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CONTENTS

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Islam and Peace: Principles, Realities and Aspirations

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

ABSTRACT

This article expounds the centrality of peace in the Islamic order of values and rebuts the common assertion that Islam is a warlike religion. We derive this conclusion from our review and presentation of the Qur'anic evidence that not only validates peace juridically but as a theological principle of profound religious significance. This is further substantiated in the text by a number of other principles such as *Ihsan* (beneficence), *Rahmah* (mercy), *'Adl* (justice), *Sabr* (patience) and *'Afwa* (forgiveness). We turn to Jihad next, and our review of the scriptural evidence on jihad similarly unfolds a different narrative to that of militarism and war commonly attributed to jihad. Jihad (lit. effort, struggle) as a philosophy of Islamic life starts with oneself in the sense of self-discipline and education, and undertaken for a good cause, including peace and justice. Peace is therefore an overarching behavioural guideline for Muslims and the Islamic polity to guide its relations with its own people, its neighbours, and all other communities and nations.

Keywords: Peace, Qur'an, Islam, universality, jihad

INTRODUCTION:

REALITIES: HUMAN SUFFERINGS, PREVENTABLE CONFLICTS

Peace in our times is challenged by persistent imbalances, wars, terrorism, widening inequalities, environmental degradation and an international system that has become far too polarised. It is disillusioning to see in some Muslim societies the spread of militarism that glorifies violence and advances a simplistic project of power and revenge. Muslims are pursuing conflicts among themselves and not living together in peace. Our era is one where Muslims in south and west Asia are divided against each other in persistent enmity and unable to negotiate and resolves their differences.

From the two Iraq wars of 1990 and 2003 there followed the rise of the al Qaeda, the Taliban and the ISIS, the collapse of the Arab Spring, and wars in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan along with anti-Tamil separatist war in Sri Lanka. Separatist movements in Africa involving regional and global powers have also caused political and economic havoc of massive migrations of the war refugees and displaced people to the West. The post-colonial Asian countries are nearly all embroiled in conflicts centred around border disputes and politico-ethnic identities such as the Sunni-Shia sectarianism in the Middle East. Sectarian killings are rampant in Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere, and religious minorities are subject to persecution and violence in certain societies.

The globalising age is an age of crisis of identity marked by increasing xenophobia, ethnoreligious exclusivism, conflicts and wars challenging the building of a multicultural world. These developments are constraining respect for basic human rights and accepting diversity of peoples and values as natural, and not threatening, realities (Yusuf 2018, 3-4).

Oppression and violence continue in Palestine thanks to the "exceptionalist" behaviour of Israel and its compliant patron the United States. One must also not neglect the plight of Muslim minorities in Mindanao, in southern parts of Thailand, and in Myanmar, who have experienced conflict and sufferings with no end in sight.

PRIMARY OF PEACE IN ISLAM

Religion and peace are intimately co-related in almost all major world traditions. Peace from the Islamic perspective is not merely the absence of war but an ideal state of inward and outward equilibrium and harmony achievable through striving against egotism, racism, economic exploitation and domination. Peace through equity and justice is a cardinal objective of Islam, often championed by Muslim intellectuals and the vast majority of ordinary Muslims. The 9/11 event has however, focused the world's eyes on Muslim terrorists, leading to a much distorted view of Islam and Muslims. History shows that Muslim countries were where the persecuted of Europe, in particular the Jews, sought refuge. The pogroms and the inquisitions in Europe forced the Jews to migrate to both the Muslim countries of North Africa and the Ottoman territories.

The Qur'an designates the Muslims as a community of the middle path "*ummatan wasatatan*," which together with its parallel concept of 'mutual recognition' (*ta'aruf*) for friendship, visualises Muslims as the agents and facilitators of peace. In

the Muslim historical narrative too, Islam is a progressive, tolerant, and civilising force with binding rules constraining injustice and wanton violence. Islam's self-identity as a "religion of peace" is based on the premise that Islam challenges the root causes of human violence. Islamic scripture provides varied readings of warrior and pacifist perspectives. An attempt is made in the following pages to present the Islamic vision of peace and the varied ways in which the Islamic source evidence is interpreted by its classical and contemporary commentators.

The pathways to peace are also enriched by Islam's rich tradition of Sufism, and its wealth of teachings on human fraternity, compassion, justice, beneficence, avoidance of harm to others, and a dignified resistance to provocation (*hilm*). A coercive narrative of peace through subjugation also exists, but which is, however, exceptional to Islam's normative advocacy of pacifism that is sustained by our readings of Islam's history and scripture.

Insofar as Muslims feel that they are "under siege," and antagonised by world powers, radical and authoritarian readings of Islam maintain considerable vitality and appeal. That said, there is a compelling core of Islamic values for a rich understanding of peace that transcends the medieval legal constructs of war and peace, themselves not altogether devoid of departures from essential guidelines. Muslims are encouraged by the core teachings of their religion to deepen their commitment to equity and justice in a people-friendly and cosmopolitan manner.

A narrow preoccupation with Western hostility towards Islam has prevented Muslims from addressing local conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, and from taking advantage of increasingly democratic trends in their societies. Although radical fundamentalists like Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi have been content with a superficial appropriation of discredited symbols from earlier times (*dar al-harb, dar al-Islam*, belligerent jihad and revival of a caliphate), moderate revivalist thinkers have placed emphasis on the need for new ways of thinking about problems of domestic and international peace (Funk and Said 2009, 130).

Evidence shows that Islam has not been witness to any more violence than one finds in other civilisations, particularly that of the West, as manifested in colonialism, World War I & II, the occupations and conflicts of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere. Nonetheless, for the West it seems that events like the Muslim conquest of Spain and the Ottoman domination of Eastern Europe have provided a historical memory associating Islam with force and power.

Moreover, the upheavals of the past decades in the Middle East, and especially movements using the name of Islam and jihad for political ends, have reinforced the idea that, in some special way, Islam is related to violence (Nasr 2005, 273). Mainstream Islamophobic propaganda readily endorse and magnify that image.

PEACE AS A THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

Islam's intimate identity with peace begins with its name: *Islam* derives from the notion of *salm, silm*, and *salamah*, meaning security, peace-making, resignation and conciliation, and is also associated with *salam* in the daily greeting of Muslims: *as-salam alaykum* 'may peace abide with you.' It is an assurance of security and freedom from all harm. For Muslims *Islam*, conventionally translated as "submission to the will of God," suggests a state of peace and security that comes through renunciation of willfulness and rebellion. Sincere resignation to God's revealed guidance is the essential connotation of "*Islam*.," and it serves as the name for the Muslim faith. "I have chosen Islam as your religion" (Q al-Ma'idah, 5:3).

Another important spiritual foundation for peace in Islam is the belief that God is Peace and is the ultimate source of Peace: "He is God; there is no god save He; the King; the Holy and the Peace (*al-Salam*)" (Q al-Hashr, 59:23).[1] Symbolising the exalted name and attribute of God, peace in Islam thus partakes in a sparkle of the divine.

The five daily prayers (*salah*) that Muslims perform end with the salutation "peace be upon you," saluting first the right side of the world and then the left side of the world. Then also God's illustrious name *al-Salam* is recited in the supplication (*du'a*) at the conclusion of the five daily prayers by Muslim worshippers: "O God, you are Peace, the source of Peace, and to you Peace returns, so help us live in peace and admit us in the abode of peace…"

Islam's notion of peace is holistic, implanted in the essence of human conscience and radiated into their hearts. This is to be manifested into healthy thinking and positive attitudes, peaceful treatment of fellow men and women, the living inhabitants of the earth, as well as the flora and fauna of their natural surroundings (Husin 2015, 319-20).

The natural world is in a constant state of peace and submission, according to the Qur'an, it is *muslim* (small m) in that it surrenders itself (*taslim*) to the will of God, thus rising above all tension and discord (Q al-Aal 'Imran, 3:83; al-Tawbah,

9:53). In its normative depiction of natural phenomenon and existential world, the Qur'an talks about stars and trees as in a state of surrender, "prostration before God." (Q al-Rahman, 55:6) Tranquility and repose thus becomes the normative order of God's creation, the beginning and end of all existence.

God shows His human servants the path to seek Him, and whoever sets out upon that path is rewarded with an inner tranquility (*sakinah* – Q al-Tawbah, 9:26 and 40) that gives him strength to build a peaceful environment around him. Peace comes from God, but not in an obvious way, as the Qur'an says: "He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers...so that they might grow firm in their faith (in Him)" (Q al-Fath, 48:4). God then praises those who live peacefully with others in daily life: "The [true] servants of God are those who walk the earth with humility, and when the ignorant address them, they reply 'Peace'" (Q al-Furqan, 25:63). Peace is thus to be found, not outside the heart of man, but primarily within it, and from here it spreads to the outer world. From the Qur'anic perspective, peace finds expression in three interlocking circles, the first of which is peace of the heart, which in turn nurtures peace with God and faith in Him, and which then extends to the third circle, peace with the outside world. All three circles interact and influence one another (Zakzouk 2004, 126-7).

Islam itself may not be imposed on anyone through compulsion and violence (Q al-Baqarah, 2:256). The Qur'an confirms that coerced religion would be pointless as it destroys the essence of conviction and belief. Muslims are enjoined to invite non-Muslims "to the Way of Thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious...God is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good" (Q al-Nahl, 16: 125-28). For the key Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymiyyah [d. 1328 CE], the idea of initiating unprovoked war to convert people to Islam belies the religion: "If the unbeliever were to be killed unless he becomes a Muslim, such an action would constitute the greatest compulsion in religion" (Khadduri 1966, 49). Ibn Taymiyyah's renowned disciple, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah [d. 1350 CE] (1983) reiterated this point and wrote that "fighting is permitted on account of war, not on account of disbelief" (17).

Paul Hedges (2015) wrote that "the freedom of religion that Europe developed around the period we called the Enlightenment actually came from an admiration of the tolerance seen in the Ottoman Empire" (29). The Ottomans had many religious traditions represented amongst their subjects,

and enacted policies to allow them to live together in relative harmony. The Ottoman Millet system that applied to non-Muslim religious communities was the institutional means for accommodation of religious diversity. Over centuries of expansion into non-Muslim lends the application of this institution created an elaborate structure of fairly autonomous communities whose religious leaders were even able to develop formal relations with the rulers of other Muslim empires (Hess 1995, 107). In a manner unimaginable at the time, the Christian Kingdoms of Europe, Jews, Sabeans, and Hindus had access to considerably high state posts from the time of Mu'awiyah [r. 661-80] to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century (Kalin 2010, 19). "Europe had nothing like this, and so had to learn from it" (Hedges, 2015). Moreover, the Ottomans were not simply inventing but were building upon foundations going back to the Prophet Muhammad and his early successors, the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs.

An allied concept to peace that takes a central place in the Islamic order of values is compassion (*rahmah*). God says in the Qur'an: "My mercy encompasses everything" (Q al-A'raf, 7:156), and that "God has written mercy upon Himself" (Q al-An'am, 6:12, & 54). Like compassion, peace cannot be imposed from outside. It starts within the hearts and minds of people and the dynamics it generates are externalised through patience, tolerance, generosity, and forgiveness (Zakzouk 2004, 115).

Ihsan (beauty and benevolence) is an integral part of the peace and spirituality of Islam. It is, possible to act rightly but be devoid of *ihsan*. One can also practice the externalities of one's religion at the level of submission (*islam*) but be devoid of faith (*iman*). One can even be religious in both these senses (*islam*, *iman*) but be lacking in beauty and spiritual devotion (*ihsan*). The Qur'an repeatedly mentions God's love for the *muhsinun*, or those who practice *ihsan*, and this is only possible when the existential reality of one's daily life is not overwhelmed by conflict. Peace thus becomes the prerequisite of beauty; it has theological significance, and it partakes in the comprehensive fulfillment of Islam.

PEACE THROUGH INCLUSIVITY AND UNIVERSALISM

Tawhid, the principle of Divine Oneness, is the first article of the Muslim faith and a major theme of the Qur'an. There is only one God and essentially only one humanity too, which implies that all humans are equal, simply because we are all of the one and the same essence and ancestry. "O mankind!" God says in the Qur'an, "surely We have created you from a male and a female and made you

into tribes and nations so that you may get to know each other. The noblest of you with God are the most righteous of you." (Q al-Hujurat, 49:13). The Qur'an also appeals to the people to cooperate in good deeds and "cooperate not in hostility and sin" (Q al-Ma'idah, 5:2), and then it also enjoins them to: "vie with one another in good works. For to God you shall all return…" (Q al-Ma'idah, 5:48). *Tawhid* thus constitutes the basis of Islam's universalism, inclusivity and tolerance.

The universalist outlook of *tawhid* is also manifested in reference to the sanctity of human life. Every human life is equally important, without discrimination of any kind. God has repeatedly proclaimed that human life – a sacred gift – may never be taken without a "just cause." Islam protects every life and therefore seeks to establish safety and security for all.

In the Sufi tradition, *tawhid* has meant not only the unity of God but also the presence of God within His creation and the complete dependence of creation upon its divine foundation – a condition some Sufi metaphysicists have described as "the unity of being" (*wahdat al-wujud*). By offering an "inner Islam" for those seeking a path to God, Sufism has left a profound mark on Islamic culture. By expressing itself in literature, philosophy, music, poetry, ethics and visual arts, Sufism created a culture in which love (*'ishq, mahabbah*) is "presented as the key to Islamic life and practice" (Murata and Chittick 1994, 309).

The Qur'an is cognizant, nevertheless, of internal diversity and pluralism among human communities and nations on account of language, creed, custom and culture (Kadayifci-Orellana and Sharify-Funk 2010, 190). The implications of *tawhid* in a pluralist world would be to discover through dialogue that which is common and universal in the religions and pursue them through respectful debate and cooperation. It would also mean seeking to strengthen the institutions of international law and bolster a global civil society of world opinion to promote and protect peace and justice in the world (Cornwall 2010, 11).

Advocates of peace through universalism seek to engage with representatives of different cultures and religions on the basis of what they understand as the Qur'anic principle of divinely-sanctioned pluralism in human societies. Human diversity exists as a function of divine will and not of human proclivity alone. In light of this diversity, exchanges of views about the world's many pressing problems ought to be conducted in a way that not only reflects Islamic values but also calls on others to act on the guidance they have received.

Authoritative voices among Muslims who embrace the Sufi dimension of Islam have often called for respectful communication among all of the world's religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Prominent Muslim scholars, including Seyyid Hossein Nasr (2002) and Abdul Aziz Said (2009), maintain that Islam offers a confident but not overbearing perspective on human religious experience. Islam retains its core theological claim with respect to the principle of divine unity while supporting dialogue among spiritual practitioners on a basis of appreciation and mutuality (Nasr 2002, 221; Funk and Said 2009, 216).

The absence of a central religious authority or clergy in the Islamic tradition preempts authoritarianism as a model, and as further attested by the multiplicity of schools of Islamic theology and law. The incremental process of establishing orthodoxy is not therefore the monopoly of the ulama; it is shaped by a multitude of social agents, including men of letters, political leaders, artists, scientists, traders and theologians. The dissemination of religious authority on the one hand, and the malleability of cultural expressions in Muslim societies on the other, have challenged authoritarianism and also raised questions of legitimacy and authenticity.

In creating their cultural orthopraxis, Muslim communities used the ethical universalism of the Qur'an and Sunnah, especially the Qur'anic call to enjoin what is good and praiseworthy (*ma'ruf*) and reject what is morally evil and disliked (*munkar*). This non-culture-specific injunction was addressed to all people, regardless of their religious affiliations. The notion of the middle community (*ummah wasatah*, Q al-Baqarah, 2:143) supports the same ethical universalism: "And thus We willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind, and that the Messenger might be a witness over yourselves."

This ethico-spiritual universalism aims to create an open society based on moral values, not on the received traditions of one tribe, city or nation. The fact that the Qur'an positions itself against the cultural and tribal localism of pre-Islamic Arabia confirms its universalist outlook (Kalin 2010, 24). Gaining status and socio-political ascendancy thus came to be based on two qualities: knowledge (*'ilm*) and moral virtue (*taqwa*) (cf., Q al-Hujurat, 49:13). These were the ultimate criteria of nobility before both God and humanity. In this milieu, cultural and religious co-existence is not based on the mere temporary absence of conflict and confrontation between Muslims and non-Muslims; its

positive character is attested to by Muslims' inclusive attitude toward other cultures and religions, making Islamic civilisation, as Hodgson (1974) phrased it, "simultaneously both Islamic and islamicate."[2]

The experience of *conveviencia* among Jews, Christians and Muslims in Andalus was a result of the Islamic notion of cultural inclusivism. While the Jews of Europe were subjected to woeful vilifications during the Middle Ages, a major Jewish intellectual tradition developed under Muslim rule and included prominent figures of medieval Jewish thought. This resulted in a unique interaction between medieval Jewish philosophy on the one hand, and Islamic philosophy, *kalam*, and Sufism on the other (Kalin 2010, 27).

