effects of flows of private financial capital and official development assistance. Sufficiency calls for the application of knowledge to decisions that have to do with the optimum combination of global and local economic and financial activities. This means using local resources when doing so exploits any comparative advantages that are inherent in local resources and using resources from the global economy when no such local advantages exist. An optimum set of decisions are not either/or but rather they are the best possible combination of using local and external resources. (*The Chaipattana Foundation Journal*, 2000)

Second, sufficiency strives for moderation in terms of seeking the optimum and not necessarily the maximum size of enterprises where optimum size is limited by long term economies of scale. The idea is not to grow beyond what is required to reach optimality and also to avoid exposure to risks associated with excess growth that could result in excessive losses during downward market cycles. (*The Nation* 2006)

Third, sufficiency stresses harmony among employers, managers, workers, market competitors and economic and financial regulators. The idea is to stress amity and to avoid enmity among all actors (that is, participants) in economic processes. Within the context of sufficiency, management plays an important role in the practice of harmony. The rational management of such factors as the sound management of all economic variables ranging from assuring flows of supplies of physical goods, maintaining the availability of financial assets and blending the interests of works whose workplace attributes are essential in the pursuit of productivity.

Fourth, a related aspect of sufficiency is the pursuit of optimal 'immunity' from risks that arise from unforeseen threats to sources of supply of needed financial and physical resources. (Krongkaew 2003, 1-5)

One clear example of rationality and immunity is the case of the Siam Cement Company, one of Thailand's largest corporations and a company that was battered during the financial crisis of 1997 through 1999. It was the victim of currency devaluation, interruptions in the stream of financial resources, losses of internal and external markets and rising costs due to slowdowns in productivity. Following the crisis, the company began to act in ways that were consistent with the sufficiency strategy. It sought moderation by reducing its size via selling off its non-core and less profitable units. The remaining units provided a harmonious core of activities and, as a result, the company's lines of commerce became more rational, more manageable (particularly in risky undertakings) and more immune from unexpected external shocks than it had been during the pre-crisis era when the company pursued more irrationally aggressive investments. By practising moderation in the range of its activities, Siam Cement became a more profitable company due to its management's decision to practise the principles contained in the Sufficiency Economy strategy.¹

¹ Limsamarnphun, Nophakhun. Sufficiency economics: goal is human happiness
<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2006/06/25/opinion/opinion_3007235.php;
see also, It's time to drop those preconceptions about a sufficiency economy
<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2006/10/08/opinion/opinion_30015651.php

THE ONE TAMBON ONE PRODUCT PROGRAMME

It is clear that Siam Cement's record suggests a useful role for sufficiency to play in the re-organisation of the South's economic structure. However, sufficiency is a general concept that warns against irrational size and scope of particular business structures and practices. Its general nature needs to be supplemented by more concrete ideas and programmes. A promising programme that can be implemented throughout the South is the Royal Thai Government's One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme. The government designed and sponsored the OTOp programme starting in the 2000 to 2002 period. Its essential aim is to promote the establishment of local enterprises in communities throughout the lower income parts of the Kingdom. It is an innovative concept that relies on the success of private sector enterprises to be the instrument via which government pursues a national development strategy.

OTOPs are found throughout the country's villages (or *tambons*) in northern and eastern provinces. The government agencies which are responsible for the OTOp scheme begin their activities by encouraging local communities to form private sector enterprises aimed at financing, producing and marketing products made locally—both for domestic and export markets. Finished products are made from local resources to the extent that those resources exist, and they are designed, made and sold primarily by local Thai. OTOps cover six categories of products which include fresh and processed food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, clothes and garments made from natural and mixed fibres, ornamental products such as hats, bags, scarves and necklaces, decorative and handcraft items and herbal products made from natural ingredients. (Department of Community Development 2004)

OTOPs are growing in numbers and participants fundamentally because there is a symbiosis between private and public sector interests. Their numbers are growing particularly in the northern and northeastern parts of the Kingdom and growth is occurring where four conditions are met: local agricultural and forest resources are plentiful and accessible, communities are well organised and experienced in cooperative activities, local people have strong workplace attitudes and attributes, and communities have access to financial and technical support from outside entities, including government. (Office of the Prime Minister 2004, 1-3)

Throughout the five most southerly provinces, as well as the six neighbouring southern provinces (with mixed Buddhist and Muslim populations), the four conditions are met and therefore it would be strategically advantageous for government to promote the formation of OTOPs and support them. Support is via technical assistance in production, developing marketing skills and providing marketing assistance through trade shows that display the products, and through informing enterprises about the sources of financial resources. The pre-eminent key to success, of course, is establishing local environments which are free from threats and attacks on property and individuals. If reasonable stability can be assured, then the formation of village (*tambon*) enterprises can yield income, output and employment significantly above their contemporary levels.

The Sufficiency Economy strategy and the One Tambon One Product programme offer ways to improve economic conditions throughout the south and significant improvements are imperative to the successful implementation of the government's plans for reconciliation. While they do not offer a 'magic solution', they should not be summarily dismissed. In this regard, it should be noted that community businesses (including OTOPs) have been successful in marketplaces throughout provinces in other regions of Thailand. (Narong 1999)

The magnitude of the current level of deadly violence, and the danger that it could spread within *and* outside Thailand mandates that government design and implement a plan that would contain violence and promote economic development. Both the Sufficiency Economy strategy and OTOP practices can play useful, direct roles towards those ends. They can also provide a less direct but equally essential role—they can provide a core upon which to construct other efforts by both the government and non- government agencies such as local Chambers of Commerce and Islamic social and business organisations. The chambers and organisations can assist new OTOP ventures to (a) gain access to sources of start-up financial resources as well as finance over the product cycle as products are forthcoming, (b) assure quality control and innovation of new products or ways of producing them, (c) improve book-keeping and business data collection and analyses and (d) strengthen marketing and product promotion.

Beyond assistance from local business organisations throughout the South, implementing successfully sufficiency principles via OTOP enterprises requires a

collective effort that is a mosaic of activities conducted by individual entrepreneurs, community (village/tambon) groups and agencies of both the Royal Thai and local government agencies. An added aspect of public sector assistance is to create a belief among local people that sees the positive impact that various agricultural/manufacturing enterprises will have on localities and the lives of people throughout the Southern provinces.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Peace and security are essential if economic development measures are going to be successful. A key question is whether sufficient and appropriate resources are being directed towards the South and, as importantly, is whether appropriate diplomatic initiatives are being employed, including ones that are consistent with the interests of neighbouring Malaysia. On the diplomatic front, Imran Imtiaz Shah Yacob, a distinguished broadcast journalist and lawyer made the point that "...there may arise a misconception that Malaysians in general would prefer any arrangement that benefits the troubled provinces of Thailand. While to an extent that may be true, there has always been a realisation amongst Malaysian officials that criminal and extreme elements couched under the guise of Islam which flourish amidst the conflict in the South of Thailand have no place in our (Malaysian) foreign policy." (Yacob 2007, 7A)