During the ninth and tenth centuries CE, Baghdad, the Abbasid Empire's capital, became one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the medieval world, where Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars collaboratively searched for knowledge. Along with Cordoba in Andalusia, Baghdad was one of the two focal points of a remarkable research programme: collection, translation and synthesis of all known sources of human knowledge. Not only Greek but also Indian, Iranian and Chinese advances in knowledge were integrated into this synthesis. Syriac Christian and Jewish scholars played a particularly vital role in an officially sponsored effort to translate Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic (Funk and Said 2009, 220f).

In the Indian subcontinent, a cultural syncretism was developed between Hindu and Muslim cultures by both Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's [d. 1047 CE] historic study of India and Amir Khusraw's [d. 1325] formulation of an Islamic identity in the Indian cultural environment. A vast literature came into being as a result, generating a unique symbiosis between the two worlds at social, philosophical, artistic and cultural levels (Hyman 1966, 677; Kalin 2010, 27-8). Such modes of inclusivity and coexistence were made possible by the Qur'anic recognition of diversity and mutual recognition:

> Unto each of you We have appointed a [different] law and way of life. And if God had so willed, He could surely have made you all one single community. But [He willed it otherwise] in order to test by means of what He has vouchsafed unto you. Vie, then, with one another in doing good works! (Q al-Ma'idah, 5:48; and Hud, 11:118).

Even though Muslim fundamentalists consider cases of cultural symbiosis and syncretism as deviations from their idealised construct of Islam, both the

Islamic intellectual tradition and Muslim societies have envisaged peace as a cross-cultural and intercommunal value that overrides and subsumes isolated and sectarian readings of Islamic heritage and scripture (Kalin 2010, 29).

Sufism provides a powerful outlook on inclusivity and universalism. For it opens a window to the inner world of spirituality, linking peace in the world to internal processes of human transformation. A Sufi approach to spirituality represents Islam's capacity for fostering inclusiveness and an appreciation of human differences. According to this universalist Islamic perspective, cultural and religious diversity becomes a resource for humanity's enrichment.

Although the Sufis did not create a separate sect within Islam, they were united by an ambitious understanding of the spiritual paths of their religion. They aspired not so much to attain a heavenly reward in the afterlife, as to 'meet' God in life through a deep commitment to doing what is beautiful in daily activities and observances (Murata and Chittick 1994, 267). Even today, Sufism transcends sectarian identities and represents an aspect of Islam whose core doctrines are shared by both Sunni and Shia. The broad-minded ecumenical and universalist tendencies within Sufism have endowed the present generation of Muslims with a rich heritage that can be used to build bridges of cross-cultural and interreligious understanding in the modern world.

WHAT OF *JIHAD*?

Among the root causes of jihad (lit. struggle, effort), that is sometimes equated with 'terrorism', commentators have identified: a perceived state of Western injustice and oppression of Muslims; disenchantment with post-colonial secular nationalism; emergence of new conflicts in Muslim lands; the failed attempts to establish Islamic rule; and increased sale of arms by major Western producers often to both sides of the conflict (Petrigh 2011, 8).

References to jihad in the Qur'an are found in twenty-four verses, most of which advance a spiritual and non-violent understanding of jihad, concerned mainly with being steadfast in faith and being prepared to make sacrifices in its cause; with the migration of the nascent Muslim community from Mecca to Medina; and with peaceful propagation of Islam. Some of the verses refer to personal and financial sacrifices, and others to jihad in the sense of armed struggle against enemies (Bassiouni and Guellali 2010, 126-7).

Contemporary Muslims speak of jihad in various ways. For instance, they refer to jihad against poverty and disease, against discrimination and prejudice, 'business jihad,' and even 'gender jihad.' In its Qur'anic usage, especially in the early Meccan revelations, the emphasis was on the peaceful meanings of jihad. If some of the Meccan revelations on jihad were given warlike interpretations, it was because such was more in consonance with traditional Arab chivalry than with the Qur'anic spirit of peace. It is also these warlike interpretations that have been relied upon by many contemporary jihadist groups (129).

During the initial thirteen years of his ministry in Mecca, the Prophet conducted his mission entirely through non-violent means, to the extent that he did not allow his followers to defend themselves against aggression. The Meccans persecuted and forced a number of the Prophet's Companions to migrate, initially to Abyssinia, and later to Medina. Some of them urged the Prophet to allow reciprocal response, which he declined due to repeated Qur'anic verses, including:

> So wait patiently (O Muhammad) for thy Lord's decree, surely thou art in Our sight
> (Q al-Tur, 52:48);
> Then bear with them and say: peace. They will (eventually) come to know
> (Q al-Zukhruf, 43:89).
>
> So overlook (any human faults), with gracious forgiveness (Q al-Hijr, 15:85);
> Repel (evil) with what is better, and when you do that, the one with whom you had enmity will become your dearest friend (Q Fussilat, 41:34).

But when the pagans of Mecca conspired an attack on the Prophet's life, he migrated to Medina, even then the Qur'anic permission to fight was not granted until a year later, when the Meccans set out to attack the Muslim community some 270 km away in Medina. The first Qur'anic verse that permitted fighting was then revealed:

> Permission is granted to those who fight because they have been wronged, and God is indeed able to give them victory; those who were driven from their homes unjustly because they said: our Lord is God (Q al-Naba', 78:39).

Jihad in the sense of self-discipline, or *jihad al-nafs*, is also repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an:

> And whoever strives (*jahada*), he only strives for his own self, for God is independent of his creatures (Q al-'Ankabut, 29:6).
> As for those who strive for Us (*jahadu fina*), We surely guide them to Our paths (Q al-'Ankabut, 29:69).
> Obey not the unbelievers, but strive against them with it (*jahidhum bihi* – i.e. by the Qur'an) with utmost striving (*jihadan kabiraa*) (Q al-Furqan, 25:59).

The renowned Companion, Ibn 'Abbas, commented that the phrase 'strive with the utmost striving' denotes preaching and exhortation as the greatest of all kinds of jihad, and that 'with it' [in the last verse] refers to the Qur'an itself (Al-Buti 1995, 16). References to jihad in the three verses just quoted have no military connotations. The greatest jihad thus mentioned is the jihad of enlightenment and education, as guided by the Qur'an itself.

According to a Hadith: 'The *mujahid* is he who wages a struggle against himself'.[1] And then again that 'The best form of jihad is to tell a word of truth (*kalimatu haqqin*) to a tyrannical ruler.[2] 'Jihad against the self' is the foundation of all jihad, for fighting an external enemy would not be possible without a successful engagement in this inner jihad. The Sufis have taken this Hadith as the main authority for their doctrines (Al-Mubarakfuri 1963, 250).

In a Hadith record by al-Bukhari and Muslim, a young man asked the Prophet: 'should I join the jihad'?' In response, the Prophet asked him a question 'Do you have parents?' and when the man said 'Yes', the Prophet told him 'then strive by serving them.'[3]

Whereas in Mecca Qur'anic references to jihad were all to its peaceful manifestations; in Medina references to jihad began to include military jihad (cf., Q al-Baqarah, 2:215; al-Tawbah, 9:41; al-Hujurat, 49:15). But these passages validated jihad in the sense of a 'just war' fought to repel:

> And fight in the way of God those who wage war on you, but do not transgress, for God loves not the transgressors (Q al-Baqarah, 2:190).

Thus, it is clear that military jihad is waged in self-defence and against aggression. By contrast, it appears that jihad as an offensive war does not have any scriptural mandate: it is a latent development that features in the work of some jurists and commentators who sought to legitimise the policies of territorial expansion (Ahmad 1983, 185). When planning to mobilise the military for purposes of annexation or conquest, especially at times when no

organised armies existed, Muslim rulers would encourage the religious leaders to declare jihad to legitimise attack. This was the case, for example, when Amir Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan waged a jihad against Nuristan in 1895, which he annexed and is now a province of Afghanistan. He convened a large number of religious figures to issue a collective fatwa in support of the proposed attack (Wikipedia 2021; Kamali 1985, 7).

The peaceful objectives of jihad and respect for freedom of religion can be seen in the renowned Constitution of Medina, dating back to the first year of the *hijra*/622CE. This document guaranteed freedom of religion for non-Muslims, Jews and Christians. The same sentiment is noted in a renowned letter by the first caliph Abu Bakr, dated 12/635, that exhorted the Muslim troops leaving for a Syrian campaign to protect civilian life and property, avoid torture and undignified treatment of prisoners of war. Drawn at such an early point of Islamic history, it is remarkable to note how closely Abu Bakr's letter resonates with the spirit of contemporary international law. Respect for freedom of religion is also manifested in the second caliph, Umar al-Khattab's example following the defeat of the Romans at the Battle of Yarmouk in 648 CE. The caliph made a pledge on behalf of all Muslims to protect the places of worship of Jews and Christians and allow them unhindered freedom of access to their churches and synagogues (Bassiouni and Guellali 2010, 140).

Muhammad Abu Zahrah [d. 1974] (1961) has quoted Taqi al-Din lbn Taymiyyah [d. 1328] in support of his own conclusion that war in Islam is permitted for only one purpose: defence against aggression. This is why the permission to fight granted by the Qur'an to Muslims is immediately qualified by the phrase 'and do not transgress' (24-5). The ultimate goal of war in Islam is to prevent *fitnah* (sedition, tumult), as in the verse: 'And fight them until *fitnah* is exterminated' (Q al-Anfal, 8:39).

Influenced by the prevailing pattern of hostile relations with non-Muslims, some Muslim jurists took an extreme position on the subject of abrogation (*naskh*) in the Qur'an. The so-called verse of the sword (a*yat al-sayf,* Q al-Tawbah, 9:5) was thus taken to abrogate no less than 114 (and according to some, 140) verses on peaceful relations with non-Muslims spread across 54 suras of the Qur'an. The verse in question was revealed at a time when the Prophet negotiated the truce of Hudaybiyah with the pagans of Quraysh. A year later, the Quraysh violated the terms of that treaty, and it was on this occasion that the verse in question was revealed, addressing Muslims to 'Slay those who ascribe divinity

to others than God wherever you find them, and take them captive and besiege them' (Q al-Tawbah, 9:5). The text then states that, if the enemy forces repent and mend their ways, violence must be brought to an end. I shall not engage with the details of abrogation here, which I have treated elsewhere (Kamali 2003, 202-28), but suffice to say that it is a controversial subject and that to use it in order to establish such a drastic position as abrogating a whole chunk of the Qur'an on peaceful relations, justice and tolerance, patience and perseverance, treating others with fairness and dignity, is far too excessive. The verse is also taken out of its particular context and exceedingly generalised.

In course of time, juristic writings on jihad became so preoccupied with the military aspects of the term that eventually it began to be used only in this sense, to the near-total exclusion of its wider connotations. Western militarism and violence during and after colonialism exacerbated the situation; against the background of the West's anti-Islamic policies and onslaughts, the Muslims began to strike back and became more inclined to embrace the militaristic interpretations of jihad. The persistent Western media depiction of Muslims as prone to terrorism and violence calls for a corrective: the fact is, as Mazrui (2002) noted, that 'in the last 100 years Western civilisation has killed millions more people than any other way of life in the annals of man in a comparable unit of time.... It has also been the West in the preceding 100 years which had made warfare less and less respectful of civilians' (1). The Christian ethic of the minimisation of violence has been observed more by non-Christians in Asia and Africa and elsewhere than by ostensible followers of the Cross (3-4).[6]

Al-Bukhari [d. 870] and Muslim [d. 875] have recorded the hadith that "One who helps widows and the poor are like fighters in the path of God".[7] According to another hadith, recorded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal [d. 855] and al-Tirmidhi [d. 892], "One who strives against oneself is a *mujahid* who carries out jihad".[8] The Prophet has also said: "Whoever goes out in the world seeking licit work to support his family is in the path of God; whoever goes out in the world seeking licit work to support himself, is in the path of God".[9] Al-Tirmidhi (2005) has recorded the following hadith: "Whoever departs in pursuit of knowledge is in the path of God (*fi sabil Allah*) until he returns."[10] This clearly rebuts the assertion by some that the phrase *"fi sabil Allah"* refers to military combat only. The Andalusian jurist and theologian Ibn Hazm [d. 1064 CE] (1942) held that defending Islam through non-militant, verbal and scholarly efforts qualifies as a meritorious struggle in the path of God. Jihad is best carried out, he affirmed, through inviting people to God by means firstly of the tongue; then by defending

Islam through sound opinion; and last, through armed combat. This last was, however, marginal, Ibn Hazm added, compared to the first two, as the majority of the Prophet's activities fell into the first two categories (135).

CONCLUSION

Humanity has been searching for peace for centuries, and today it is moving, not closer, but even further away from this shared ideal. Yet our deep awareness of our need for peace also impresses upon us that peace without justice will remain an elusive ideal, and peace without security from fear and oppression for all will also be short-lived. When peace is broken in one part of the world, its effects are felt in other parts far beyond territorial borders. This interconnectedness is even more pronounced now in the age of globalisation than ever before. War and calamity in one country deliver their ugly consequences to all other countries with unprecedented rapidity and scale.

Values are not merely the pre-requisite for good political and administrative decision making, but are essential for human resource development and equitable distribution of limited material resources. The core values we prize most today were first taught and implanted by revealed prophetic traditions as well as by those philosophic-ethical teachings linked to the major religions and philosophies.

These core values embrace innate human dignity and respect for the individual person; Justice, fairness and equity before the law without prejudice to any; and equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender or family origin. Likewise, moral sincerity and integrity in one's transactions with others, security and peace to ensure healthy flourishing, compassion and forgiveness to promote harmony and peaceable conditions. These are permanent values rooted in the divine sources of all great religions.

To advance further the larger dialogue for establishing international peace and security, one must begin by a paradigm shift within our own thinking and in the formulation of policies by nation states. We should work towards building general consensus on certain core fundamentals for establishing durable peace. Below are five such fundamentals involving five governmental shifts:

First, the shift from security and order based on state security to one based on human moral purpose.
Two, a shift from security as the central object of national order, to people's

security as a central goal for all.

Third, a shift from pursuit of narrow national interests to enlightened national interests and hopefully planetary interests.

Fourth, a shift from unilateral security to cooperative security.

And **fifth**, a shift from focusing on narrow military security to an inclusive approach that combine comprehensive ecological security.

These shifts need to be made and undertaken, if we were to have a better chance of existing together, with reciprocal cooperation by working together for the higher human purposes most of us aspire to achieve.

NOTES

1 "Al-Salam" is one of the ninety-nine Most Excellent Names (*al-asma' al-husna*) of God that occur in the Qur'an. These are descriptive of the illustrious Self of God, the way that God makes Himself known to His human servants.

2 The term *Islamicate* suggested the hybrid and multifaceted nature of Islamic civilisation, as many previously non-Islamic elements were incorporated into Islamic civilisation in a relatively short period of time.

3 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mubarakfuri. *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi bi-Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Uthman (Cairo: Matba'at al-Marifa, 1963), hadith no. 1671.

4 Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah, Abwab al-Fitan. Bab al-Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa'l-Nahy 'an al-Munkar*, ed. Al-Arnauth (Beirut: Dar al-Risalah al-Ilmiyyah, 2009), hadith no. 4012. Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi have recorded a slightly different version of this *hadith* which mentions, the word *'adl'* (justice) instead of *'haqq'* (truth).

5 Muslim, Sahih Muslim, *Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Silah wa'l-Adab, Bab Birr al-Walidayn*, ed. Muhammad Fuad (Cairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub, 1991), hadith no. 2549.

6 Ali Mazrui mentions in this connection leading non-Western personalities, including Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Luthuli, Anwar Sadat, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, and Kofi Annan whose advocacy of peace echoed the spirit of Christian teachings better than that of the mainstream Christian themselves.

7 A J Wensinck, *Al-Mu'djam al-Mufabras li-Alfaz al-Hadith al-Nabawi*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E J Brill, 1967), 389.

[8] Ibid.

[9] 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani. *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2000), 271-2.

[10] Muhammad Ibn Isa Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Darul Al-Hadith, 2005), hadith no: 2647.