Neither Thailand nor Malaysia has an interest in the conflict worsening and perhaps even spreading. Prior to the 18 February bombings that killed eight and wounded sixty, the *Bangkok Post* reported that leaflets were distributed which cited "...repression, injustice and discrimination at the hands of Thai authorities and asked fellow Muslims to fight for the liberation of 'Pattini' Land." (Kaopatuntip 2007, 1)

The seeds of modern violence and the sense of the leaflets were planted more than a decade ago by Southern Thai Muslims who fought in Afghanistan with the Taliban against Soviet troops. Upon their return, they began to recruit young men and children to help in the establishment of a Taliban-style Islamic state in Thailand's south. Many leaders are the product of this effort and others graduated from religious colleges in the Middle East and were inspired by the old Pattini United Liberation Organisation to create a Muslim state in the south. In response,

the Thai government continued to pour in more soldiers and police, some of whom committed sordid acts, and matters only got worse. Current Defence Minister Boonrawd Somtes blamed government officials for choosing the poorly thought-out 'hard line' approach and asked "Now let us hear what the government will do from now on?" (Boonthanom 2007, 1)

There is, therefore, a hard-core group that will resist legitimate efforts to bring about peace, security and economic development through the south. They will remain intact and they will seek to recruit others. The key to progress is to limit the successful spread of their recruitment message via the creation of an environment that will deter others from joining them. Providing a barrier that would make their future recruitment efforts less successful means reducing the impression among possible recruits that discrimination and injustice is all they can expect from the Royal Thai Government.

The Government of Malaysia can assist in the process and this means using the two-country institutions which are designed to bring about development in the four most northerly regions of Malaysia and the five most southerly provinces of Thailand. This requires that the economic development task of the authorities be twofold. First, to identify private sector undertakings which have a chance of being successful OTOP ventures; and second, to identify the need for funding of specific public sector social and physical infrastructure projects that could use support successfully. The two-country border development authority that is currently in place can be strengthened in ways that can help to identify public sector projects and promising private sector market initiatives. In effect, the authority can also play a key role in strengthening the diplomatic ties between the two countries by improving the regional economy in ways that offer more people expanded economic opportunities and benefits.

Diplomatic ties between Thailand and Malaysia are generally cordial and reflect amity in terms of their joint participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). In addition, regular discussions and diplomatic ties at the foreign ministerial level continue to take place (Thailand's Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram recently

visited Kuala Lumpur for talks which certainly included the troubled region). Within the context of national level cooperation, the shared border authority operates within a broad confluence of cooperation. Amity and not enmity characterises the diplomatic ties that bind Thailand and Malaysia as Southeast Asian neighbours and the resulting environment is conducive to promoting regional economic development based upon principles contained in the Sufficiency Economy approach and the One Tambon One Product initiative.

The above theoretical principles provide a foundation upon which to base efforts to generate shared economic growth and development throughout Southern Thailand. However, the principles are not fully capable of accomplishing this task and consequently they must be thought of within a broader social, cultural and political context. A useful set of recent publications provide that context (Aphornsuvan 2007 and Sidel 2007). In combination the two authors analyze the struggle in Southern Thailand from historical, cultural and sociological perspectives. Based upon their thinking, it becomes clear that a fully successful government effort to reduce violence must rely on a dual approach. *One* is the approach encouraged within our paper; that is, transferring economic resources and support based upon Sufficiency Economy principles and mechanisms such as OTOP. The *other* approach focuses on strengthening civil state institutions throughout the region. Stronger civil institutions mean that the south would remain *less* socially and politically fractured (particularly among groups within the broader Islamic community), and *more* cohesive and therefore capable of increasing political effectiveness and improving local conflict-resolution mechanisms.

A peaceful and economically robust civil state's institutions must necessarily be appropriately founded upon Islamic-based culture and religion. However, three essential provisos must accompany this point: first, great care must be taken to account for the interests and views of non-Muslims who live in Thailand's south. Second, efforts must be undertaken to see to it that the envisioned institutions would be both understood and appreciated throughout the remainder of Thailand. Third, without a confluence of the two approaches and the institutional changes that they mandate, a lasting peace and a dramatic lessening of violence would be out of Thailand's reach. The consequences of failure would assure a permanent cadre of young Malay Muslims who are (a) without adequate educations, (b)

underemployed or unemployed and materially disadvantaged, (c) separated from other Thai by culture, language and religion and (d) living within an internal and external political system that fails to meet their basic human needs.

Government failure in the south would become its own “threat” because the extent to which young Malay Muslims conclude that have little hope makes them fodder for recruitment into acts of violence. This runs the risk that retaliatory government actions would contribute to the process of human destruction and consequently government actions. Success will not be easy—it will take time, wisdom and an unfailing commitment by government, non-government organizations and the Thai people.

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Turkish Foreign Policy and the European Union: Is Harmonization Possible?

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ABSTRACT

In analyzing Turkey's membership to the European Union, a societal perspective has dominated the continuing discussions. Nevertheless, while not referred to as frequently as the aforementioned issues, the harmonization of Turkish foreign policy demands detailed attention in the integration process. The idea of integration, however, cannot be analyzed independent of the integration of foreign policies. Like the domestic prerequisites, EU membership necessitates certain fundamentals in foreign policy. It is politically important to analyze how Turkish foreign policy will be harmonized with the European Union. As most structural political clashes among the EU members take place in foreign policy, the issue of absorbing Turkey, a country with many thorny problems in foreign policy, seems important. This article examines Turkey's integration process in terms of foreign policy.

INTRODUCTION

On 3 October 2005, Turkey officially began membership talks with the European Union—the culmination of a 40-year campaign.¹ Unsurprisingly, Turkey's membership has been criticized by a large coalition. Criticism is usually piled on several renowned issues such as human rights, democratization, Islamic identity and economic problems. In arguing against Turkey's membership, a societal perspective has dominated the continuing discussions. Nevertheless, while not referred to as frequently as the aforementioned issues, the harmonization of Turkish foreign policy demands detailed attention in the integration process. The transnational nature of the Union can be shown as a reason for the dominance of societal discussions. Similarly, societal issues are also the most contested because they are the most difficult to measure.² The difficulty of measuring them perpetuates endless discussions on various societal issues such as identity and culture. The idea of integration, however, cannot be analyzed independent of the integration of foreign policies.

Even though contending theories differ in explaining integration, the crux of the issue in any approach is the necessity of an overall shift of loyalties in certain fields. Integration is “the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center.”³ Thus, political integration means the re-organization of national matters, including foreign policy, according to a new center. The EU similarly necessitates an adaptation process in foreign policy:⁴

The original Treaty on European Union established two specific legal bases for action under CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy): common positions and joint actions. Common positions require the member states to implement national policies that comply with the

¹ The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs described this event as a historic event. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4305500.stm>

² William Wallace, “Introduction: The Dynamics of European Integration”, in William Wallace (ed.), *The Dynamics of European Integration* (London: Pinter Publications, 1990), p. 9.

³ Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe* (London: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 19.

⁴ Daniel C. Thomas “The Institutional Construction of EU Foreign Policy: CFSP and the International Criminal Court”, *Prepared for presentation at the European Union Studies Association, Austin, Texas, March 31-April 2, 2005*, pp. 6-7.

http://aei.pitt.edu/archive/00002990/02/Institutional_Construction_of_EU_Foreign_Policy_EUSA_2005.doc

position defined by the Union on a particular issue. Joint actions are operational measures taken by the member states under the auspices of the CFSP, such as the allocation of financial resources or the deployment of military forces.

The crux of the question is the necessity of related countries to implement national policies to comply with the policy defined by the Union. As a matter of fact, the Union, according to the Treaty on European Union (1993), was accorded a number of explicit and overarching political objectives, including:⁵

to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defense policy, which might in time lead to a common defense.

In other words, the Union recognizes the importance of normative concerns that originated from its identity in formulating its foreign policy. Turkey as a candidate state is also expected to harmonize its foreign policy on particular issues according to the Union's position. This criterion will play an important role in the negotiation process in regard to other societal issues such as democratization and minority rights. Based on this framework, this article examines Turkey's integration process in terms of foreign policy. Certain official papers such as regular reports or the negotiating framework will be taken as a point of departure while studying the Turkish case through several issues. As most structural political clashes among the EU members take place in foreign policy, the issue of absorbing Turkey, a country with many thorny problems in foreign policy, seems important.

THE CYPRUS ISSUE

For its unique nature, the Cyprus issue is one of the most important problems between the Union and Turkey. Unlike other typical foreign policy problems, the clash between the two sides is deep and structural. Turkey recognizes the existence of an independent state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), on Cypriot territory that is accepted as an independent member state by the EU.

⁵ Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *European Union as a Global Actor* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 9-10.

Turkey argues that the Cyprus Republic does not represent the whole island. As it is written in the regular report of 2004, the Cyprus issue has dominated EU-Turkey relations since 1999.⁶

Officially, the Union declares its position as continuing “to support efforts to find a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded.”⁷ In this vein, Turkey is asked to implement fully the protocol adapting the Ankara Agreement to the accession of the ten new EU member states including Cyprus. Accordingly, Turkey should undertake steps toward normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and all EU member states, including the Republic of Cyprus.⁸ However, when Turkey understood that Cyprus would become a member of the Union, a customs union treaty was immediately signed between Turkey and the TRNC on 8 August 2003. Turkish officials interpreted the agreement as policy to surmount the isolation of the TRNC. The European reaction, however, was negative.⁹ Accordingly, the agreement has no validity under international law, yet it would be in breach of Turkey’s commitments in its customs union with the EC.¹⁰

The most intriguing development occurred in 2004. After the negotiations in B rgerstock, both sides in Cyprus agreed to support the referendum based on a plan prepared by Kofi Annan. It was the only plan that ever directly brought the question to the people living on the island. The majority of the Turkish Cypriot community approved the plan but it was rejected by a majority of the Greek Cypriot community. The rejection of the plan by the Greek Cypriot community created a completely new situation because the Union previously urged both parties to support the plan.¹¹ The rejection of the plan by the Greek Cypriot

⁶ 2004 Regular Report on Turkey’s progress towards accession, 6.10.2004 SEC (2004) 1201 {COM (2004) 656 final}, p. 51.

⁷ *Negotiating Framework*, (Luxemborg, 3 October 2005), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/st20002_05_TR_framedoc_en.pdf, p. 3.

⁸ *Proposal for a Council Decision On the Principles, Priorities, and Conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey* {SEC (2005) 1426} (presented by the Commission) Brussels, 9 November 2005 COM (2005) 559, p. 10.

⁹ “KKTC ile ‘g m ruk entegrasyonu’na AB’den jet sitem”, *Zaman*, 8 August 2003.

¹⁰ 2003 Regular Report on Turkey’s progress towards accession, (Luxemborg, 2003), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2003/tr_tk_final_en.pdf, p. 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

community was taken by the Turkish side as clear proof showing that it was not the Turkish side that impeded the peace efforts. In addition, Turkey believes that the Greek side, given the guarantee of full membership, did not want to risk itself by accepting the plan. The Turkish thesis underlines that the Turkish Cypriot community should not be punished because the Greek side rejected a UN plan that was also officially supported by the EU.¹² Yet, Turkey criticizes the Union for accepting the Cyprus Republic before solving the problems on the island. In other words, for Turkey, the extension of membership to Cyprus has annihilated the basis of negotiation between the two sides. The Union was blamed for not abiding by its promises in terms of the Annan plan.¹³

On 29 July 2005, Turkey signed the Additional Protocol adapting the EC-Turkey Association Agreement to the accession of ten new countries. At the same time, Turkey issued a declaration stating that signature of the protocol did not amount to recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. On 21 September, the EU adopted a counter declaration indicating that Turkey's declaration was unilateral, did not form part of the protocol and had no legal effect on Turkey's obligations under the protocol. The EU declaration stressed that recognition of all member states was a necessary component of the accession process.¹⁴

Since the failure of the Annan plan, the Cyprus issue has become a diplomatic game between Turkey and the Union. Turkey has tried to harmonize its membership process and its policy toward the Cyprus issue through playing with the words. Turkey, through interpretations and over-interpretations, is trying to advance in the membership process without committing to *de facto* or *de jure* recognition of Cyprus. Also, Turkey has continued to impose its veto on Cyprus' membership in certain international organizations.

As stated before, the Cyprus problem is a structural issue between Turkey and the Union. Unlike other problems such as economic criteria or democratization,

¹² "Soykırım İddiası Meclislerde Çözülemez", *Zaman*, 22 October 2004.

¹³ In an informal press conference what Prime Minister Erdogan said is of importance in this respect: "Before the referendum, the EU officials promised that what is needed is a "yes" from the Turkish side. But, the Greek side became part of the Union; even they did say no in the referendum. Thus, no one can demand that Turkey should be punished for these developments." "Erdogan: Kıbrıs'ı tanyın baskısı cirkinlik", *Radikal*, 14 September 2005.