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Contesting the South China Sea: Significance and Spin-Offs

Elina Noor

ABSTRACT

Although the South China Sea has been an area of both maritime and territorial contention for several decades now, recent developments in the air and cyber domains point to greater assertiveness and narrowing options for smaller claimant states such as Malaysia. Before considering these emerging theaters of tension as well as their diplomatic and security ramifications, it is worth taking a step back to recall the significance of the South China Sea for Malaysia. This article will first offer three reasons why the South China Sea is important to Malaysia as a claimant state. It will then examine the "spillage" of the dispute into the air and cyber domains, as evidenced by current and longer-term incidents.

Keywords: Nation-state, maritime contention, territorial contention, cyberspace, encroachment

I. WHAT THE SOUTH CHINA SEA MEANS FOR MALAYSIA

(i) Hydrocarbons

The oil and gas sector contributes 20 per cent of Malaysia's annual GDP.[1] Finite if not dwindling resource, hydrocarbons will continue to remain an important economic sector for the country's domestic and export market in the foreseeable future. The Malay and Penyu basins off Peninsular Malaysia, as well as deposits in the Sarawak and Sabah basins, for example, continue to yield "prolific" production of oil and gas.[2]

Much has been made of hydrocarbon estimates in the sea bed of the South China Sea. In 2013, the US Energy Information Agency estimated that the South China Sea holds about 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 11 billion barrels of oil in proved and probable reserves.[3] Most of these reserves lie around the coastal states rather than under the disputed features of the South China Sea. In 2012, the US Geological Survey estimated potentially 160 trillion cubic feet more of natural gas and 12 billion barrels of oil in the South China Sea. Because most of these estimated reserves are projected to be near the Spratly Islands

rather than the Paracel Islands, they privilege the Southeast Asian claimant states of Brunei, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

The US estimates are valued at between US$3 – US$8 trillion. Chinese estimates, however, are said to be significantly higher at between US$25 – US$60 trillion.[4] This could partly explain China's increasingly forceful moves in the area. The fact is that there is no definitively quantifiable amount of hydrocarbons in the South China Sea just yet. The estimates are exactly that – estimates – and exploratory drilling will have to be done to determine more accurate projections. That is hard to do when there are conflicting claims in the South China Sea, especially with China's so-called nine-dash line as well as its rejection of the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration's decision.[5]

Exploration activities in Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have become more challenging over the years, particularly off the coast of Sarawak. While surveys in the Sarawak basin, including around the North, West, and Central Luconia geological provinces have attracted commercial interest, they have also drawn regular and persistent harassment at sea. In 2020, Malaysia's auditor-general reported 89 incursions by Chinese vessels between 2016 and 2019, while the Washington-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative reported that between 2018 and 2019 alone, at least one Chinese vessel remained around the Luconia Shoals for up to 258 days.[6] From December 2019 to May 2020, China's fishing and coast guard vessels tailed a survey ship, *West Capella*, contracted by Petronas to conduct exploratory drilling within Malaysia's EEZ off the coast of Sabah and Sarawak. In April 2020, China deployed its own survey ship, *Haiyang Dizhi 8*, towards east Malaysia escorted by a number of China Coast Guard (CCG) and maritime militia vessels. In an act of both defiance and intimidation, the *Haiyang Dizhi 8* approached as close as 8.5 nautical miles to the *West Capella* and stayed within Malaysia's EEZ and continental shelf. The Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) deployed their own vessels to patrol and protect the country's EEZ but the fact that this episode took place during a time of political turbulence in Malaysia and at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was a particular slap in the face to the country.

It seems prudent to anticipate increased encounters in the maritime and other domains of the South China Sea, especially with sizeable discoveries of natural gas, prospecting of deepwater oil, and projections of Malaysia contributing about 12 per cent or 3.1 billion cubic feet (bcf) of global natural gas in 2025

beginning 2021.[7] Additionally, as external (non-Southeast Asian) powers increasingly sail through the area, the risks and consequences of escalation or miscalculation among self-declared adversarial parties will be especially acute for smaller, littoral states like Malaysia. During the harassment of the *West Capella*, for example, US and Australian naval vessels conducted joint exercises in the area, operating within 53 nautical miles of the ship. A few days later, another US naval ship patrolling the area passed within 24 nautical miles of *Haiyang Dizhi* 8.[8]

Tensions at sea do not make for a stable investment climate. It bears reminding that in 2018, Hanoi – having itself been on the receiving end of similar intimidation offshore – ultimately suspended two offshore gas production projects in the South China Sea that were entering into commercialisation with the Spanish energy company, Repsol. The suspension was reportedly due to Chinese pressure.[9]

The larger energy landscape, however, is underwritten by a complex mix of political, security, and commercial dynamics. A combination of corporate consolidation, regulatory trends, and market forces have already swayed a number of divestment decisions by North American and European energy companies away from Southeast Asia. As a result, regional state-owned enterprises such as Thailand's PTTEP have expanded operations acquiring the assets and interests of foreign players in Malaysia.[10] This may result in various technical and technological challenges but could, in fact, bring greater opportunities for Southeast Asian cooperation in an area otherwise simmering beneath the surface. Against this backdrop, what Malaysia's public and private sector leaders will have to assess will be whether the benefits of surveying the subsea soil will outweigh the costs, economically (i.e. whether they will be commercially viable), diplomatically (i.e. whether neighbouring ties will be severely affected), and militarily (i.e. just how much added pressure Malaysia will be putting on its maritime enforcement and naval personnel as well as the aging assets of both services).

(ii) Marine resources

The South China Sea is one of the world's most biologically diverse marine areas but knowledge of its fauna is relatively incomplete. The most comprehensive catalogue of its fishes lists 3,365 species in 263 families. The South China Sea is also home to 20 per cent of Southeast Asia's reefs and more than half of the region's hard coral species diversity.[11] The richness of these reefs, corals, and the fauna that are dependent on them means that the South China Sea holds precious

preservation value for what it contains alone. But the sea is also a rich reservoir of still-untapped sources of genetic and biochemical material for medical and health purposes.[12] Its ecotourism potential, developed and managed sustainably, can not only add to job and economic growth but perhaps more importantly, be a focal point of environmental education and advocacy for future generations.[13] Although marine environmental degradation has regrettably been occurring even in and around Malaysia's world-class diving havens such as Pulau Sipadan, recent sightings of a sperm whale and common minke whale around Luconia Shoals should provide impetus to take conservation more seriously.[14]

The marine diversity of the South China Sea makes it one of the top five most productive fishing zones in the world in terms of total annual marine production. The area contributes about 12 per cent of the global catch.[15] Between 1950 and 2014, the South China Sea made up 20 per cent of the total 2.5 billion tonnes of fish caught in Asia's 13 Large Marine Ecosystems, which include the East China Sea, Bay of Bengal, Gulf of Thailand, and Indonesian Sea.[16] However, fish catch figures are likely largely incomplete and underestimated particularly with the problem of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

It is a problem the region increasingly faces as fish stocks come under pressure and larger trawlers from the northern reaches of the South China Sea venture further and more aggressively down south to Malaysia's EEZ to make up their numbers. From January to December 2020, the MMEA together with other agencies and departments intercepted 15,450 vessels and arrested 71 for various offences off Sarawak. Under Op Naga Timur launched in June 2019, MMEA detained and arrested 11 foreign boats along with 97 crew members. The total haul from those arrests were valued at RM10 million. As part of another operation launched in June 2020, MMEA Sarawak arrested 11 Vietnamese boats in Malaysia's EEZ.[17] Off the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, from April 2019 to most of 2020, Op Naga Barat netted 129 foreign fishing boats and 1,290 foreign crew found illegally fishing in the country's EEZ.[18]

For Malaysian authorities, encroachment into Malaysia's maritime zone has been a challenge for years. In 2014, then-Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Shahidan Kassim, reported to Parliament that Chinese warships had encroached into Malaysia's EEZ in the South China Sea nearly once a year since 2011. These incursions increased in 2013 around Beting Serupai (James Shoal), Beting Patinggi Ali (South Luconia Shoal), and Beting Raja Jarom (North Luconia Shoal), all within Malaysia's EEZ, warranting increased patrols

year-on-year by both the MMEA and RMN.[19] Similar concerns have been raised consistently over the years with regard to regular Chinese presence around Beting Patinggi Ali and the intimidation of local area fishermen.[20]

Over time, if current trajectories of overfishing and climate change are not reversed, pressures on the fishing communities and governments of the littoral states bordering the South China Sea will only increase.[21]

(iii) The nation-state

Of fundamental concern is how the Malaysian nation is split, geographically and demographically, by the South China Sea. At its narrowest point, the distance between peninsula Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak measures roughly 600 km. At its widest point, that distance increases to about 1,600 km. That distance between peninsular Malaysia and "east" Malaysia can only be covered by flight or sea. What this means for a small country with a modest defence budget is that Malaysian forces have to be split between two geographical territorial entities with sufficient air, land, and sea deployment in separate parts of the country. Moreover, Malaysia's long coastal borders measuring 8,840 kilometers and maritime zone spanning 637,734.23 square kilometers[22] can be challenging to defend against a range of threats, especially with limited resources and aging assets. The physical cleaving of Malaysia by the South China Sea is compounded by a legacy cabotage policy that has long-strained political and economic ties between the two halves of Malaysia, raising costs, restricting intra- and international market access, and adding to the resentment felt by the country's two easternmost states.[23]

The South China Sea does not only literally divide Malaysia as a nation; it also does so figuratively. While some would argue that ethnic and religious relations are less complicated in Borneo, creating a sense of nationhood in two separate parts of the country across an expanse of water that takes at least three hours to reach by air becomes exponentially more complex with lingering historical bitterness and socio-economic inequalities.[24] Fostering a sense of unity spanning various vernaculars, ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, faiths and lived experiences, across the South China Sea is not only a challenge for the nation-state. It is also a challenge for the state of the nation. It is crucial to bear this in mind when arguing in the defence of "sovereignty and territorial integrity". Defending the integrity of borders is one thing, defending the unity of the people within those borders is elemental. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the defence policy of Malaysia explicitly states that "the physical separation between

peninsula Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak by the South China Sea necessitates central attention towards the sea routes and air space between those territories. Any threat or disruption to the sea routes or air space there could detrimentally affect the integrity of both those territories and Malaysia as a whole".[25]

II. BEYOND THE SEA: AIR

Despite ongoing negotiations of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (CoC) as well as repeated pleas and pledges by disputing state parties to adhere to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC), increasing patterns of intimidation in the South China Sea have instead continued to erode the trust and goodwill intended by the DoC to pave the way for an effective CoC.[26]

There now looms the prospect of these provocations spilling over into other domains beyond the maritime theater. Malaysia was jolted into this realisation on 31 May 2021 when the Royal Malaysian Air Force's (RMAF) radar detected "suspicious" flights by 16 People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) planes near Malaysian airspace over the South China Sea. The Chinese transport planes flew in tactical formation, entering Malaysia's Flight Information Region without prior notice and approached as close as 60 nautical miles within Sarawak's coast. The RMAF scrambled its jets after attempts to direct the Chinese planes to contact Malaysia's air traffic control were ignored.[27] China minimised the episode as "routine training" in accordance with international law but the flights raise disturbing implications about the opening of new theaters of conflict in the South China Sea dispute.[28]

China's freedom of overflight justification is interesting given its own position on the matter with respect to US military aircraft in the past.[29] China has also repeatedly protested against US military activities both at sea and in the air as threats to international peace and security. The discrepancy in China's past rhetoric and recent actions leaves open the question of whether Beijing has now changed its legal position or whether it interprets international law discriminately and according to its own interests. Of immediate consideration, however, is whether the 16 PLAAF planes flying in close proximity to Malaysian airspace were an extension of China's campaign to assert its claims over the Spratly Islands and relatedly, a test of Malaysia's tactical response and resolve. The timing of the flights was also symbolically galling – they came on the 47th anniversary of Malaysia-China relations and a day before the RMAF's 63rd birthday. In the near future, the larger hazard is increased aerial projection by

China over the South China Sea. This would, in turn, compel a more robust response from claimant states but also escalate the risk of air encounters from regional partners in order to uphold international law.

III. BEYOND THE SEA: CYBERSPACE

Less discussed but no less disconcerting are South China Sea-related activities that have been unfolding in cyberspace for over a decade. Much of it has revolved around intelligence collection through advanced persistent threat (APT) operations. What initially started as a focus on industry – particularly, oil and gas – interests has evolved into a more strategic exercise targeting key individuals and domestic agencies in a number of Southeast Asian claimant states as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.

In April 2015, FireEye revealed a cyber espionage operation dating back to 2004 that was focused on government, commercial, and media targets with key political, economic, and military information. Labelled APT 30, the sustained campaign focused on "a special interest in political developments in Southeast Asia and India" and territorial disputes involving China, India, and Southeast Asian countries. APT 30 proved especially active "at the time of ASEAN summits".[30]

The APT 30 threat group identified by FireEye overlapped with another that Kaspersky Lab had been tracking, Naikon. Both actors had mined victims in the South China Sea area for years, "apparently in search of geo-political intelligence".[31] Kaspersky found that in the spring of 2014, there had been a spike in the volume of attack activity by Naikon. The attackers "appeared to be Chinese-speaking and targeted mainly top-level government agencies and civil and military organisations in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Singapore, Nepal, Thailand, Laos and China". Kaspersky's report fell short of attributing the operations to any state entity or sponsor but noted that the perpetrators had established a "dynamic, well-organised infrastructure", relied on an "externally developed, consistent set of tools", and achieved a "high success rate in infiltrating national organisations in ASEAN countries" over "at least five years of high-volume, high-profile, geo-political attack activity."[32]

One report that did specifically attribute cyber espionage activities to China was ThreatConnect's and Defense Group Inc.'s "Project CAMERASHY: Closing the Aperture on China's Unit 78020", which was also released in 2015.[33] The report categorised the operations under the Naikon threat group and detailed it

to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chengdu Military Region (MR) Second Technical Reconnaissance Bureau (TRB) Military Unit Cover Designator (MUCD) 78020. The MUCD 78020 is believed to operate primarily out of Kunming and has responsibility over border regions, Southeast Asia, and the South China Sea.[34] Notably, the report linked Naikon to MUCD 78020's computer network exploitation campaign against claimants. Similar to FireEye, this ThreatConnect report relied on "the structure of Naikon's campaigns, nature of the targets, and reliance on precision social engineering" to determine state support of Naikon.[35] Unlike FireEye, however, ThreatConnect went further to conclusively prove that Naikon was MUCD 78020.[36]

In fact, more than a year earlier, ThreatConnect had released another report, "Piercing the Cow's Tongue".[37] The report, released in May 2014 after nearly a year-long monitoring effort, found that APT perpetrators had weaponised numerous documents about Southeast Asia. One of those was a Microsoft Word document of talking points prepared for a Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Beijing, China from 28 – 30 August 2013. ThreatConnect summarised that the efforts were "likely the direct operational result of the People's Republic of China (PRC) government's interest in gaining intelligence connected to the deep-rooted, multi-national disputes that are ongoing in the South China Sea (SCS) region."[38]

In 2016, cybersecurity company, F-Secure, released a white paper on *nán hǎi shǔ* (南海鼠) a Remote Access Trojan (RAT) that targeted, "government and private-sector organisations that were directly or indirectly involved in the international territorial dispute centering on the South China Sea".[39] These targets included, in particular, the Philippines' Department of Justice, the organisers of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit and an international law firm representing one of the involved parties in the arbitral tribunal dispute between the Philippines and China. A sample of the malware had been seen floating in the wild in January 2015, a month after the December 2014 announcement by the tribunal requesting further written information from the Philippines.

F-Secure did not explicitly assign blame or responsibility but believed the threat actor to be of "Chinese origin", based on its target selection and technical analysis of the malware, itself.[40] F-Secure's Threat Intelligence Team Senior Manager Mina Aquino was more direct, concluding that "the attacker was most likely the Chinese government" based on the organisations targeted.[41]

Although these cyber operations seem to have peaked between 2013 and 2015, the APTs have evolved in tactics, techniques, procedures, and infrastructure to remain active under the radar. In 2020, Check Point Research, for example, observed that the Naikon threat group has continued to target several governments in Southeast Asia, namely Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, by breaching one to try and infect another.[42] There have even been occasions of APT-on-APT attacks targeting similar groups of intended victims in Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, these have included the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the National Security Council, and MMEA.[43]

Southeast Asia's responses have largely been quiet. In some instances, governments officials appear not to have even been aware of intrusions.[44] Even when intrusions were detected, Southeast Asian nations chose to respond in the region's characteristically obtuse manner. Although researchers may identify the location of IP servers in China, states will typically refrain from attributing the operations to any country.[45] There are, of course, valid reasons to abstain from naming-and-shaming. The level of technical capacity and capability, political risk of escalation, and legal uncertainty are a few. Each of these entails different dimensions of attribution: 'technical' requires the operational skills to trace and locate the source of attack; political will necessitates an assignment of responsibility to the author(s), executioner(s), and possibly even sponsor(s) or an attack; and 'legal' raises questions of what type of law and what standard or burden of proof to apply in the event of an attack.