¹⁴ *2005 Progress Report*, SEC (2005) 1426 {COM (2005) 561 final} 9 November 2005, p. 40.

it is a clash of contending diplomatic and legal epistemic views. The negotiating framework once again called for Turkey's continued support in efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded.¹⁵ It is more ideal to refer the UN to address the solution after Cyprus' membership. In doing so, the Union may be protected from deep clashes between Turkey and Cyprus. Nevertheless, for all actors it is still not clear how to make progress on the issue.¹⁶ The Turkish side still believes that the EU has not realized its previous promises on the eve of the Annan plan. On the other hand, the EU has not made any progress in terms of rescuing the Turkish community from economic isolation. Several plans were vetoed by the Cyprus Republic.¹⁷ The problem also fabricates tensions among the Union members. Recently, despite heavy criticism from the Greek side, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw visited the Turkish side. Tassos Papadopoulos refused to see Straw as he met the Turkish Cypriot leader in his "presidential" offices. The British secretary later blamed the Greek Cypriots for abusing the deadlock.¹⁸

On the other hand, the Union's failure in proposing a functional solution forces Turkey to look for help in other partners, such as the U.S. or the Islamic states. For example, after the Istanbul Summit the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) recognized the TRNC as a "Cyprus Turkish State" instead of the previous title of "Cyprus Muslim Turkish Community." The basic reason behind this shift was the belief that the Turkish community cannot be punished after the failure of the Annan plan. Additionally, several states, including Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, for the first time declared their official support for the TRNC. For instance, Azerbaijan launched direct flights from Baku to the Turkish part of the island.¹⁹ A group of parliamentarians from Kyrgyzstan also visited the island to declare their support for the Turkish side.²⁰ Similarly, the U.S. dimension has presented little but symbolic progress. A group of American businessmen led by a high-level diplomat from the U.S. Embassy in

¹⁵ *Negotiating Framework*, p. 3.

¹⁶ "Kıbrıs bunalımı derinlesiyor", *Zaman*, 9 December 2005.

¹⁷ 'AB'den Kıbrıs'ta Yeni Bir Fiyasko", *Zaman*, 12 June 2005.

¹⁸ *Zaman*, 9 February 2006.

¹⁹ "Bakü'den KKTC'ye ilk doğrudan uçuş", *Radikal*, 28 July 2005.

²⁰ "Kırgız heyeti ilk kez KKTC'de", *Radikal*, 20 October 2005.

Ankara visited the TRNC last February.²¹ Additionally, a group of American senators visited the Turkish part of the island.²² Senator Whitfield, the spokesman of the group, said that the isolation of the Turkish side is not acceptable.²³

Indeed, Turkey's efforts toward the U.S. and the Muslim countries, despite their positive responses in favor of the TRNC, multiply structural differences with the EU. However, so long as the Union fails in activating a functional solution, Turkey keeps looking at alternative solutions. To conclude, the Cyprus problem is still a major reason that forces Turkish foreign policy to be constructed outside of the Union's context. The Union's failure in proposing and enforcing a solution on the issue is a structural reason for Turkey not harmonizing herself with the Union.

OTHER ISSUES

Problems related to the integration process are not limited to the issue of Cyprus. As it is clearly declared in the negotiating framework, Turkey is asked to re-organize its foreign policy in line with the Union:²⁴

In the period up to accession, Turkey will be required to progressively align its policies towards third countries and its positions within international organizations with the policies and positions adopted by the Union and its member states.

As is clearly indicated by the negotiating framework, the Union demands a very complex and strict harmonization policy. This task, however, is difficult given Turkey's complicated bilateral relations with different states. Initially, there are some particular issues such as the Iraq case. However, there are some other issues which are more complex such as the role of Turkey in the Islamic world. Despite the criteria underlined in the above quotation, it is not clear how Turkey will harmonize itself with the EU in different fields such as in the OIC. Apart from political differences, epistemological differences are of importance. Therefore, both vertical and horizontal dimensions must be analyzed in the problem of Turkey's foreign policy alignment

²¹ "ABD'li işadamları heyeti KKTC'de", *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2005.

²² "ABD Kongre ve Senato Heyeti KKTC'de", *Yeni Safak*, 9 August 2005.

²³ "ABD Heyeti: Ambargo Adil Değil", *Sabah*, 31 May 2005.

²⁴ *Negotiating Framework*, p. 3.

with the Union. The horizontal dimension refers to the classical issues such as regional and political problems of Turkish foreign policy. Bilateral relations with Iraq, Iran, Syria and Armenia can be presented as current examples of horizontal level issues. Along with this, a vertical dimension, which defines other complex issues such as religion, identity and civilization, is also influential in Turkish foreign policy. Turkey's relations with the Islamic states and with the Islamic community or Ummah in general or the role of Turkic identity in relation to the Central Asian Turkic states are concrete examples of the vertical level dimension.

Iraq

Since the beginning of the Iraq crisis, Turkey has been one of the most negatively affected countries. To begin with, the problem has cost Turkey economic losses amounting to the billion dollar range. The chaotic situation in Iraq has virtually ended the economic dynamism in the region. The economy of Turkey's southeastern region has to a large extent collapsed. Moreover, several other factors, such as the rise of military expenditures, are significant. The rise of military dynamism damaged Turkey's fiscal balances. Secondly, the Iraq crisis has weakened Turkey's security. The rise of terrorist activities, including trans-border attacks and smuggling, worsen the situation. The total failure of the Iraqi government's domestic sovereignty in the region has served terrorist groups. Additionally, the Iraq crisis has created problems with Turkey's traditional allies such as the U.S. Turkish-American relations have been damaged in an unprecedented way. The U.S. and Turkey have clashed on different issues relating to tackling the Iraq question. Finally, Turkey's social stability has been damaged greatly. The emergence of an embryonic Kurdish state in northern Iraq has increased the fragility of the Kurdish problem within Turkish territory. For Turkey, home to millions of Kurds, the Kurdish problem as a transnational issue may threaten the traditional balances in the region.

On the other hand, the U.S., by the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, has become the post-modern neighbor of Turkey. In the past, Turkey and the U.S. have been relatively successful in cooperating against several grand threats such as communism and terrorism. The case now, however, is very different because both sides have confronted each other. In other words, the grand narratives on certain issues such as the "war on terrorism" are overshadowed by bilateral tensions

between Turkey and the U.S. For example, Turkey rejected a decision allowing U.S. troops to use the country as a base to open a northern front in a possible war with Iraq.²⁵ Today, Turkey and the U.S. have many different and very opposite visions for Iraq.

When it comes to the EU dimension, the Iraq crisis has presented a very important litmus test. Is the Union ready to play a global role? Or, more accurately, does the Union project such an aim? At present, it is not possible to answer such questions in the affirmative. The Iraq case has displayed the weakness of the Union's attempts at implementing a common foreign policy.²⁶ Apart from the problems caused by some important members such as the UK and France, several structural problems concerning the relationship with the U.S. has come to the fore.²⁷

In terms of actual affects of the negotiation process, it has almost ended the military activism in Turkish foreign policy with respect to Iraq. Yet, no further military operations will be allowed by the Union. Turkey's announcement of its decision not to send troops to Iraq was positively noted by the Union.²⁸ The Union does not want to risk itself. Indeed, a member state in a trans-border military activity is an unwanted development in many respects. In exchange for this commitment, Turkey demands strong political support from the Union. The continued failure of the Union in proposing a satisfying level of support, however, may inevitably force Turkey to search for alternatives. The spokesman of the Turkish government once said that Turkey would decide independently when deciding the subject of military operations in "northern Iraq."²⁹ So far, the Union has regularly praised Turkey for deploying sustained diplomatic efforts at the multilateral level to try to find a peaceful solution to the Iraq crisis.³⁰ However, there is no European policy with respect to the problems and losses of Turkey. Similarly, despite the fact that the Union confirmed Turkey's worries about the

²⁵ Alan Cowell, "Turkey Spared a War, Still Pays a Heavy Price", *The New York Times*, 19 April 2003, p. 2.