Espionage remains a grey area in international law so all the APT incidents above might simply raise caution, especially as encounters at sea intensify.[46] Website defacement by hacktivists may draw criminal penalties according to the domestic laws of a victim state. But if there is a distributed denial of service that is sufficiently severe to bring about massive disruption to the critical infrastructure of a state, then what type of countermeasures might a state have recourse to in international law? What happens if there is a computer network operation during peacetime on a state's air defence radar systems resulting in a causal chain that physically damages property or injures human life? How might a state prove an adversary's support and sponsorship of an attack? What recourses will the affected state have under international law?

CONCLUSION

As circumstances in the South China Sea churn periodically, there is value in placing a premium on managing tensions. In this regard, Malaysia's continued reliance on diplomacy and negotiations premised on principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, will prove stabilising. Instruments such as the DOC and the COC as well as the proposal for an expanded Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) and a similar version for over-flights are, and will still, remain beneficial.

However, as the realities of the dispute begin to take a different shape and new theaters of contention unfold in the air and in cyberspace, Malaysia should prepare to recalibrate its approach to respond firmly, even creatively. As a small, still-developing country, Malaysia's resource constraints will remain a fact especially as economies all around the world grapple with recovering in the wake of COVID-19. These constraints will require bold choices for defence decisions long-postponed and disciplined redress of the shortcomings in defending Malaysia's maritime and other borders, as outlined by the Auditor-General's report in 2020.[47] Constraints do not, however, have to be paralysingly limiting.

Whereas physical assets are unavoidably costly, thought leadership does not have to be so. Greater awareness of, and participation in, international discussions on standards and global governance frameworks related to cyber and emerging technology, for example, can bolster Malaysia's negotiating positions on evolving norms of responsible state behaviour in these increasingly critical areas. By proactively contributing to ongoing debates on the application of international law in cyberspace, Malaysia can also help clarify conceptual sticking points such as when cyber operations may be considered a threat or use of force or even an armed attack, if at all. These conversations, while abstract now, may have actual consequences in the South China Sea sooner or later. It is time Malaysia fully recognises, anticipates, and responds to this rapidly changing landscape before it determines outcomes for Malaysia.

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Geostrategic and Internal Dynamics of the Afghan Conflict*

Wahabuddin Ra'ees

ABSTRACT

The conflict in Afghanistan in its fifth decade is one of the longest conflict in the world. Afghanistan's geostrategic location has attracted great and regional powers interference in its internal affairs and hence to date contributes to political instability and civil war. The Soviet invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and the US-led NATO alliance invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Iran, Pakistan, and India also have interfered in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. This study puts the conflict in Afghanistan in historical context and argues that foreign invasion and interference, absence of democratic space and a genuine political pluralism and civil society, and amateur political elites have contributed to political instability in Afghanistan. The key to resolving the conflict therefore requires the removal of these historical causes of the political instability and institutionalizing of a strong civil society.

Keywords: Pluralism, religion, national identity, ethnic conflict, Taliban

INTRODUCTION

Most academics believe that 'ethnic imbalances' constitutes the main cause of Afghanistan's internal conflicts. Although the ethnic diversity of Afghanistan may provide insights into the nature of political alignments, only investigating the nature of the relationship among its different ethnic taboos may not explain the nature of the crises in Afghanistan. Rebutting Furnival and Mill's incompatibility approach that ethnically diverse societies are doomed to fall apart[1], Horowitz joins Banton, Cross, Hechter and Lawler and argues that political alignments were not always determined by ethnic orientations. Horowitz has forcefully argued that "to explain away an ethnic conflict as a tragedy of necessity is to neglect the complex of interplay of factors out of which it arose. It undervalues history and context and shows disrespect for the importance of political variables".[2]

* This article was submitted prior to Taliban's control of government in Afghanistan for the second time in August 2021.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen believes that the roots of confrontation in multi-ethnic societies are often found in the policies adopted by the successive governments of a particular country and not ethnic diversity.[3] Walter Morris-Hale argues that the tensions in certain societies seen as ethnically driven are often "an expression of underlying social conflicts and the intensity of such conflicts grows with the extent of economic inequality".[4] Afghanistan would, therefore, continue to remain politically instable and fragmented if the causes of the Afghan crises that are both serious and often neglected in the mainstream academic and political discourses are not identified. One way to approach the problems in Afghanistan is to put the crises she faces in its historical context. This author would suggest that a deeper understanding of the country's history would engender a better approach to today's problems of Afghanistan.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The political history of modern Afghanistan is complex. However, an overview of the political developments throughout its modern history may involve three interrelated issues: (1) Afghanistan's ethnic composition, (2) the emergence phase focusing on attempts at creating a centralized administration and the Afghan identity and (3) the reassertion phase that focuses on attempts of reviving the Afghan national identity. Afghanistan's population since its birth is composed of numerous ethnic groups and hence Afghanistan is a **multi-ethnic** state. The Afghans alternatively called Pashtoons are Afghanistan's main ethnic inhabitants, constituting some 50 per cent of Afghanistan's population.[5] Irrespective of tribal or clan affiliation all Afghans speak **Pashto language** and hence the name Pashtoon. Tajiks are the second largest ethnic inhabitants of Afghanistan; constituting approximately 30 per cent of Afghanistan's population.[6] A distinctive feature of Tajiks is that their vernacular **language is Dari form of Persian language**. The Hazaras, the Iranian and Mongolian admixture, constitute the third largest ethnic inhabitants of Afghanistan. Other ethnic inhabitants of Afghanistan are the Uzbeks, the Nuristanis, the Baluchis, etc. These minority groups speak their respective vernacular languages. Vartan Gregorian observes that ethnic heterogeneity has not been a recent phenomenon in Afghanistan's history. Ethnic diversity has been a prominent feature of Afghanistan even before the advent of Islam.

Ahmad Shah Abdali also known as Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-1773) of the Abdali/Durani Tribe was crowned as the first king of Afghanistan. He laid the foundation of monarchy system of government in Afghanistan in 1747. Ahmad Shah's approach to government and politics was not myopic. Ahmad Shah

contemplated establishing a broad-based national government; that is both highly centralized and national in outlook. Gregorian observes:

> Ahmad Shah was caught in a difficult dilemma, one that was to face his successors for many years to come. To maintain his rule and consolidate the position of the monarchy he was dependent on important Afghan tribes; at the same time, the country's long-term interests called for a centralized monarchy…, one that would not only be independent of the tribes, but assert its authority over them.[7]

Ahmad Shah's first attempt at nation building, therefore, was to create a multi-ethnic standing army, introduction of Afghan coinage, central taxation system and the reconstruction of major cities both in northern and southern Afghanistan (i.e. Kandahar, Kabul, and Tashkurghan). In fact, Ahmad Shah himself raised a multi-ethnic army. This same policy was rigorously followed by his son and successor Timur Shah (1773-1793). However, under the pressure from his tribal chieftains and king's dependence on them militarily, the reforms Ahmad Shah attempted could hardly lead to a judicious system in Afghanistan. However, all attempts at creation of a centralized monarchy were unsuccessful due to intra-tribal succession struggle and external threats. The negative impact of intra-tribal succession struggle and external menace on the Afghan politics was the crises of identity.

In **reasserting the Afghan national identity**, scholars and intellectual like Jamaluddin al-Afghani and the famous Afghan stylist, writer and intellectual, Mahmud Tarzi, began to contemplate on the causes and nature of the internal strives and disorder in Afghanistan. Al-Afghani focused on a broader Muslim unity of which Afghanistan constituted a part thereof. Tarzi's approach, however, included revival of the Afghan strength so that Afghanistan could contribute positively to the Muslim unity on a broader scale. Tarzi argued that it is imperative upon the Afghan ruling elite and all the inhabitants of Afghanistan alike to revive their understanding of what does constitute an 'Afghan', what is meant by the prefix Afghan, or what does this theoretical superior cultural construct 'Afghanistan' refer to? By raising these fundamental questions Tarzi was reminding the Afghan rulers and monarchs that they must abandon their narrow and parochial understanding of the bastion of 'Afghan power'. A tribe, clan or ethnic group can not become the substance and bastion of the Afghan power and strength. Mahmud Tazi and his colleagues in the beginning of the 20th century revived the latent classical definition of the word 'Afghan'. According to Tarzi, Afghan is a compound word that possesses three distinct features: (1)

it refers to all inhabitants of Afghanistan regardless of their ethnic origin, (2) these peoples live over a geographical territory under the jurisdiction of the Afghan monarch and (3) these various ethnic groups share a common religion; the religion of Islam that binds them together and transform them into one concrete abstract entity.[8] Tarzi's influence on the palace was significant and numerous. However, the most important political impact of Tarzi's ideas was promulgation, in 1923, of the First Afghan Constitution.

THE DYNAMICS OF THE CONFLICT

The dynamics of the Afghan conflict can be traced into the 1960s. Its dynamics can be divided into four phases: (1) the pre-Communist Phase, (2) the Communist Phase, (3) the post-Communist Phase and (4) the post-Taliban Phase. Hopes of democracy and emergence of politically pluralistic society in Afghanistan was shuttered when the 1964 Constitution promulgated by King Muhammad Zahir Shah, despite taking note of politically pluralistic nature of the Afghan politics, did not include a provision on political parties and organized groups. Despite the fact that the monarchy system of government has been transformed into republican form by Prince Muhammad Daud Khan, King Zahir's cousin, the political system remained authoritarian and despotic. The Cold War international environment among other factors had greatly influenced Daud's policies of regime survival. Daud's Cold War pursuit of policy of neutrality through friendship became costly on domestic front. The regime turned harsh on the so-called Islamically inclined groups and groomed the so-called nationalist and pro-Soviet Communist political parties. This widened the horizon of ideological debate and gave rise to ideologically fragmented yet closed society.

The Communist Phase began in Afghanistan in 1978. A strong resistance movement unfolded against the Communist regime in Kabul. The resistance became formidable. The Soviet 1979 invasion of Afghanistan on the pretext of salvaging the comrades has been perceived as a serious threat to the West's strategic posture. The United States believed that the resistance movement must grow under its patronage. An indigenous full-scale guerrilla war found the western support expedient. The resistance's leadership was mainly formed from the factions and parties that had emerged in the pre-Communist Phase of the conflict. Its leadership had been subjected to various kinds of subjugation under King Zahir and Daud's regimes. The personalities leading the resistance had developed differences over the strategy the resistance was to adopt towards political developments under the reign of King Zahir and Prince Daud.

The Soviet Union as part of Mikhail Gorbachev's drive of perestroika and glasnost, was forced out of Afghanistan in 1989. A breakthrough was expected to occur in 1989 but withered away when the resistance movement failed to capture Jalalabad, the capital city of Nangarhar Province in North-Eastern Afghanistan. Lack of coordination and presumed intervention from the Pakistani military establishment and the United States were among the reasons cited by the resistance. The stalemate continued until 1992. The fall of President Najibullah and with it the collapse of Communism in Afghanistan in 1992 set the stage for the civil war within the rank and file of the resistance movement.

The Communist Party of Afghanistan has been divided into ethnic factions: the Pashtoons led by Najibullah, the Tajiks led by Babrak Karmal and his associates and the Uzbeks led by Abdul Rashid Dostum. The Soviet in an attempt to ensure the survival of the regime dumped a large amount of war implements into the hands of minority Tajik and Uzbek factions of the Communist Party of Afghanistan. While Najibullah and his Pashtoon faction held the presidency and the political power, they were systematically deprived of military base. In 1992 the leading Tajik and Uzbek Communist figures began to defect Najibullah's government and joined the Shura-e-Nizar of slain Ahmad Shah Masood wing of the Jame'at-e-Islami-i-Afghanistan led by Buhanuddin Rabbani. Some academics argue that the nature of the defection and the role played in the so-called Mujahiddin government in terms of distribution of governmental positions by the once maverick Communists such as Abdul Rashid Dotum, General Baba Jan and General Azimi point that the coalition has been pre-planned and well-engineered. The transfer of power from the Communists to the leadership of the resistance movement appeared bumpy. Yet, the transition could have been smooth if the power could be transferred to the 'Leadership Council' institutionalized by the seven resistance factions based in Pakistan a little earlier than the collapse of Soviet installed regime. The potential of the Leadership Council as the ultimate decision-making unit in Kabul and its capacity to provide a base for policy consensus could be beyond doubt.

However, in the wake of defection as such and the collapse of Communists regime, the resistance factions flocked into Kabul. Prominent among them were Hezb-e-Islam-i-Afghanistan faction led by Golbuddin Hekmatyar and Shura-e-Nizar led by Ahmad Shah Masood. In the midst other factions such as Ittihad-e-Islami-Afghanistan led by Abdul Rabb Rasul Sayyaf and the Shi'ite factions of Abdul Ali Mazari also found themselves embroiled in the civil war. The situation provided the regional and global powers with vested interests with an

opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Lacking political maturity and ignorant of state-centric international environment, the resistance leadership did not realize to place the national interests of their motherland above their own factional interest. One side fought to secure his share of power. The other systematically attempted to deprive him from it. Both, however, were disliked by Uncle Sam. The resistance leadership lost legitimacy in the politics of Afghanistan.

While the various resistance factions were struggling to seize power in Kabul, their representatives were convened in Peshawar by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to contemplate on Najibullah's replacement. The Peshawar Agreement concluded in the presence of the Pakistani premier appointed Sibghatullah Mujaddidi as the president of Afghanistan for a period of two months who would be succeeded by Burhanuddin Rabbani for a period of four months. It has also been inserted in the Agreement that Afghanistan will have an elected government within six months despite the absence of electoral law and delineation of electoral districts. During the two-month tenure of Mujaddidi, civil war among the various factions erupted in Kabul. Masood and Hekmatyar were considered as the main adversaries in the civil war, yet the Shi'ites, the Ittihad-e-Islami of Prof. Sayyaf and the Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum also considerably contributed to the destruction of fascinating Kabul. Hekmatyar believed that Masood had formed a coalition with the Communists to seize power. He argued that he fought in the capital against an imminent military attack on his forces by the Masood-Communist coalition. Exercise of restraint by either side would have saved the holy warriors, however.

However, the efforts of I'jazul Haq, the son of Pakistan's late President General Muhammad Ziaul Haq, persuaded Hekmatyar and Masood to meet in Surubi District of Kabul. Despite the Surubi Agreement between Hekmatyar and Masood, new waives of conflict began. The conflict resulted in a series of negotiations in Saudi Arabia, twice in Islamabad (Pakistan), and Jalalabad (Afghanistan). However, the failure of observing the provisions of these agreements by the government of President Rabbani led to a series of fresh military exchanges. In addition, President Rabbani upon assuming presidency convened an assembly of the so-called peoples' representative called *shura-e-ahl hal-wal-'qd*. The term coined centuries earlier by the Muslim jurists found its practical model for the first time in Afghanistan where it mainly drew its membership from one faction. The implication of the *shura-e-ahl hal-wal-'qd* was two-fold: (1) it renewed Prof Rabbani's mandate as the president of Afghanistan

until his removal after the fall of Taliban in 2001 and (2) enabled Rabbani to abolish the Leadership Council.

In the midst of factional conflict, a new force appeared in the politics of Afghanistan. This new force was the Taliban Religious Movement. Ascertaining the origin and the process of the rise of the Taliban requires extensive research. Yet, the rise of the Taliban can point out the complex nature of the Afghan conflict and the role of the regional and global powers in the tragedy from which the whole world is suffering. Arguably backed by Pakistan, the Taliban Movement was different from the resistant movement in that its outlook of Islam and Islamic principles were quite strict. In addition, the Al-Qa'edah Terrorist Network had become an influential actor in the politics of Afghanistan under the Taliban. Initially handsomely supported by the government in Kabul, the Taliban asked Masood to surrender. Hekmatyar and Masood realized that Afghanistan's essential interests were at stake. Sayyaf, however, was instrumental in an indigenous diplomatic process that convinced the parties to the conflict that Afghanistan's national interests mandate unity of all its citizens. Soon Hekmatyar joined Rabbani's Government as Prime Minister. Hekmatyar-Masood alliance suggests considerable realization by the resistant movement that Afghanistan's essential interests were at stake. However, it was too late to resist the tide of the Taliban onslaught.