²⁶ Kirsty Hughes, "After Iraq: Can Europe Overcome Its Divisions?", *Global Dialogue* 8(3-4), (Summer-Autumn, 2003), p. 63.

²⁷ "EU struggles for unity on Iraq", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2770175.stm>, 17 February 2003.

²⁸ *2004 Report*, p. 154.

²⁹ "Türkiye, Kuzey Irak kararını kendisi verecek", *Zaman*, 25 Mart 2003.

³⁰ *2003 Report*, p. 124.

situation of Turcoman as well as the status of several cities such as Kirkuk, no progress has been realized in any field so far.³¹

Iraq should also be analyzed within the neighborhood policy. Indeed, this necessitates a paradigmatic shift for the European public. Secondly, the Iraq case clearly shows how it is difficult to absorb a country like Turkey. When Turkey's standing is analyzed, it is clear that certain peculiar dynamics such as its Islamic identity, or in general the Middle Eastern face, is influential. As the Iraq case has shown, certain issues imbued with religious drives may play a similar role in Turkish-European relations. Thus, the Union should develop a new political language for such issues. Thirdly, Turkey's membership will automatically necessitate a very active European foreign policy in the Middle East. In other words, Europe geographically will become a side in Middle Eastern politics. This new geographical dimension is very important because it tacitly necessitates certain consequences such as the Islamization or the Orientalization of European diplomacy.

Armenia

The negotiating framework underlines Turkey's unequivocal commitment to good neighborly relations.³² The problems with Armenia, however, are very critical. Although Turkey quickly recognized Armenian independence in 1991, the two states do not share diplomatic relations. Turkey denies diplomatic relations with Armenia for three sets of reasons.³³ The first group is about the territorial problems between the two states. Turkey blames Armenia for several territorial issues. For example, accordingly, in the 11th article of the Armenian Declaration of Independence, the Eastern Anatolia Region that is part of Turkey is referred to as "Western Armenia." The second set of issues relate to Azerbaijan. Turkey, referring to the fact that approximately 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory is presently under Armenian occupation, demands Armenia carry out UN Security Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 calling for an end to the occupation by Armenia and demand it respect the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Finally,

³¹ Ibid., p. 129.

³² *Negotiating Framework*, p. 3.

³³ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Regions/Caucasus/Armenia/Armenia_Political.htm

the third set of issues and probably the most important set refers to the famous “historical conflict“ between Turkey and Armenia. According to Turkey, Armenia, disregarding historical facts, is accusing Turkey of having committed a so-called “genocide” that never actually took place.

Compared with Armenia, Turkey is not in a position to be threatened by such a relatively small and weak state in terms of territorial disputes. Thus, the “historical conflict” is the major problem between the two states. Turkey takes the case as a great symbolic issue. Even Turkey’s bilateral relations have become worse with some states as a result of the issue. But, the history debate between Turkey and Armenia weakens the rational basis of diplomacy. A heavy value-loaded symbolic language rules all related processes. Many aspects of the problem refer to a sacred sphere, in which diplomatic reason is very limited.

In spite of frequent warnings, the Union has so far refrained from any demands on the so called genocide issue. Instead, the Union regularly demands the normalization of relations with Armenia. Several positive developments such as direct flights from several Turkish cities to Yerevan are praised.³⁴ However, one cannot exclude that the issue of closed borders could be one of the preconditions for Turkey’s membership.³⁵ Turkey is also criticized because of its isolation of a smaller neighbor through different methods such as insisting the route of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline bypass Armenian territory.

Meanwhile, European pressure on Turkey is perceived positively in Armenia. In contrast to other alternatives such as U.S. projects, the European dimension seems more neutral in terms of keeping the issue far from regional power politics.³⁶ In general, it can be argued that Armenia supports Turkey’s membership since this would establish a geographical neighborhood for Armenia.³⁷ As an example, Armenian President Robert Kocharian stated several

³⁴ *2005 Report*, www.abhaber.com/belgeler/0520ABKomisyonu2005ilerlemeraporu.pdf, p. 129.

³⁵ The Former President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, said: “Personally, I do not like that the Armenian-Turkish border gate is closed. I do not exclude that the issue of closed borders could be one of the preconditions for Turkey’s membership.” www.dw-world.de/dw/article/

³⁶ Hakob Chakrian, “The Armenian-Turkish Dialogue: A Brief Note”, *Iran & The Caucasus* (5) 2001, p. 224.

³⁷ “Ermenistan Dışışleri Bakanı: Türkiye’nin AB Üyelğini Destekliyorum”, *Vatan* 25 November 2005.

times that Armenia is not opposed to Turkey's European Union membership.³⁸ In view of that, Turkey's EU membership on different grounds meets Armenian interests.³⁹

In sum, Turkish-Armenian relations present two major dimensions in terms of European politics. First of all, Turkey denies diplomatic relations with Armenia on the basis of a history debate which is actually about the contemporary presentation of Turkish identity. Thus, Turkey wants the European dimension removed from the Armenian context. Any European support for Armenia at any level may trigger serious tension between Turkey and the Union. Secondly, given Ankara's societal links to Azerbaijan, Turkish foreign policy toward Armenia has another cultural dimension. It is a fact that Turkey is not satisfied by Europe's pressure on Armenia. Remembering again the cultural proximity between the Turkish and the Azeri publics, Turkish foreign policy is highly limited on the Armenian issue. Therefore, Turkey's policy toward Armenia is to a large extent shaped by value-based concerns. It should be remembered that the value-loaded nature of issues is a great difficulty for any integration process.

Syria and Iran

Syria and Iran constitute another major concern in terms of Turkey's integration with the Union. The revisionist, if not revolutionist, nature of Syria's and Iran's foreign policies have been a great concern for the international community, mainly the U.S. The U.S. wants to isolate both countries. Iran's nuclear program and U.S. allegations against Syria on terrorism are two chief concerns. Therefore, the neighborhood between the Union as a system of democratic states and two countries with such a revisionist agenda is the crux of the question. Similarly, how Turkey would sustain a balance between two very different poles is another point.

Iran has a political system in which non-elected religious mullahs have supremacy. Similarly, Syria's political system depends on a one-man led sectarian model. Radical elements have influence in both states' polities. The failure of

³⁸ Kezban Narlikaya, "Kocharian: Armenia not Against Turkey's EU Membership", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* <http://www.turkishweekly.net/armenian.php>

³⁹ ARKA News Agency, 5 October 2005.

moderate Khatami's rule and paradigm in Iran gave way to the rise of conservative elites. Despite the early euphoria, Khatami's presidency was not successful in terms of transforming Iran. The discontent he created facilitated the late rise of the conservatives.⁴⁰ "Israel should be wiped off the map" was among the early messages of the newly-elected Iranian president. When it comes to Syria, Bashar Assad's relatively moderate policies have yet to satisfy the international community, mainly the U.S. Although Syria has evacuated its troops from Lebanon, the U.S. is still determined to isolate the country.