The Taliban campaign intensified. Taliban captured Kabul in 1996. Hekmatyar went into exile in Iran until the fall of Taliban. Rabbani's Government in exile formed anti-Taliban Northern Alliance led by Masood. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan until the tragedy of 9/11 in which the Twin Tower in New York fell on its feet in an obvious act of terrorism. Washington alleged Usama Bin Laden, then residing in Afghanistan, as the master mind behind the 9/11 incident. In the wake of refusal by the Taliban Government to hand over Bin Laden, the United States forced Taliban out of power. The Northern Alliance resistance force found the American air and ground campaign handy. They soon overran the capital, despite numerous warnings by the United States that no group could capture power and form government until the formation of a new government in Bonn, Germany.

While the American military campaign was in progress, representatives of various Afghan groups were convened in Bonn Germany to contemplate on a post-Taliban administration. Four groups were represented in the Bonn Talks: (1) Peshawar process, representing the Afghans in Peshawar, (1) Royalists,

representing the ex-Afghan King Zahir Shah, (3) Cyprus process representing Afghans wanting peaceful settlement of the conflict and (4) the Northern Alliance representing the government. In Bonn, the Afghans named Hamid Karzai as the president of transitional government. Karzai was officially sworn in as the post-Taliban president of Afghanistan on 21 December 2001. Karzai has been mandated with the difficult task of transforming Afghanistan into a democratic nation. Karzai stood the test of time. Only history is the best arbiter to judge whether the political reforms undertaken by the government of President Karzai under the patronage of Western powers have placed Afghanistan on the road to democracy and evolution of a genuine civil society.

THE AFGHAN CONFLICT: DEMOCRACY, ELITES AND GEOSTRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Afghanistan's long, complex and often misunderstood history suggests that (1) the relationship between religion and politics, (2) politically amateur elite, the absence of a genuine and matured political pluralism and the political will to create a politically pluralistic system of governance in Afghanistan and (3) geo-strategic significance of Afghanistan throughout the modern history of the country are a complex of factors contributing to the political instability in Afghanistan.

1. The Relationship between Religion and Politics

The relationship between religion and politics in Afghanistan since the 7th century has been intimate. Religion has always been a unifying force among the numerous ethnic inhabitants of Afghanistan. "The builders of the modern Afghan state ... had to rely on the Sunni Afghans as the dominant political force in order to promote cohesion within the country; at the same time, they had to emphasize tenets of Islam that would be acceptable to both sects [sunnis and shi'is]. *The ultimate aim of the Afghan monarchy was to make Islam an important element of Afghan nationalism and a major force in the unification of the country*".[9] The depositories of political authority always maintained friendly relationship with the religious depositories such as the *imams* and the *mullahs*. The *mullahs* and the *imams* often wielded greater authority throughout Afghanistan across ethnic lines.

However, the religious authority had remained traditional in outlook. Parochial in approach to knowledge and Islam, traditionalism viewed science and innovation as un-Islamic. The political establishment on the other hand, had diagnosed the dangers of traditionalism and parochialism to progress. Approaches to redress the problem of traditionalism by the successive Afghan

rulers proved erroneous. The policies pursued by the political establishment to reduce the influence of religious establishment instead strengthened the position of the latter against the former. The religious establishment was either alienated or suppressed. This in turn provided legitimacy for the approaches advocated by the traditionalists. Dost Muhammad Khan, for instance, was the first Afghan monarch who initiated bold policies against the static approach towards religion. However, he could fight the subversive elements of religious authority only in the name of religion. He, therefore, proclaimed himself as the Amir al Mu'minin or commander of the faithfuls. In an attempt to free Afghanistan from the extremism of religious establishment, by design or by default, Dost Muhammad Khan institutionalized absolute monarchy. He proclaimed that he was made ruler by divine grace and "the throne is property of the Almighty King of kings, our Creator, who appoints kings to shepherds to guard his flock, and into whose care he confides the creatures of his herds. Kings stand to their countries as the vicegerents of God".[10] Despite bold actions against the so-called *'ulama*, Abdur Rahman Khan, Dost Muhammad Khan's successor, to manifest his commitment to fundamentals of his religion, declared Jihad (holy war) against the Nuris or Nuristanis, pagan inhabitants of Eastern Afghanistan. Nuris conversion to Islam rallied the bulk of religious clergy to the monarch's court which led to the conferment of the title of Zia al Millat wa al-Din (Light of the Nation and Religion) upon Abdur Rahman Khan. The reforms instituted by King Amanullah Khan, Abdur Rahman's grandson, who succeeded his murdered father Habibullah Khan, created even more resistance and resentments against him. His policy totally alienated the religious scholars. He humiliated the religious authority and expressed little respect for the traditional values and culture of the Afghan society. Imprisonment of famous religious authorities including the Chief Judge in Kabul and accusation of treachery leveled against them finally forced him off the throne.

In the midst of the struggle between the religious authority and the political establishment, the 'Young Afghan Movement' led by Mahmud Tarzi emerged. The Young Afghans came to be known as *rushanfikran* (intellectuals) and the traditionalists as *ruhanian*. The *rushanfikran* movement is greatly indebted to Al-Afghani and Mahmud Tarzi. Mahmud Tarzi, influenced by al-Afghani, "stressed that the survival of Islam and the Muslim nations was contingent upon a return to the true spirit and character of Islam, free from the corrupting influence of despotic rulers and ignorant 'ulama which, together with the widening Gulf between secular interests and the ethical standards of Islam had caused the downfall of all Muslim nations".[11] On a further note, Tarzi observed that

"the religious establishment, in insisting that all learning was their exclusive prerogative, had raised a formidable obstacle to the development of education and the dissemination of knowledge among their fellow Muslims".[12] Tarzi maintained that science, technology and Islam are not incompatible. He therefore believed that the Afghan society needs reorganization on the basis of science and technology. Tarzi, however, did not advocate uncritical borrowing and imitation of the west.

The rise of *rushanfikran* to combat the views propagated by the *ruhanians* appeared to have been a positive development in the Afghan political scene. Yet, overemphasis of patriotic tendencies by *rushanfikran* led to the growth of Pashtoonophobia among the ethnic minority inhabitants of Afghanistan. Such a fear among ethnic minorities has been reinforced further by the Afghan official policy on Pashtoonistan. Although the Pashtoonistan issue has been employment as a foreign policy instrument by the Afghan government, it impaired the combating capacity of the *rushanfikran*. It also gave rise to the problem of ethnocentrism. Ethnic issues began to be openly debated in a somehow organized manner. Ethnically inclined organized groups such as Shu'la-i-Jawid (Eternal Flame, Maoist), Setem-i-Milli (Against National Oppression, racist in nature), and Afghan Millat (nationalist) were formed. The *ruhanians* were further divided in their approach to modernization and political transformation of the Afghan society.

2. Politically Amateur Elite and the Absence of Democratic Space and Genuine Political Pluralism

Political leadership and political establishment are closely connected to the type of political institutions existing in a country. The Afghanistan of today possesses neither. In the first decades of the 20th century many royalist and close associates of the palace spent their life in exile and returned to their motherland. Among those in exile included Mahmud Tarzi and King Nadir, King Zahir's father, and Nadir's brothers, Hashim Khan (prime minister in Zahir's reign), Shah Wali Khan and Aziz Khan. While in exile, they had come into contact with the advanced western world. They believed in an independent, free and modern Afghanistan. They realized that Afghanistan which by then had acquired the status of a 'buffer state' between Czarist Russia and Great Britain cannot afford another war. It needed to progress and advance. However, these exiled royalists were convinced that progress and development could materialize only if the Afghan government is capable to keep the then great powers, Britain and Russia, at arm's length. The palace therefore adopted a policy that may be described as

'the policy of neutrality through friendly relations' with all powers with vested interests.

Kabul's policy of 'neutrality through friendly relations' in the politics of Afghanistan was significant in that it unveiled the beginning of the process of political maturity and the emergence of relatively politically matured ruling elite. However, the political establishment did not create conducive conditions for the Afghans to freely debate issues and events affecting Afghanistan's interests. Attempts at transforming Afghanistan into a politically pluralistic society and moving it away from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchical system of government were unsuccessful. The 1964 Constitution deferred provisions on political parties and organized politics that the Afghan society was not ready for full-scale democratization was among the reasons cited for this failure.

However, there exists an alternative explanation to the issue of deferment of constitutional statute on organized politics in Afghanistan: the political system was despotic and more so under the reign of Prince Daud. Daud's pursuit of the policy of neutrality through friendship became costly on the domestic front. The regime in the 1970s to keep the great powers at arm's length had to show that Kabul was sincere in pursuit of its policy of neutrality. In order to do this, it turned on the so-called Islamically inclined groups and groomed the so-called nationalist groups and pro-Soviet Communist political organizations. The reason for venerating the nationalists was due to the so-called Afghan official policy on Pashtoonistan. The ideological divide widened under Daud's reign. Communists penetrated the armed forces as well as the administration. The result was the emergence of an ideologically fragmented intelligentsia, resulting in 1978 Communist coup in which President Daud and his entire family were killed.

The Communist regime in Kabul met with strong resistance. However, the resistance took place in a socio-political context detached from politically matured intelligentsia and devoid of genuine political pluralistic principles. The leadership of the resistance was mostly composed of young university students or academics with little experience both in domestic and international politics. They belonged to ideological pockets whose leadership lacked political sagacity and possessed limited knowledge of socio-political realities. They did not have adequate knowledge of the political context that shaped their views. Political parochialism of this new breed of elite was not compensated by the existence of viable democratic space and political institutions of a civil society. Therefore,

they become a pawn without realizing it, in the real game of power politics. The resistance movement fought to win a difficult war but was incapable of administering a country. The resistance groups based both in Pakistan and Iran did not contemplate coordinating institutions for power sharing. In addition, they narrowly believed that it is absolutely alright for one faction to seize all state institutions and deprive others from sharing power. The resistance movement fought the war, it defeated the enemy but, it did not know the art of power politics. It therefore failed to achieve what it wanted to achieve.

3. Geo-Strategic Significance

Afghanistan's strategic location has always been the greatest asset as well as liability throughout its recorded history. Therefore, 'geo-strategic theory' provides greater insight into the prevalent chaotic situation in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's strategic position has always placed it in the heart of power struggle among great powers. Afghanistan's internal dynamics and weaknesses (ethnic composition, religious schism and ideological divisions, amateur political elite and absence of a genuine political pluralism) have always have been considered as an asset by the powers with vested interests. Geographically located on the crossroads between India, Central Asia and the world of Islam, Afghanistan had long acquired economic and political importance in the policies of powers with vested interests. For instance, Afghanistan served as the frontier state of the Muslim world. Hence, the Ghaznawids (999-1186), Seljuks (1038-1157) and Ghurids (1150-1217) could not neglect Afghanistan's geostrategic significance. They needed the support of the tribal chieftains to augment their power and be able to repulse the invaders. Geographically vulnerable, every new wave of political onslaughts would lead to political disintegration and cultural and ethnic dislocation of the Afghan society.[13] The invading powers of the Mongols (under Ghenghis Khan, 1220-1330s) and Turks (under Timur-i-Leng known as Tamerlane, 1336-1405) had destroyed Afghanistan's glorious heritage. Political institutions, economic system, agriculture, irrigation system, libraries, science, centers of learning, large cities such as Ghazni, Balkh, etc., were utterly devastated. Populations in major cities were massacred and many small regions such as Punjshir valley had become uninhabitable.[14] After the Mongol-Turkic onslaughts, Afghanistan fell prey to the (1) Uzbek Shaybanid rulers from Central Asia, (2) Safawid Shi'i Persian Empire and (3) the Moghul Empire in India under its founder Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur.[15]

At the time of Afghanistan's birth in 1747, the imperial powers of Russia in the north and Britain in the East of Afghanistan were expanding their territories. Both

Russia and Britain had identified their interests in Afghanistan. The rulers in Britain believed that capture of Afghanistan by the Czarist Russia was against its interests in India. Overstretch of Russia's influence, therefore, must be contained. Two ready strategies were contemplated: (1) friendly Afghanistan and strengthening of the Afghan Monarch or (2) occupation of Afghanistan. The British invasion led to the First Anglo-Afghan war. Dost Mohammad was dethroned and replaced by Shah Shuja, until he retained control of Kabul in 1842 for the second time.[16] However, Britain did not abandon its desire to place Afghanistan within its sphere of influence. Britain actively partook in inter-tribal and intra-clan rivalries sparked over the issue of succession; pitting one Afghan claimant to the throne against the other or one Durrani tribal leader against the other. Great Britain continued to interfere in Afghanistan until it succeeded. This occurred in 1879 during the reign of Yaqub Khan, Sher Ali Khan's son and successor, in the aftermath of the Second Anglo-Afghan War in the infamous Treaty of Gandamak, to retain full and direct control of Afghanistan's foreign relations.[17]

During the Second Anglo Afghan War, Sher Ali Khan sought military assistance from Russia, hoping to counterbalance the British invading forces by Britain's Strategic rival. Russia refused to support the Afghan monarch's anti-British military campaign. However, Abdur Rahman, Sher Ali's nephew entered Northern Afghanistan from exile in Russian Tashkent. Abdur Rahman Khan, perceived as the most Russian of the Afghan Monarchs with pro-Russia inclination, was readily accepted by Britain; the occupying power bent on withdrawing from Afghanistan. Apparently Abdur Rahman's ascendance to the Afghan throne was reconciliation of Russo-Britian interests; by then the two imperialist powers had concluded that a weak Afghanistan may exist but to serve as a 'buffer state' between Russia and British India.

In a similar vein, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 has been viewed by the US administration as a threat to its strategic status and counterpoise to the whole policy of containment. Afghanistan, policy makers in Washington silently believed, would provide the Soviets with access to the warm water ports in the Indian Ocean and much more in the Persian Gulf. This would "put the Soviets within the striking distance of the Persian Gulf oil fields and warm water ports, and should, therefore, be seen as a further step in the progress of Russian expansionism".[18]

According to Martin Evans, after the defeat of the Red Army and the subsequent Soviet withdrawal in 1979, Pakistan has identified Afghanistan as a

depository of "overland trade route to central Asia".[19] Moreover, Martin observes that an American oil company, UNOCAL, had also identified Afghanistan as one of its major investment avenues and wanted to construct an oil pipeline flowing from Turkmenistan through to Pakistan.

Rizawan Zib in "War Against Terror: Lessons for Pakistan" argued that Pakistan's policy of strategic depth is composed of two-halves: (1) geo-strategic and (2) geo-economic.[20] Martin further suggests that the United States shared with Pakistan only the second half of its policy of strategic depth: geo-economic concerns. Moreover, the United States after the disintegration of the Soviet Union emerged as the lone super power and determined to punish detractors to its interests while Pakistan was an emerging, albeit staggering, regional power. The policy, Zib argues, articulated in 1989 by the then Pakistan Chief of Armed Forces, General Mirza Alam Beg, was perceived to provide Pakistan with a space in military and non military terms as well as economic gateway to Central Asian Republics. Obviously, the policy required a friendly government in Kabul. Taliban style of regime, however, could not be enlisted as the best strategy as "Taliban's rigidly", Zib argues, "ideological government with a narrow worldview could not be reliable partner in the defense of Pakistan's interest".[21]

Martin observed that the Taliban regime in addition to its inability of correcting their human rights abuses and serving as safe haven for terrorism was "incapable of suppressing all opposition in Afghanistan, and hence of producing the conditions of peace and stability that were required for the construction of a pipeline…."[22] While weak at home to suppress the opposition, the increasing influence of the Taliban regime and their strict puritanical form of Islam were viewed with concern in the 'Russian Near Abroad'. Concerns about the export of Taliban brand of Islam among post-Soviet Central Asian Republics were expressed both publicly as well as privately by most Central Asian representatives to emergency conferences convened after Taliban's capture of the city of Mazar-e-Shrif in northern Afghanistan. There were the declarations and warnings of "readiness to take necessary measures, should the borders of any of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) be violated"[23] by the Taliban regime. However, a watershed occurred when Russia manifested growing anxiety about Afghanistan becoming depository and training centers for anti-Russian rebellions and the Talibanization of Central Asia. Russia's support of the Northern Alliance's anti-Taliban campaign led by its slain leader Ahmad Shah Ma'ud is a clear indication of Russia's security concerns and interference in Afghanistan.

The great powers interests once again converged in Afghanistan. The policy-makers in Moscow and Washington were contemplating on policy alternatives towards Afghanistan. Russia needed a policy that could contain Talibanization of its sphere of influence. The United States wanted to acquire permanent access to the Central Asian markets and the oil. Obviously, American influence in Afghanistan is perceived detrimental to Russia's interests in the region. However, the overthrow of Taliban regime was the policy option on which policy-makers both in Moscow and Washington could not disagree. Given the convergence of the Russian and American interests in Afghanistan, Russia would favor a post-Taliban administration dominated by the Northern Alliance. However, evidence suggests that the principle of 'power sharing' with the Northern Alliance was not among the options being considered by policy-makers in Washington. Despite the Taliban's poor human rights record, as Martin points out, and inability to produce conditions of peace and stability required for the construction of the pipeline, the United States neither supported the Northern Alliance's anti-Taliban campaign nor contemplated on a broad-based administration in Kabul that would include the Northern Alliance. Even in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States, Washington's official position was that the Taliban regime may survive and stay in power if they withdrew support for Usama bin Laden and hand him over to the American administration. The American official position toward the Taliban regime, however, does not suggest that the United States supported the Taliban style of system of governance. It only reflects the dilemma Washington was facing about the nature of the post-Taliban administration in Kabul.

After 9/11, the transitional government of President Hamid Karzai came to power. However, Karzai's transitional government did not represent convergence of the American and Russian long-term interests. The struggle for attainment of interests between the major powers is continuing unabated. However, the battle is often fought on diplomatic, political or constitutional fronts and may lead to indirect military confrontation and prolonged proxy war. The controversies over the type of system of government or the division of powers between the executive and the legislature during the convention of Loya Girga (Grand Assembly) in 2003 to consider Afghanistan's new constitution indicate the constitutional dimension of the battle with the Afghan face among the representatives of the powers with vested interests in the politics of Afghanistan. Notwithstanding the US-Russia strategic maneuvers, China, Iran, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar and other regional powers also aggressively pursuit their interests in post-

Taliban administrations of Afghanistan. Afghanistan, therefore, began breathing once again in the midst of power game whose actors are silently struggling for their share of the cake.

MANAGEMENT OF THE CONFLICT

If history can become a guide and lessons can be learned from it, attempts aimed at bringing a lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan may need to consider creating a viable civil society that can provide a breakthrough for constitutional, political, economic, military and social developments in Afghanistan. The proposals below provide general guidelines for evolution of a genuine civil society and hence management of the Afghan crises.

First; creation of a broad based government. A government is not broad-based if it thinks in terms of dividing cabinet posts along ethnic lines. It is however, broad-based when it is able to engage all the Afghan factions and groups, irrespective of their ideological, ethnic and religious tendencies. Engaging all Afghans in some kind of political dialogue is, therefore, the most essential step to an enduring peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict. Exception, however, to this principle is the proponents of the communist ideology and the supporters of the communist regime that ruled Afghanistan for more than a decade since 1978. Such an engagement will minimize interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Second; creation of a strong central administration that effectively wields control over all corners of Afghanistan. However, establishment of a strong central administration is contingent upon the first essential principle discussed above.

Third; Afghanistan needs a "responsible" and "sovereign" government. The government that is able to 'engage' all Afghans of different standing and views in some kind of political dialogue. The government that possesses the power and courage to decide in the interests of its people. The government whose ruling leadership is acceptable to and is elected representative of the people of Afghanistan. A government whose policies are not suppressive; rather promote freedoms, human rights and civil disobedience; and who avoids attempts at creation of a police state. The government that serves as mechanism that accommodates the wishes of all ethnic groups and social backgrounds; only constitutional provisions and guarantees are not sufficient. The government that is able to acquire the powers and ability to put these constitutional guarantees

into practice.

Fourth; democratization of the Afghan society needs to follow a natural course of development. Imposition of democracy from outside will result in the revival of despotism and will breed a suppressive and imperial executive. This imperial form of democracy neither grooms a viable and competitive civil society nor evolves into a true representative system of administration.

Fifth; Afghanistan needs a comprehensive plan for reconstruction of its political, social and economic institutions. However, development of national economic plan is as essential as reconstruction of its political and economic institutions. The economic plan must be judicious and based on the principle of equal distribution of national resources. The plan needs to prevent creation of individual monopolies over most important sectors of economy. Government in these initial stages of reconstruction should possess the ability to play the role of a big government in the economic setup of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's economy in the name of free market should not become the victim of 'contracting out model'. For instance, banking system, revival of industrial sector, revival of agricultural sector, transportation, and public healthcare should be carried out under maximum governmental supervision.

Sixth; the new institutional setup must reflect the Islamic history and tradition of the Afghan society. Institutions that fail to link Afghanistan's traditional past with its present conditions will become the source of factionalism, ideological conflict and rigid political alignments and cleavages.

Seventh: serious attention should be given to education. However, the system of education should be based on policies that reflect both Afghanistan's Islamic history and culture as well as exposing the Afghan mind to science and education. The curriculum to be framed in such a manner that can produce a young mind that is moderate and able to establish a balanced relation between the religion of Islam and modernity, the mind that is able to combine the best of traditional Muslim legacy and modern state of art. The curriculum must not create fragmented, parochial and narrow-minded mentality. This will place Afghanistan once again in its past and create ideological tension within the Afghan society.

Finally; Afghanistan needs political stability. It is possible if the demilitarization of Afghanistan in line with the interests of the people of Afghanistan takes place. It is often argued that demilitarization of all armed

factions to be replaced by creation of national army. While the creation of a national army and police force is essential guarantees for a nation's security, the country's political leadership needs to give serious consideration to some important issues while contemplating development of the armed forces and the police. First the armed forces must remain professional. The relationship between politics and the military must be clearly defined in the constitution. The armed forces should not be allowed under all circumstance to form alliance with any political group or faction. Second the armed forces should be composed in such a manner that it does not represent or is dominated by one faction or politically influential group. Third the country's leadership should assure all the powers with vested interests that Afghanistan needs to stabilize and re-construct its own institutions. Its military and police forces would pose threat to none.

CONCLUSION

Sources of instability in Afghanistan have been many. Ethnic imbalance, therefore, cannot explain the complex nature of the Afghan conflict. The issue of ethnic diversity is used as a scapegoat to camouflage the real destabilizing dynamics of the Afghan society. Among the numerous causes of the Afghan conflict, inability of the Afghans to develop a strong civil society stands out. Therefore, evolution of a viable civil society is considered essential for the management of the problems in Afghanistan. The suggestions outlined above are humble contribution in the hope of establishing a genuine and strong civil society in free and democratic Afghanistan. Let's do not commit the same policy error once again in Afghanistan. If abandoning the Afghans and Afghanistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union was a policy error, failure to put in place fundamental principles of a viable civil society will not be a policy error but a crime against the values of democracy and freedom.

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Japanese Peacekeeping Operations: Retrospect and Prospect

Mohd Ikbal Mohd Huda & Nurliana Kamaruddin

ABSTRACT

The participation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) in the United Nations' peacekeeping operations is one of Japan's diplomatic strategies and effort in contributing to world peace and collective security. Although Japan is still subjected to scepticism concerning its militarism both locally and internationally, it has always strived to contribute to the betterment of human life. This article analyzes JSDF's peacekeeping missions worldwide and tries to foresee the potential role of the JSDF in carrying Japan's image as a staunch supporter of international peace and security. This qualitative research obtained its primary data through empirical evidence from the secondary data. It looks at Japan's initial participation in peacekeeping operation, and the consistency in Japan pursuing peacekeeping duties. The article argues that JSDF peacekeeping missions not only fulfil its diplomatic strategies and efforts but also contributes to improving human and environmental security. Through the JSDF, Japan has advocated for the need for international cooperation and has been actively supporting global peace by improving human security.

Keywords: Japan Self-Defense Forces, Sustainable Development, Diplomatic Strategies, Challenges, United Nations

INTRODUCTION

Japan's participation in the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions through the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), began in a unique manner (MOFA, 2005). Unlike other armed forces in the world, the JSDF's rules of engagement and deployment were initially strictly confined to homeland self-defense and disaster relief. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution prohibited Japan from internationally committing the JSDF outside her borders during the post-war period. Pressure from allies and the international community later changed the direction of Japan's military policy and JSDF subsequently participated in the post-Gulf War operations. As the UN Security Council sanctioned the invasion of Iraq by US-led coalition forces, JSDF's participation in post-Gulf war missions officially

initiated its participation in global peace efforts. JSDF has since been aiding in post-war redevelopment and humanitarian efforts to countries engulfed in armed conflicts. However, JSDF has also received criticisms from the Japanese public, allies, UN state members and the international community for its refusal to deploy fully armed JSDF servicemen. For Japan this is not an option as it would contravene Article 9 making the JSDF's peacekeeping missions illegal.

This article argues that the JSDF peacekeeping missions not only fulfil Japan's international political and diplomatic purposes but are also an essential contribution to improving human and environmental security. The legality of JSDF participation in the post-Gulf War operation led to heavy criticism toward the JSDF and the Japanese government. The Japanese public opinion on JSDF's deployment as UN peacekeepers was also fairly divided particularly concerning the interpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. The legal provision of Article 9 reads as follows: *Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized (Chapter II, Renunciation of War, 1946).*

The Japanese political elites had made various attempts to reinterpret Article 9 but strong opposition in the Diet complicated the amendment of the Constitution. In 1950, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida led the initial effort to reinterpret Article 9 and legalize the formation of the JSDF's predecessor force, namely the National Police Reserve (NPR). This effort has been more actively pursued under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration. Mochizuki and Porter (2013) observed that Prime Minister Abe's eagerness to reinterpret Article 9 is mainly directed toward strengthening Japan's alliance with the US and it came with a two-pronged objective. First, to enable Japan to exercise its right of collective defense and second to reclaim traditional right of self-defense. Prime Minister Abe's revolutionary move could be Japan's attempt to distance the nation from the post-war government's stance which prescribed that Article 9 prohibits the right to collective defense, thus limiting the JSDF's armaments to avoid being seen as a military threat to other countries.

In September 1991, the International Peace Cooperation Bill was presented to the Diet to legalize the JSDF's participation in UN missions. The bill outlined five core principles that grounded the JSDF contingent's deployment and retraction in any peacekeeping missions. The Five Principles are as follows:

i. Agreement on the ceasefire shall have been reached among the parties to the conflict;
ii. The parties to the conflict, including the territorial states, shall have given their consent to the deployment of the peacekeeping force and Japan's participation in the force;
iii. The peacekeeping force shall maintain strict impartiality, not favouring any party to the conflict;
iv. Should any of the above guideline requirements cease to satisfy the Government of Japan, it may withdraw the contingent; and
v. Use of weaponry shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives of personnel, etc.

After the speedy passage of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in October 2001, the Japanese government realized that the International Peace Cooperation Law 1992 (the Peacekeeping Operations Law – PKO Law) must be overhauled to enable a stronger integration with the Anti-Terrorism Law. The 9/11 tragedy brought about a new security and peacekeeping approach, rendering the Five Principles obsolete and impractical for the JSDF to function efficiently. Subsequently, the Diet passed the bill to amend the 1992 PKO Law in December 2001 resolving any potential crisis stemming from the Five Principles. The new 2001 PKO Law empowered the JSDF to carry their weapons for peacekeeping missions and protect those who are under their control. However, public outcry and political pressures still persist, and the grey area of Article 9 is still being debated in regard to the JSDF's participation as UN peacekeepers.

The JSDF's participation should not be unilaterally viewed in a military-combat spectrum but must also be seen in the light of Governance for Sustainable Development (GSD). The gridlock imposed by Article 9 has an unexpected positive outcome. During the decades of military isolation, the JSDF perfected their expertise in managing natural disasters and thus, they are recognized worldwide as the military force who excels in disaster relief and humanitarian efforts. Their post-disaster recovery expertise includes technical assistance, area re-development, civilian search and rescue, structural construction, civil engineering, medical, food distribution and other related aspects. The JSDF's disaster relief and humanitarian efforts expertise could be reinterpreted as Japan's foreign policy in line with Japan's effort to promote human security. Therefore, it creates a new scope within the international argument on the multitude of JSDF's unilaterality in peacekeeping functions.

By evaluating Japan's posture in international politics and their commitments in the UN, it can be argued that post-war Japan is muscling all efforts to participate in global peace and security. From massive economic aid to internal policy realignment, the question that directs this article is, *why Japan is so keen on committing the JSDF to the UN's global peacekeeping operations despite facing various internal obstacles and international pressure?*

JAPAN'S INITIAL PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION

Two years after regaining its sovereignty, Japan joined the UN and has been upholding a UN-centered foreign policy ever since. By focusing its resources on economic redevelopment under US's protection, Japan has successfully become one of the world's economic powerhouses within twenty years after losing the war (Smith & Mitcham, 2007). Japan's economic strength enabled it to become the second largest contributor to the UN's peacekeeping operations and the most consistent-paying state out of 185 UN member states by the end of 1990s. Furthermore, records also show that Japan has been an active contributor to various UN assistance activities since late 1940s in the field of global health, economic development and loans, labor affairs, postal policies, telecommunications, and space policy (McDermott, 1999). Although this clearly shows that Japan has made a huge contribution toward the betterment of UN peacekeeping operations, the Constitutional restraint from deploying the JSDF in any peacekeeping operations became an issue after the Gulf War. Pressure from the US and its allies forced Japan to send a fleet of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) minesweepers for post-war operations. Nonetheless, this action was only considered as a courtesy and did not bring many expected positive effects as the JMSDF's role at that time was limited (Inoguchi, 1995). Surprisingly, the move was also criticized by South Korea who perceived the minesweeper deployment as an expansion of the JSDF's role by using terrorism as an excuse (Buszynski, 2004).

Additionally, there was increasing expectation for Japan to play a bigger role in global peace effort rather than splurging money on the UN. Further backlash followed domestically when the Japanese public criticized Japan's USD13 billion contribution to the Gulf War effort intended for US military and humanitarian expenses. Burdened by special taxes and price hikes to fund the war, public opinion started to shift in favour of the JSDF's role in collective self-defense and fighting terrorism (Buszynski, 2004). During an interview with the Mainichi Daily News in 1991, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa historically remarked that Japan must also contribute by dispatching its personnel to UN

peacekeeping operations, and not merely airdropping lavish aid while blaming the constitutional restrictions. Driven by the softened public opinion, pressure from allies and the international community, Japan started to show their willingness to reinterpret Article 9 to enable more proactive participation in UN peacekeeping operations (Hitchcock, 1994).

Initiated by the pivotal PKO Law which legally sanctioned the deployment of the JSDF overseas for peacekeeping missions, Japanese political elites with the Japanese public and US support began to amend a series of local laws in order to expand the JSDF's agencies interoperability such as the Anti-Terrorism Law 2001, Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan Law, Japan Coast Guard Law, Situation of Armed Attack Law, Iraq Special Measures Law 2003 and seven contingency laws of 2004. Prime Minister Koizumi was one of the key revisionist Prime Ministers in these legal empowerments and staunchly supported the amendment of the Constitution to bolster JSDF's role in collective self-defense (Christensen, 2006). The expansion of JSDF's role to cater to collective self-defense needs and interoperability with the US and other allies signaled the change in Japanese foreign and domestic policy following the 9/11 and Gulf War events.

The notion of "active pacifism" introduced by Ichiro Ozawa was an attempt to entrench the JSDF's international military role under the UN peacekeepers' flag while still conforming to Article 9. Ozawa's maxim aligns with the Japanese revisionist politicians that believe the reinterpretation of Article 9 would allow the JSDF's deployment in UN peacekeeping missions and related activities of the UN troops. The Japanese Ministry of Defense - MOD (previously known as Japan Defense Agency - JDA) also views that the JSDF's participation in combat missions under UN peacekeeping constitutional as different to unilateral military combat as they are operating under UN command. The MOD plays a central role in Japanese peacekeeping activities as the MOD is responsible for settling post-war accounts. The MOD also has begun to play a greater role in shaping Japanese security and defense policies, emerging new decision-making structure in Japanese security policy, including the management of the Japan-US alliance. The horrific war experience caused by militarism, coupled with the strict pacifist policies implemented by pragmatist Prime Ministers has led to the MOD's effort to build the JSDF as a non-threatening military institution. UN peacekeeping is deemed as the pinnacle of international military prestige and an unparalleled opportunity to establish a positive image of the JSDF in the international community and the Japanese public. Peacekeeping missions would also

present the JSDF with a unique opportunity to enhance their knowledge, build thorough protocols, and accumulate international experience while operating with other UN multinational military forces. The MOD itself played a crucial role in demanding that the JSDF be deployed for UNTAC in Cambodia and paved the way for more peacekeeping missions (Mulgan, 1995).