Turkey's role in this vein can be summarized as follows: First of all, Turkey tries to persuade Iran and Syria to recognize the international community's demands. For example, during the visit of the Iranian Foreign Affairs minister in Ankara, Iran was diplomatically warned by Turkey over its nuclear program.⁴¹ Similarly, Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Gul paid a sudden visit to Damascus on 16 November 2005. The purpose of the sudden visit was to persuade the Syrian government to cooperate with the international community on the Harriri case.⁴² Secondly, Turkey, after experiencing the negative ramifications of the Iraq intervention, knows that more tension in the region will definitely cause greater problems for its security and economy. Thus, the Turkish side also tries to persuade the international community, mainly the U.S., not to use force. The region is already in a state of war. Indeed, a new conflict in Iran or Syria may completely collapse the state system in the Middle East. Such worrisome developments may also destroy the nascent economic and political understanding in the region between Turkey, Iran and Syria. The trade volume between Turkey and Syria has boomed during the last three years. In the same way, Turkey has tried to persuade the U.S. not to use force against Syria and Iran. On the other hand, Turkey tries to prevent Syria from isolating itself from the system by undertaking several radical foreign policy agendas. Thirdly, and a very important factor, the three states have common visions on several issues such as the Kurdish problem and the territorial integrity of Iraq. This no doubt creates a

⁴⁰ Ulrich Rippert, "İran: Seçimler "reformcuların" siyasi iflasını ortaya koydu", <http://www.wsws.org/tr/2004/apr2004/iran-a02.shtml>, 2 April 2004.

⁴¹ *Milliyet*, 2 December 2005.

⁴² Sami Kohen, "Şam Sürprizi", *Milliyet*, 17 November 2005. Serkan Demirtaş, "Şam'a acil mesaj var", *Radikal*, 17 November 2005.

regional synergy which is politically very important for each state.⁴³ Many in Ankara view Iran and Syria as vital allies for consultation against a Kurdish polity in Iraq.

In general, the Union seems to appreciate Turkey's developing bilateral relations with Iran and Syria with several known warnings on recurring issues such as terrorism.⁴⁴ Turkey's alignment with the Union's policy calling on the government of Iran to conclude and implement urgently and unconditionally the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime does of course satisfy the Union.⁴⁵ However, Turkey additionally supports that Iran has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology.⁴⁶ Turkey cannot be expected to be extremely critical of Iran's right of using nuclear technology in peaceful ways as Turkey, a country facing an acute energy crisis every winter, is also preparing for nuclear energy projects.

The main issue concerning Turkey's position toward Syria and Iran is the lack of a strong European standing against the American-dominated regional politics. Middle Eastern politics is now somehow completely under the influence of an American-based orientation. Therefore, it is normal for related countries like Turkey to regard the American factor as formative. Turkey's drift toward the U.S. for pragmatic reasons, however, may deepen the foreign policy problems between the Union and Turkey.

The Muslim World

Turkey's Islamic identity has long been an important concern in integration debates. Apart from bearing a different religious identity, Turks have long been perceived as the "other" in European political narrative.⁴⁷ Therefore, it is still difficult to answer how the Union as a transnational integration project can absorb a country that has a totally different religious identity. However, it is not

⁴³ "Esad: Sezer'in ABD'ye rağmen gelmesi önemli", *Zaman*, 6 April 2005.

⁴⁴ *2004 Report*, p. 153 and *2005 Report* p. 129.

⁴⁵ *2003 Report*, p. 123 and *2004 Report* p. 152.

⁴⁶ Prime Minister Erdogan said that Iran has a right to use nuclear technology peacefully. "Ürdün Başbakan'ı Bahit Ankara'da", *Anadolu Agency*, 16 January 2006.

⁴⁷ A. Nuri Yurdusev, "Avrupa Kimliğinin Oluşumu ve Türk Kimliği", in Atilla Eralp (ed.), *Türkiye ve Avrupa* (İstanbul: İletisim, 1997), pp. 17-18.

correct to analyze the encounter between Christian Europe and Muslim Turkey in only one dimension. Certainly, neither Europe nor Turkey has religion as a determining identity. On the other hand, despite several almost Islamophobic approaches, European politicians seem to recognize the role of Islam. Romano Prodi, the ex-president of the European Commission, noted that Islam should not be viewed solely as a religion. He also noted that Islam is part of contemporary European culture.⁴⁸ Presenting Islam as part of European culture has of course great symbolic meaning. Recently, Ingmar Karlsson, Sweden's ambassador to Ankara, stated that Islam is a European religion.⁴⁹ In the past, it was the former EU commissioner responsible for enlargement, Gunter Verheugen, who first stated that Islam is a part of Europe in addition to Christianity and Judaism.⁵⁰

However, more important is Turkey's orientation at the international level. Turkey has strong and historical ties with the Islamic states. The secretariat of the most important international organization representing the Islamic states, the OIC, is headed by a Turkish citizen. Along with these important political issues, Turkish society is aligned with other Muslims communities. Unlike the Western type of transnationalism which has a functionalist and a liberal essence, a societal and value-based transnationalism exists in the Muslim world. The Islamic version of transnationalism can survive despite the lack of political and economic interdependence. As a result, a philosophical clash between Islamist perspective and modern statehood continues at different levels. Having witnessed colonially-imposed borders, Muslims still experience the trauma of dealing with a post-Caliphate world order and are still in the process of adjusting to it.⁵¹ Even though Turkey has a longer modernization history, it is societally part of the Islamic world. Therefore, the partnership has significant consequences in Turkish foreign policy on several issues such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Chechen crisis.

⁴⁸ Romana Prodi, "Opening Statement", *Conference of Muslim Leaders and Imams in Europe*, Graz, 13 June 2003.

⁴⁹ "İslam bir Avrupa dinidir", *Yeni Safak*, 7 November 2004.

⁵⁰ Volkan Altintas, "Will the European Sun Rise from the Bosphorus?", *ZEI EU-Turkey Monitor*, 1(1), (October, 2005), p. 5.

⁵¹ Naveed S. Sheikh, *The New Politics of Islam Pan-Islamic Foreign Policy in a World of States* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 20-29.

Mainly, Europe's approach to the Turkey-Islam link is somehow romantic. The Union expects Turkey to be active in transforming Muslim societies around the principles of democracy and human rights.⁵² Many European officials have made different declarations on Turkey's cited role of being a model to the Muslim world. Apart from being a model, by engaging with Turkey the Union declares that it is not a monolithic Christian club. In other words, Turkey is perceived as the EU's gate to the Islamic world.⁵³ Apart from this "model narrative," the Union so far has not developed a consistent discourse on Turkey in terms of its relations with the Islamic world.

However, the narrative of dialogue faces severe deficits at the practical level. For example, of the ten Mediterranean-rim partner states, only the Palestinian president and the Turkish prime minister led high-level delegations in a summit to mark the 10th anniversary of the so-called Euro-Mediterranean partnership.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, several attempts, such as opening a representative office of the OIC in the EU, have not been realized.⁵⁵

A recent crisis between Turkey and Denmark over a religious issue is a good case to analyze how such problems may affect Turkish-European relations. Islamic organizations are engaged in growing conflict with a Danish newspaper over its publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed. The Turkish prime minister also criticized the Danes for offending Muslims.⁵⁶ However, the case became internationalized when the OIC decided to boycott the project "Images of the Middle East" which will be organized by the Danish Center for Culture and Development, partially financed by the Danish Government.⁵⁷ Additionally, the OIC is due to consider the matter at its next summit. The OIC's decision demands Turkey boycott an EU member on religious grounds. Such cases show how different epistemic structures may dominate European and non-European actors.

⁵² 2003 Report, p. 124.

⁵³ Chris Patten, "Turkey-The EU's gate to the Islamic world?", *The Globalist*, 7 June 2004.

⁵⁴ These states are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

⁵⁵ John Quigley, "Islam and the EU: moving forward", *EurAsia Bulletin* 8(3&4), (March-April, 2004), p. 12.

⁵⁶ "Erdogan Doktrini", *Milliyet*, 16 November 2005.

⁵⁷ "Press Release", <http://www.oic-oci.org/>

Islam is still a very strong determinant in Turkish politics. Turkish decision-makers are somehow limited by the societal recognition of Islamic values. Thus, negotiations with Turkey would lead to very different relations between Europe and the Islamic world. It is not easy for Turkey, a country which refers at the same time to both Western and Islamic epistemic universes which are somehow different, to adjust itself to European foreign policy. At this point, rather than expecting a total Westernization of Turkish foreign policy, a kind of Islamization of European foreign policy seems logical. In other words, the Islamic dimension of Turkish foreign policy is potentially very valuable for the Union in constructing a functional discourse toward the Islamic world.

Global Terrorism

The September 11 attacks have to a great extent changed major perceptions in international relations. Traditional concepts such as security, threat and enemy have been almost re-defined.⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, post-9/11 developments have created certain advantages and disadvantages for Turkish foreign policy. In brief, Turkey has tried to give two messages in the post-9/11 atmosphere. First of all, it is believed that the terrorist attacks in the U.S., and in other Western cities, have confirmed Turkey's long-lasting struggle against terrorists, mainly the Kurdish PKK.⁵⁹ Since Turkey has long been criticized by Western states because of its negative record on human rights within the context of its fight against Kurdish terrorists, Turkey expects the Western states in the post-9/11 era to have a new understanding.⁶⁰ Secondly, it is also believed that Turkey's global value as a secular, democratic and Muslim state would increase. Two Turkish scholars summarized this case as follows:⁶¹

Because the events of September 11 have proven Turkey's value, not only to the Americans but also to the Europeans, Turkey could now "anticipate a warmer West." Turkey therefore tried to utilize this opportunity so as to

⁵⁸ Gokhan Bacik, "The Resistance of the Westphalian System" in Gokhan Bacik and Bulent Aras (eds.), *September 11 and World Politics American Hegemony Reconsidered* (Istanbul: Fatih University Press, 2004), p. 10.

⁵⁹ Hüseyin Bağcı and Sabah Kardas, "Post-September 11 Impacts: The Strategic Importance of Turkey Revisited", <http://www.eusec.org/bagci.htm>

⁶⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 12 September 2001.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

cement its relations with both the U.S. and Europe by emphasizing its role as a significant pro-Western power in such a critical juncture.

Therefore, Turkey has tried to maximize its position within the context of presenting a model to the Muslim world. As the Turkish prime minister referred once, Turkey's entrance to the EU will influence and affect how other Muslim states view the EU in a very positive way. "It will be the best example of how Islam and democracy can function together."⁶² Similarly, Abdullah Gul, the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, noted that if the EU accepts Turkey as one of its members, it will give the message to the whole Middle East that they could be Muslim, democrat, modern and transparent at the same time.⁶³

The Union has always praised Turkey for its "important role in the international campaign on the fight against terrorism."⁶⁴ Naturally, Turkey's partnership is important at least in rescuing the fight against terrorism from being seen as a war of religions. In other words, the existence of several Muslim states such as Pakistan and Turkey in the anti-terrorism camp legitimizes the war against terrorism.

CONCLUSION

The incorporation of Turkey into the EU, which displays many different peculiarities, is definitely a tough process. Ironically, even though the EU demands the alignment of foreign policies of candidate states, it is still not clear what is meant by the European common security and foreign policy. The failure in formulating a common security and foreign policy is still paralyzing the Union at the international level. The Union seems to be a declaratory power rather than one that has an actual effect on international politics.⁶⁵ As a result, apart from periodic demands by the Union on different issues, what the Union demands seems unclear. Yet, recognizing that there are several issues in which it is difficult to harmonize Turkish foreign policy with that of Europe, the Union officially criticizes Turkey.⁶⁶

⁶² "The US and Turkey: An essential partnership", <http://www.state.gov/p/us/rm/15924.htm>

⁶³ *Anadolu Agency*, 4 January 2004.

⁶⁴ 2003 Report, p. X, 2004 Report, p. XX.

⁶⁵ Philip H. Gordon, "Europe's Uncommon Foreign Policy", *International Security* 22(3), (Winter, 1997/98), p. 84.

⁶⁶ 2004 Report, pp. 154-155.

With respect to the CSFP, despite its overall satisfactory record, Turkey aligns itself with significantly fewer EU declarations than the other candidate countries. This was particularly the case with declarations on issues related to Turkey's neighborhood, to certain Muslim countries and on human rights and democracy. Turkey is sometimes hesitant to align itself to EU positions on issues touching its vital foreign policy and security interests.

However, this hesitancy originates from Turkey's complex and historical limits with a large hinterland. In addition to this societal framework, Turkey, facing acute problems such as the ones in the case of Iraq, needs to implement an immediate national policy. In sum, despite the necessity of aligning with the EU, it is not unlikely that Turkey will follow a relatively independent foreign policy on several issues.

In a broader framework, the Union, by including Turkey, will gain a new political environment where the political implications of the new environment will be unprecedented. To begin with, Europe will remember the issue of territorial conflicts which seems anachronistic for contemporary Western political culture. Secondly, the EU will face anti-democratic systems, which is another archaic form for the European public order. However, the expansion process is also to produce so many positive changes in the region. Regional states are very keen about the expansion of Europe so far as to become a neighbor in the Middle East. Turkey bringing Europe to the region geographically is almost welcomed. Deputy Prime Minister of Syria Dardari noted that they realized they "have a joint destiny to pose a common space linking the European Union to the Arab free trade zone."⁶⁷ Similarly, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh, commenting on Turkey's convergence with Europe, noted, "Turkey's membership in the European Union can positively affect regional development while Iran would also become a neighbor of the EU."⁶⁸ As noted above, similar welcoming declarations were also issued by different officials from Armenia and Georgia.

⁶⁷ "Syria, Turkey economic ties increasingly strategic", www.arabicnews.com, 10 August 2005.