Japan has shown its commitment to world peace by participating in the UN and adopting a UN-centric policy as its foreign policy. Although Japan had already contributed greatly to the international community prior to their participation in the Gulf War, it was apparent that Japan needed to project their commitment via the JSDF as well. The legal aspect remains the biggest hurdle in allowing the JSDF to fully function in peacekeeping missions. In this case the MOD played an important role in advancing Japanese peacekeeping missions because they transformed the JSDF into a respectable and assertive agency as well as initiating the move to allow the JSDF troops to carry firearms during peacekeeping missions. Arguably Japan also continues to contribute in the field of environment, human and societal security via the JSDF peacekeeping activities by focusing their early efforts at clearing mines, logistical support and technical assistance in post-Gulf War affected countries.

CONSISTENCY IN PURSUING PEACEKEEPING DUTIES

Despite global criticisms and international scepticism, Japan's undeterred commitment toward peacekeeping is noteworthy. There is a deep driven commitment which has kept Japan going despite criticisms and negativity against the alleged lack of the JSDF's interoperability qualities. According to Mulgan (1993), Japanese peacekeepers carry the image of Japan's diplomacy and international peace cooperation. Japan has designated peacebuilding as one of its major diplomatic priorities in order to build the foundations for sustainable peace and prevent the recurrence of conflicts. The UN peacekeeping duties is seen as an excellent stage to project Japan's image as a non-threatening and peace-loving nation with the highest standard of humanitarian assistance type of military force, emancipating the JSDF from their dark military history. The PKO Law is also significant as the JSDF's overseas deployment shows a profound foreign policy reorientation. By participating in international peacekeeping, Japan is openly announcing their commitment to world peace and a readiness to break away from their post-war passive pacifist value. The JSDF's international success could be seen during the events of 2004 Indonesian earthquake and tsunami (deployment in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand), 2005 Pakistan earthquake and 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Mulgan (1993), also observed that the PKO Law represents the change in Japanese security perspective in becoming an important international security supplier. Japan has committed themselves to future peacekeeping missions despite many encumbrances. With the PKO Law, Japan is ready to expend time, effort, and money in efficiently adapting the JSDF into the sphere of UN peacekeeping power. Continuous JSDF deployment will also stamp the Japanese mark onto the world of peacekeeping and in the process, contribute to the betterment of the JSDF as a humanitarian, friendly military force.

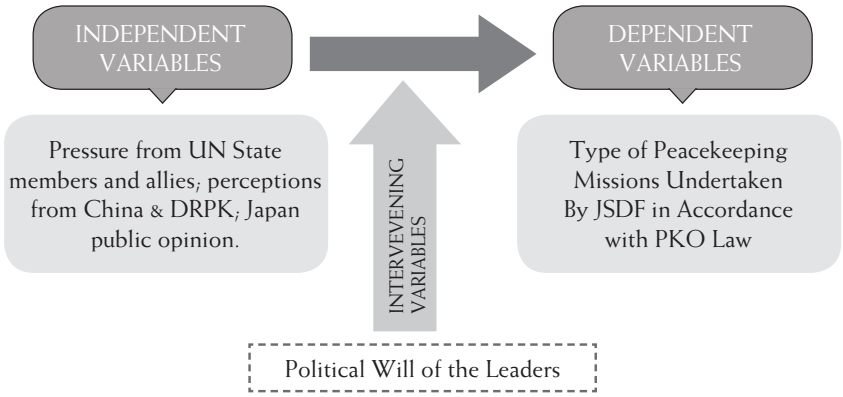
The importance of having efficient UN peacekeepers steadily rose after the end of the Cold War. Peacekeeping missions became an important vehicle for maintaining global peace with 67 peacekeeping operations established between 1948 to 2012, and 53 of these missions deployed after 1988. Japan has also followed suit by having the PKO Law but as reviewed by Hatakeyama (2014), the road ahead for Japanese peacekeeping is never easy. It will be too simplistic to assume that Japan has already shifted to the new norm of collective defense while concurrently maintaining anti-militaristic tendencies. The deployment of the JSDF in UNTAC, East Timor (UNTAET and UNMISET) and Haiti (MINUSTAH) revealed some serious constraints in the execution of peacekeeping operations (Hatakeyama 2014). Despite numerous delays in the JSDF's participation in these three countries, Japan continues to commit its military forces with humanitarian aid and physical redevelopment in mind. This proves that Japan has decided to follow the internalized norm even when there are no clear strategic benefits available to them.

There are also debates as to whether the PKO Law has "frozen" the function of the JSDF in peacekeeping missions. To this extent, Shimura (1996) argued that the dimension of "peacekeeping" under the UN definition does not exclusively involve military-type missions but also envelopes the function of "keeping the peace". Shimura further observed that military-type missions under UN peacekeeping are relatively smaller in scale compared to the latter element considering that peacekeeping operations would involve a larger number of troops in battalion-sized units, lightly armed for self-defense. The JSDF is actively participating in the "peacekeeping" element, therefore serving more efficiently in the more important chunk of the whole UN peacekeeping mission. Although the PKO has frozen the military function, the JSDF is still participating greatly in logistic and rear support functions, without which, will be almost impossible for the multinational troops to effectively complete their peacekeeping missions. Hence, Japan is consistently contributing toward global peace by fulfilling an indispensable role to the UN's multinational peacekeeping force.

The consistent attitude of the Japanese government in UN related activities (particularly peacekeeping missions) also makes them a key player in good governance practice. The UNDP underlined three governance qualities, namely effective mechanisms, processes, and outcomes. Governance mechanisms refers to the actor's transparency, democratic institution, and efficient public service. Therefore, the inner workings of the Japanese government must be in-sync to render an effective participation in international politics and diplomacy. As discussed earlier, Japan will always seek strong political and public support in the early stages of deploying the JSDF for international military peacekeeping duties. The JSDF will only serve as auxiliary support to the primary mission and most importantly, to serve as humanitarian relief. The efforts of the political elites to legalize JSDF peacekeeping with proper cabinet support also demonstrate a strong value of institutional democracy.

The governance processes represent the quality of broad societal consensus being heard by the state before drawing any important decision concerning national interests. The extent of the importance of the public's voice for the Japanese government's machinery is evident in the previous section as the Japanese society's reactions are taken into consideration by the government. Finally, outcomes prescribe that good governance shall shape peaceful, stable and resilient societies via impartial delivery of services. The JSDF's humanitarian efforts reflect the value of Japanese service that places high priority on the needs of the society and satisfaction of quality. This explains why the deployment of the JSDF in all peacekeeping missions garnered praise from the international community because the JSDF values human life and environmental preservation in fulfilling their peacekeeping duties.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND ANALYTICAL STRUCTURE



The framework explains four significant factors. First, pressure from UN state members and Japan's allies managed to persuade Japan to review its passive pacifist stance and refusal to participate in global security efforts. Perceived threats from China and the DPRK also influenced the JSDF's strength build-up, which contributed to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operation participations. Second, the Japanese public's opinion is highly valued by the Japanese government and policy makers. Many times, their opinion would sway the government's policy whereas their support (as reported by local media polls) would further strengthen the current political administration.

Third, although the peacekeepers' scope of responsibilities is mandated by the UN, rules and policy would depend entirely on the Japanese factor. For instance, the JSDF could be deployed for peacekeeping under UNMISS (MOFA, 2020) but they were not allowed to join any combat rescue mission under UN command. Meanwhile in Haiti, the JSDF was not allowed to participate as peacekeepers in UNMIH because of the violent civil war but was deployed to MINUSTAH in the Dominican Republic in the wake of the earthquake tragedy to render humanitarian relief and infrastructure rebuilding after the Japanese government took a calculated risk of deploying them beyond the conflict area. Fourth, Japanese Prime Ministers are known for strong camaraderie to their parties, and every nomination must be approved by powerful party leaders. Therefore, any Prime Minister's policy decision will find a strong footing in the Cabinet and sometimes even the opposition party and will influence the formation of Japan's foreign and security policy. The next section explores the role of individual leaders', the state's and the international system's influences on Japanese foreign policy.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Japan's foreign and security policy is closely related to the preference of its Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is an influential figure who has garnered support from his own political party and sometimes even from the opposition. It is also a prerequisite that the Prime Minister of Japan must be supported by the political elite camps within the party itself to get full support from the cabinet members. Accordingly, individual motivation for Japanese foreign policy can be divided into pragmatist and revisionist camps. Prime Minister Yoshida was an influential pragmatist who emulated the principle of pacifist Japan via the Yoshida Doctrine. The doctrine was entrenched in the Japanese foreign policy by the institutionalisation of formal rules and organization, the creation of political bargaining focal points, and by influencing public ideology (Chai, 1997). Its main idea is to build the economic strength of post-war Japan through hard

work while relying on US for national security matters and capping national defense expenditure at one percent of its GDP. Limited rearmament policy coupled with public sentiment against a militaristic modern Japan successfully transformed Japan into a powerful global economic player within two decades. The Yoshida Doctrine regarded JSDF deployment abroad as unconstitutional and a violation to its core principle, resulting in the concept of passive defense. The JSDF's overseas deployment could also be construed as military assertiveness in the region and contravenes the pacifist idea of the doctrine (Marquand, 2006). Other pragmatist political elites include Toshiki Kaifu, Kiichi Miyazawa, Gotoda Masaharu and Nonaka Hiromu.

Due to international pressure, the balance of Japan's foreign policy influence shifted in favour of the revisionist political elites after the Cold War. The revisionist saw the opportunity to come up with a more proactive security role in regional and international affairs through the JSDF's deployment in UN peacekeeping missions. They viewed overseas deployment as a diplomacy tool for providing aid, and this would dismiss the notion of Japanese military resurgence (Singh, 2010). Some of the revisionists are pushing for legal reinterpretation while others are advocating for the amendment of Article 9 in the Constitution. New laws and reinterpretation of Article 9 are needed to enable the JSDF to operate beyond Japan, participate in global peace effort, contribute in regional and international collective defense, and most importantly to project a positive image of Japan's military power (Akimoto, 2016). Prominent revisionist political figures include Inchiro Ozawa, Yasuhiro Nakasone, Ryutaro Hashimoto, Junichiro Koizumi and most recently, the current Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe.

Shinzo Abe is the primary driving force behind the Japanese foreign policy revolution and the JSDF's active participation in peacekeeping. One monumental step taken by Abe's administration is the review of the US-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation which encapsulated peacekeeping as one of the four salient points of the agreement. The legal amendments under Abe enabled the JSDF to perform logistical support for multinational forces, especially the UN peacekeepers (Liff 2015). Japan's multiple defense technology development projects with Britain, Germany, France, and NATO countries also benefit the peacekeeping missions. For example, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with Canada would enable both countries to provide each other with the necessary peacekeeping equipment (Easley, 2016). The so-called "revolutionary" Abe also committed Japan to the peace effort, answering Miyazawa's call that Japan must do some "sweating" rather than just lavishly scattering money around.

THE STATE

According to the Japanese Diplomatic Bluebook 1957, being accepted as a member of the UN was an important achievement to the initial shaping of Japanese foreign policy. Under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), its three pillars are UN-centrism, cooperation with free countries (the US in particular) and being a member of Asia. In discussing the role of Japan for regional stability, Hosoya (2013) observed that Japan could create unshakable diplomatic ties with regional neighbours if "East Asian Community" and the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" strategies are unified, although these strategies have different focus and priority. Edström (2004) supported the argument that UN-centerism has long been one of the pillars of Japanese foreign policy together with another three, namely omni-directionality, economic diplomacy, and the separation of politics and economic.

MOFA's eagerness to participate in peacekeeping missions could be understood as MOFA bears the responsibility of projecting Japan's goodwill in its foreign policy to the world. In MINUSTAH, although the JSDF could not be dispatched to Haiti because of the volatile civil war situation, MOFA saw the opportunity for the JSDF to participate as a disaster relief team and the JSDF performed excellently in its humanitarian mission (Hatakeyama, 2014). The centrality of MOFA in formulating Japanese foreign and security policy continues even after the creation of MOD in 2007. MOFA is still the anchor in managing US-Japan bilateral military and security agreements. MOFA also interprets the multiple legal language of Japan, ensuring that Japan's legal obligation in treaties will always stay within the sphere of appropriate JSDF actions for Japan (Oros, 2014). By acting as the primary negotiator in all of Japan's national security interest, MOFA sets Japan's strategic culture and Japan's international prestige could be attributed to post-war MOFA's effort in boosting Japan's relationship with the international community and its allies (Hamada 1999).

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Japan's previous reluctance to partake in global crisis and international politics might have served as an opportunity for the country to quickly rebuild its economy; however, this reluctance has severely crippled Japan's ability to effectively advance its foreign policy in the long run. Branded as a 'buck-passer' and 'free-rider' when it comes to collective defense, Japan was pressured to reevaluate its foreign and security policy after the Cold War. The opportunity for this normative shift appeared during Prime Minister Kaifu's administration as

Japan began to move away from relying on economic diplomacy. Japan began to showcase a desire to contribute to the management of regional and international peace (Singh, 2010). In 1996, President Clinton's and Prime Minister Hashimoto's joint communique aimed at reinforcing the security of Asia Pacific region via an enhanced alliance signaled this ongoing paradigm shift. Following that, Japan allowed the US to utilize JSDF's bases throughout Japan to facilitate logistical support and to jointly develop ballistic missiles (Christensen, 1999). The Yoshida's doctrine of ignoring defense capabilities is now viewed as irrelevant because Japan has already become a global economic giant. After decades of being protected by the US, Japan wanted to give back to the international community (Mochizuki, 1983) not only in terms of financial aid but also by equally enhancing world peace.

Japan felt the need to contribute equally like any other UN member states because global peace would mean fortified diplomatic relations. As the spectrum of threat widened after the end of the Cold War, US changed their attitude toward Japan's rearmament and believed that Japan must also share the burden of security. Mulgan (1993) argued that Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping reflects Japan's predominant world view and how it could relate to the international community. Japan wants to participate according to the current trends and to adjust wherever necessary to avoid international isolation and facilitate international acceptance. This trait is known as "situational accommodation". Through the JSDF's participation in UN peacekeeping missions, Japan avoided international criticism while simultaneously tapping into the global trend of serving as multinational peacekeepers. Nonetheless, other regional players (particularly China) have been viewing Japan's persistence in UN peacekeeping and Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC as a threat. Although MOFA has denied this notion, various scholars point out that Japan was on a quest for recognition because a permanent seat in the UN will complete Japan's international prestige, acknowledge its vast contribution to the world, and confirm its status as an indispensable member of the UN (Ishizuka, 2005; McDermott, 1999; Mulgan, 1993; Shibata, 1994; Shimura, 1996; Singh, 2010).

As peacekeeping missions require global partnership, Japan's commitment to the UN in terms of monetary, manpower, technology and equipment are undoubtedly filling the role of a responsible member state. Japan's almost instantaneous willingness to cooperate with UN's activities despite so many impediments reflects Japan's readiness in taking a pivotal role to safeguard the international community's interest.

DISCUSSIONS: JSDF'S CONTRIBUTION IN SUPPORTING HUMAN SECURITY

The JSDF Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) serves to uphold human security as its main mission is to ensure the proper livelihood of displaced people and infrastructure rebuilding within conflict areas (MOFA, 2020). For example, the JSDF mission in 2004 to Iraq, mandated by the Diet for peacetime reconstruction and the restoration of basic amenities. This mission was marked as an historic moment for the JSDF when the service members were allowed, for the first time, to carry heavy weapons with them in an overseas mission. The level of readiness and commitment to help was displayed early while the JSDF service members were still at home base as they learnt the Iraqi language, custom, religion, and culture to better adapt with the locals (MOFA, 2015). The efforts of restoring the city of Samawah created a symbiotic relationship between the JSDF and locals as the complexity of Samawah's infrastructure required the JSDF to contract the construction works to local civilian companies. This in turn generated the local economy and gave the locals a source of income in time of instability. The engineer and medical corps of the JSDF also participated in the restoration of clean water supply, road building and providing medical supply (Fouse, 2007). The JSDF undertook the peacekeeping mission with the primary objective of providing basic human security of food, shelter, education and economy. It can also be said that the peacekeeping mission in Iraq helped Iraqi citizens to build trust in UN's assistance to rebuild their country.