⁶⁸ "Iran-Turkey Relations Growing", *Iran Daily*, 18 October 2004. However, a traditional criticism at more societal level also exists. For example, according to the editorial of the same newspaper "The secularism and westernization trend in Turkey has created a pathological inferiority complex among the Turks vis-a-vis Europe. Some Turks are in the illusion that by joining the EU they would attain *Jannah* (paradise)." Nawab Khan, "Turkey's European Dreams", *Iran Daily*, 18 October 2004.

From a different perspective, Turkey's negotiation process will be a kind of test for the Union in terms of formulating a functional common foreign policy. The failure of a common foreign policy is also influencing the failure of the Union in harmonizing candidate states with the Union itself.⁶⁹

The Union, inspired by liberal values, has an economy-based vision of the world system. Therefore, the European dimension has presented itself in the form of different liberal appearances such as human rights and economic liberalization. However, despite the unprecedented success of the global economy, traditional issues such as military and security are still dominant in the contemporary world system. The Union's abstention from high-politics, however, slows down the position of candidate states such as Turkey. It is thus not surprising to see the Union's willingness on economic concerns but abstention on high-political issues. But, there are two important points to be underlined. The first point is the limits of the cited liberal abstention. To what extent can the Union be successful in following such a policy? Or, can such a gigantic power isolate itself continuously from military issues? Secondly, how can such a paradigm sustain a successful integration process with different candidate states such as Turkey that have serious concerns on foreign policy?

⁶⁹ Ben Tonra and Thomas Christiansen, "The study of EU foreign policy: between international relations and European studies" in Ben Tonra (ed.), *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). p. 1.

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Palestine: Peace not Apartheid

By Jimmy Carter

Reviewed by Charles M. Hubbard, Ph.D.

Palestine: Peace not Apartheid

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Former president Jimmy Carter provides in *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid* a marvellous and comprehensive analysis of the issues that have and are causing the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The winner of the Nobel Peace Prize received wide acclaim for his *Our Endangered Values* and builds on the fundamentals he outlined in this current analysis. Many of Carter's conclusions regarding the future prospects for peace in the Middle East are provoking heated debate among US policy makers and the public at large. In many ways, the author, writing in the first person, gives both a memoir and a critical analysis of this decades long conflict. Certainly, former President Carter is one of the most knowledgeable and committed individuals actively working for peace in the Middle East. His commitment, both as president and as a private citizen spans more than 30 years. Leaders in the region continue to receive him with respect and trust. His analysis of the current situation is informed by his first-hand knowledge of the issues and individuals associated with the Palestinian-Israeli crisis.

Carter explains that his lifelong interest in the Holy Land is grounded in his Christian religion and he opens with a quote from the Book of Genesis in which Cain, after killing his brother, asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He believes it is everyone's responsibility to keep their brothers safe. The author then proceeds to detail his first visit to Israel before he was elected president in 1973 and explains the Christian connection to the land and its holy places. He is very open and expressive in recounting his religious experiences connected to his first trip and expresses his sympathy for all the religious groups connected to the respective holy places located in the region.

In a candid discussion of the Camp David negotiations between Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin, Carter explains many of the controversial issues the leaders addressed. He states that, while the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel has never been broken, Israel has not completely complied with the terms of the Camp David Accords. Carter goes on to suggest that Begin had a hidden agenda to remove the largest and most powerful adversary from the coalition of Arab states threatening Israel. The Israeli Prime Minister may have agreed to peace terms that he expected to change in the future. The agreement was based on Israeli withdrawal from specific occupied territories while Egypt pledged to acknowledge Israel's right to exist and committed to a peaceful resolution of future conflicts. The two nations agreed to normalize diplomatic relations. Carter still believes that the Camp David Accords should form, when coupled with several subsequent UN resolutions, the basis for a permanent peace between the Palestinians, Israel and the Arab states in the region. It is understandable why this overly simplified view of the situation, when combined with the implied deviousness of Begin, one of Israel's most admired leaders, has produced a barrage of criticism and controversy.

Referring to his self-described copious notes and personal recollections from numerous official and unofficial interviews with regional leaders over the years, Carter seeks to explain the positions of the various stakeholders engaged in the Palestinian/Israeli dilemma. Carter often quotes and paraphrases various leaders on both sides of the conflict. This technique may lead the reader to believe that the arguments of King Hussein of Jordan or President Assad of Syria are those of Carter. It is a very good method of detailing different points of view and on balance enlarges the focus of the narrative. As the narrative develops, it provides substantial detail and documentation. Carter concludes that in recent years, particularly the last six, Israel under the leadership of conservative politicians has hardened its position toward the Palestinians in the occupied territories of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Carter points out that after agreeing to withdraw and dismantle settlements built in the occupied territories after the 1967 war, Israel made only token efforts to comply with a series of subsequent agreements designed to complete the process. Recently, Israel has expanded settlements in the occupied territories, constructed numerous obstacles, fences, check points and fortifications to protect

Israeli citizens in the occupied region. As a result, Palestinians are confined more and more to small enclaves and excluded from access to highways, roads and public transportation. The overcrowded conditions, limited access to employment and burdensome licensing and registration requirements imposed by the Israelis have created a “ghetto environment” for many Palestinians. Carter refers to this as apartheid because it creates an underclass of citizens and denies social justice and equal opportunity to Palestinians. While he is careful to explain the security requirements demanded by the Israelis, he believes that Israel has overreacted to Palestinian militants.

The Carter Centre sent a team of election observers to the occupied territories in 2006 to monitor the elections. The former President accompanied the team and acknowledges that for the most part, the elections were fair and open. However, he criticizes the Israelis for massive arrests of members of the Palestinian parliament after the election. He further accuses the Israelis of an effort to undermine the legitimacy of the duly elected government. He goes on to criticize the current US administration for acquiescing and contributing to the collapse of the Palestinian government by labelling it a terrorist faction.

Carter reserves his most heated criticism of the Israelis for the construction of the so called “perimeter walls”. He refers to the perimeter walls constructed by the Israelis as a “prison wall” and suggests that it incarcerates Palestinians in confined regions of the territory. On a more a personal basis, he is particularly irritated by the presence of the wall in Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives, areas that are sacred to Christians. He quotes a Catholic priest whose mission is divided by the wall, “Never before did the Turks, the British or the Israelis construct a wall that would prevent people from attending a place of prayer”.

Throughout this impassioned narrative, the reader senses the frustration and almost desperation as Carter explains the numerous disappointments he has experienced in negotiating peace not apartheid. The former President makes clear his belief that any permanent peace in the Holy Land will require Israel to comply with the guidelines of the “international road map” and the Palestinians to forgo further acts of violence. Carter is hopeful but guarded and limits his expectations for any peace in the near term. In an address on 26 January 2007 at Brandeis

University, Carter expressed to the student body that “I may not live to see peace in the Middle East but surely you will”. This book is an important contribution and will inform future debates and negotiations in a unique and extraordinarily perceptive way.

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