Another monumental JSDF participation in a PKO was during the Haiti earthquake in 2010. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated infrastructure and residences, putting some 3 million lives at stake. JSDF sent a medical team first to aid the international humanitarian efforts, and later sent 350 engineers under the flag of UN Stabilization Mission to Haiti (MINUSTAH). The JSDF worked together with Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Medical Team, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). They cleared rubble, reopened crucial transportation and infrastructure points, provided crucial medical treatment, restored water and food supply, transported refugees, and built a makeshift camp as well as housing for thousands of orphans. The JSDF also flew patients who required critical medical assistance from Port-au-Prince to Miami. The boots-on-the-ground support coupled with financial aid laid a crucial foundation to an effective effort in enhancing human security and boosted a positive Japanese image to the international community. According to a JSDF service member, the infrastructure and road restoration work was vital for the aid effort and restoring economic activities. The JSDF's

humanitarian support paved a way forward for effectively building basic support for the Haitians to restart their daily life after the destruction.

Through the JSDF, Japan has advocated for the need for international cooperation and has been actively supporting global peace by improving human security (MOFA, 2020). Japan braved the world's negative perception for its active rearmament and sought local political support in realizing the dream of a better world for everyone (MOFA, 2020). The Iraq mission opened the door for the JSDF to re-evaluate their strategy within the unique national security environment (Suzuki, 2017). Their effectiveness was was proven by the rapid restoration of water and food supply, and reparation of crucial infrastructures in Samawah.

CONCLUSION

Japanese peacekeeping is still at an early stage and will undoubtedly encounter difficulties in the future. However, given the fact that Japan is a close ally of the US, the future of Japanese peacekeeping looks promising. Japan's revisionist political elites might hold the key for Japan's high stature in global peace contribution, and Shinzo Abe is on the right track of Japanese peacekeeping expansion as he sets to get the majority support of the Diet. As long as Japan maintains the right idea and philosophy of actively developing the JSDF while making sure that it will not threaten regional and international stability, the JSDF's technical skills and expertise in humanitarian efforts (particularly in disaster relief and infrastructure rebuilding) will become indispensable to the JSDF peacekeeping mission under the auspice of the UN.

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Wisma Putra and PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism): Sustaining Malaysia's Narrative of Peace and Security

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ABSTRACT

This article illustrates the contemporary scenario of PCVE in Malaysia in the midst of developing her National Action Plan (NAP) for PCVE (2021-2025). An increasingly specialised sub-sector of security and public safety mainly involving public, academic, and civil society organisations (CSO), the plan of action for PCVE is now a prominent component of policy-making, cascading down as an international regime from the UN to be adopted by regional organisations and nation-states. Expectedly, the plan will involve specific and collaborative implementation of various government ministries and agencies. This article begins by looking into the PCVE flagship research, engagement and advocacy of an academic institution i.e. ISTAC-IIUM (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation – International Islamic University Malaysia), and will also briefly look at the necessity of understanding the evolving narrative of PCVE internationally and adapting it to local constituents in Malaysia. It will then look into what is at the point of writing, the beginnings of the collaborative undertaking in developing the NAP PCVE in Malaysia. Wisma Putra or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is then featured as an essential actor in sustaining Malaysia's narrative of peace and security by design via messaging and communications (especially through Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-terrorism or SEARCCT) since its inception in the realm of foreign policy. Finally, the article will anticipate the prominence of Wisma Putra by leveraging and contributing to the success of the upcoming plan.

Keywords: National Action Plan, ISTAC-IIUM, implementing ministries and agencies, violent extremism, counter messaging

INTRODUCTION: THE EXTREMISM ANALYTICAL RESEARCH UNIT (EARU) AND THE 2LEAD4PEACE FLAGSHIP (2018-2022), IIUM

The 2LEAD4PEACE or Peacebuilding and Civilisational Development Flagship project (2018-2022) began in September 2018 under the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) research grant on "Understanding Extremist Discourse, Intervention and Rehabilitation: Bridging the Gap between Stakeholders in Malaysia and Southeast Asia". The project brings together researchers and practitioners in the area of violent extremism and terrorism from IIUM, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Mercy Malaysia to develop PCVE modules and activities for capacity building through networking, education, and engagement with various public and civil society sectors. A few months after the inception of this research, a collaborative sub-grant was acquired through a partnership with National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland. The sub-grant included a 6-week student-scholar training at START in relation to profiling, spatial analysis and simulation instruments in 2019; and an international PCVE symposium in January 2021 due to disruptions and travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By the time the flagship was institutionalised in line with the IIUM strategic development plan, the research team itself had expanded in terms of inter-disciplinary researchers and consultants as members and formalised itself as the Extremism Analytical Research Unit or EARU in April 2020. Apart from conducting research, the core research members have, since 2019, became a mainstay in the national and regional discourse of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE). This was through organizing programmes, being consulted and invited to speak at various PCVE, counter-terrorism, Islamophobia, youth-based programmes and peacebuilding seminars, conferences and workshops organised by the likes of the United Nations, European Union, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia Press Institute (MPI), Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Government of Australia and the Southeast Asia Network of Civil Societies (SEAN-CSO) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

In 2019, the EARU and Peacebuilding and Civilizational Development Flagship had also entered into a national collaborative engagement programme with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The National Convention for the Empowerment of Youth Against Violence Extremism 2020 was a nationwide programme incorporating a training session for trainers, a national convention,

and zone level conventions involving Malaysian youth. The EARU was primarily responsible for the content of the convention. The convention programme utilised a narrative of pre-radicalisation to rehabilitation and reintegration involving the participation of many stakeholders in the sector including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, various youth based civil societies, faith-based communities and their houses of worship, E8 (Counter-Terrorism Division) of the Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysia Prisons Department, scholars and activists, and many more.

The collaboration between the EARU and START also led to ongoing research on radicalisation in Sabah. The project aims to better understand the risks of radicalisation in Sabah and what could be done to strengthen and protect communities from radicalisation. A research grant was also obtained to expand the baseline study of violent extremism in Malaysia initially conducted by Merdeka Center. The aim of the grant was to study how social media influences youth's support for violent extremism organisations. Meanwhile, a web portal (i.e. Mycveguide.com) dedicated to PCVE and peacebuilding efforts, training and responsible reporting on terrorism was developed through a collaborative project between the EARU, USM, SEARCCT and the Malaysia Press Institute (MPI) and due to be launched in 2021. In short, since its inception at the end of 2018 as a research team, the EARU and Peacebuilding and Civilisational Development, ISTAC-IIUM, has managed, in the span of a few years, acquired considerable research and engagement funding through networking, consultancy and collaboration while projecting itself as a subject matter leading institute in PCVE and capacity building. The expected prominence of PCVE as a core security and public order strategy in the 12th Malaysia Plan (2020-2025) and the involvement of ISTAC-IIUM in the national PCVE discourse makes this a highly relevant sector for engagement over the next five years. This is partly to ensure that Malaysia's National Plan of Action (NAP) on PCVE 2021-2025 is realised and implemented during the 12th Malaysia Plan period.

THE EVOLVING NARRATIVE OF PCVE[1]

The narrative of PCVE and CT from "Never Again" to sharing of responsibilities between states and civil societies to empower the community against terrorism and violent extremism indicates that PCVE is at present focusing on resilience development. The necessary evolution of this narrative was in part due to a number of factors including (1) the rise and fall of ISIS and the ideological latency of religious extremism; and now (2) the radicalisation of identity politics i.e. ethnic and racial mobilisation of violent extremism.

The shift towards resilience looks at PCVE in the context of a global prevention architecture, focusing on mitigation and recovery. In effect three trends pertaining to risk and resiliency are expected to be facilitated and incorporated: (1) Social Cohesion i.e. community and nation building; (2) A Public Health Model that clearly distinguishes between PVE and CVE in relation to the baseline of PVE's advocacy to community and CVE's intervention of targeted segmentation of those at risk or having certain vulnerabilities; and (3) Case Management approach to CVE because while the drivers and enablers may be identifiable, the triggers for violent extremism (VE) or Terrorism are highly idiosyncratic[2].

The recommendations for resilience as an approach to PCVE is also earlier emphasised as a "whole of society approach", bridging both society and the security apparatus, which includes among others: (1) Strengthening and incentivising locally led PCVE efforts by investing in trust building between communities and security agencies; and working with existing states and society organizations; (2) Enhancing contribution of CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) to PCVE; (3) Strengthening and incentivising cooperation and collaboration among national and subnational authorities and stakeholders relevant to PCVE, and capacity building among multidisciplinary stakeholders; as well as (4) Improving evidence base for monitoring and evaluating PCVE efforts (Rosand et al 2018, pp 41-49). The resilience narrative is pervasive and is the mainstay approach among PCVE practitioners, researchers international organisations, down to the international community of nation-states in creating the global PCVE architecture.

As mentioned, the shift towards resilience looks at PCVE in the context of a global prevention architecture, focusing on mitigation and recovery. It is meant to develop the capacity for individuals and communities to resist or prevent as well recover from violent extremism. Vulnerability and risk are used interchangeably in relation to drivers and enablers associated with being prone to radicalisation; and groups that are identified through needs assessments who can benefit from intervention and case management approach for individual cases. Resilience is further advocated in the international framework of approaches (UN or United Nations and EU or European Union) to PCVE, with the UN Plan of Action calling for national and regional PVE action plans to address local and regional concerns[3].

The operationalisation of a public health model has also led to recommendations for improving the evidence base for and monitoring and evaluation of PCVE efforts. They include: (1) highlighting the link between strengthened or effective governance and successful PCVE programmes; (2) focusing attention and resources on local conditions and not just strategic communications and impact of counter narratives; (3) increasing the capacity of the UN and relevant regional bodies to provide training and knowledge exchange for governments to design human rights compliant PCVE policies and programmes; and (4) emphasising on policy and programme attention at international and regional levels on the nexus of human rights protection and PCVE, especially in light of state appropriation of counterterrorism, PCVE and security in breaching civil liberties, committing human rights violations and political subjugation of groups and individuals that only contributes to diminishing societal resilience[4].

THE NAP PCVE (NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM) 2021-2025

No country is excluded from the threat of VE. Realising this , the UN on the 1 July 2016, had called for the *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*. In line with the call, on 15 November 2020, the then Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, in his speech at the 11th ASEAN-UN Summit, reiterated Malaysia's commitment to develop its NAP as an extension, formalisation and coordination of ongoing efforts by the various government ministries and agencies in PCVE.

A combination of hard and soft approaches is required in the Plan of Action comprising of law enforcement; deradicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration; education, engagement and outreach to society and vulnerable groups. To fulfill Malaysia's PCVE commitment, the Ministry of Home Affairs, was entrusted to develop and prepare the NAP PCVE 2021-2025 for Malaysia. The Plan is expected to provide a clear direction; a comprehensive set of implementing strategies, objectives, initiatives and indicators; and as a result to contribute to the security and public safety of the country. A secretariat and team of researchers and expert consultants were appointed to realise the Plan by 2022.

At a glance, religious and political oriented groups such as JI (Jamaah Islamiyyah) and IS (Islamic State) as well as ethno-nationalist elements have the potential to threaten Malaysia's sovereignty. There is also the threat of ideology e.g. revival of communism, separatism in relation to Sabah and Sarawak from

Malaysia, and even terrorist encroachment i.e. RAS (Royal Army of Sulu) in Sabah in 2013, as well as anti-royal institution sentiment in the country. Apart from these, there are human rights centric non-violent and radical extremist ideas that do not comply with the core and unique cultural and moral values of society and interpreted as contradictory with the Constitution, Rukun Negara (Pillars of the State), national security policy and deem to threaten public safety and security of a multicultural society like Malaysia. As such the unique constituents of Malaysia or any other country for that matter indicates the need for developing a NAP PCVE for a society and state that addresses its own dynamic challenges and threats.

In terms of laws and enforcement against VE, Malaysia already has a functional system in place through the creation of the E8 or Counter-terrorism division of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), the establishment of SOSMA (Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012), POCA (Prevention of Crime Act 2015) and POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015) following the abolishment of the ISA (Internal Security Act) in 2011. Malaysia also has a deradicalisation panel of experts to facilitate rehabilitation since 2017 and specialist consultant for cases investigated under SOSMA to evaluate evidence related to VE.

Realising these challenges and threats to security and public safety, the NAP PCVE 2021-2025 is meant to accomplish these three objectives in Malaysia:

1. Identify the form of VE threats to national security;
2. Analyse the drivers and enablers of VE phenomena; and
3. Develop the NAP PCVE 2021-2025 with a comprehensive set of implementing strategies, objectives, initiatives and indicators to contribute to the security and public safety of the country.[5]

The success of the plan will thus require the efforts of the implementing ministries and agencies highlighted in the framework, one of which is expected to be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, also known as Wisma Putra.

MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE MESSAGE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

Malaysia's foreign policy has been based on pragmatic and principled positioning of its interests and values. Some would argue that it has been sown in strategic

ambiguity to allow the freedom to choose which powers it wants to work more closely with for its own interests[6]. As the country is situated at the heart of Southeast Asia, overlooking the South China Sea that connect to world's busiest straits and trade route, Malaysia must be pragmatic when it comes to forging close relations with her neighbours and the five superpowers.

Malaysia has never acknowledged the nine-dash line China has over the South China Sea and had denied the extradition of Uighurs as requested by China, but at the same time Malaysia remains a popular destination for Chinese investments. In fact, in 2021 China tops the largest foreign investor in Malaysia with RM18.1 billion (US$4.4 billion)[7]. At the same time, Malaysia continues to establish strong bilateral relations with the US through the Maritime Surveillance Initiative and continues to be part of the Five Power Defence Agreement (FPDA). In this regard, the words of Ambassador Dato' Raja Nurshirwan in an interview with Global Times summed it clearly that "We will not take sides. Our foreign policy is to have good relations with all countries of the world"[8].

Terrorism is an existential threat to humanity. Malaysia has taken a staunch position to condemn all acts, methods and practices and to tackle the threat of terrorism by addressing the root causes. Throughout its formative years, Malaysia has a long history of countering communist insurgency from 1948 to 1989. Apart from military action, Malaysia has placed importance in winning the hearts and minds of its people including those who had waged war against the country. Central to its message was the core value of religion, national identity and a nation-wide economic development programme known as KESBAN (Security and Development) to convince citizens to be stakeholders in the country while downplaying the agenda of the communist insurgency[9].

One international issue, "The Question of Palestine", has been closely affiliated with the Malaysian people. Many Malaysians resonate that the plight of the Palestinian people that is under occupation by Israel has been a source of extremists messaging, whether they are individuals or groups. Malaysia has always adopted a view that the Palestinian issue must be resolved at its root cause, by establishing a Palestinian State and Israel that live side by side in peace and security. A similar effort of supporting the integration of Muslims in the Southern Philippines continues to be part of Malaysia's contribution to peace and security. Since 2004, Malaysia has dispatched a group of international military and civilian observers to monitor the ceasefire agreement and support dialogue and negotiations between the Philippines Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Being part of the

monitoring team allows Malaysians and international observers to engage local people and communicate with them with a message of peace and security[10].

One can only see that Malaysia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society would mean messaging contentious information against extremism is a source of credibility and legitimacy. In this context, messaging and counter messaging of Malaysia's pragmatic foreign policy that is deep seeded in pursuing friendly relations with all countries would prove beneficial to her people and the region.

MULTILATERALISM IN PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY

In the conduct of multilateralism, Wisma Putra has continued to promote approaches to foreign policy that attempts to sway international beliefs toward addressing the root causes of various crisis across the globe. On 24 April 2021, the ASEAN Special Leaders' Meeting in Jakarta was an example of addressing serious political crisis in the Southeast Asian region[11]. The initiative has been at the forefront of Malaysia and Indonesia to underscore the grave developments in Myanmar following the coup d'etat by the military junta led by Senior General Ming Aung Hliang[12]. In a Tweet on 21 April 2021, YB Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, the then Foreign Minister of Malaysia called for an end to the violence in Myanmar and the immediate release of detainees held by the junta since the February 1 coup[13]. The Malaysian Foreign Minister further added that 'ASEAN representatives must be allowed to meet with all the parties involved'.

Extremism has many forms and origins. While politics and military adventurism in international relations has been known to affect the perception and mental portrayal of societies, it is the perception that the lack of justice and subjugation of foreign powers over the subdued group of people and their nation can be strong motivators for radicalization. The 2017 Manila Declaration introduced specific lines of effort for ASEAN Member States, including taking steps to prevent radicalization, mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups, pursuing de-radicalisation in rehabilitation and reintegration programs as an alternative to punitive measures; and undertake capacity building programs to educate youth[14]. The Declaration contains many value-based initiatives that are the result of ASEAN's experience.

At the United Nations, Malaysia has never wavered to underscore its serious concerns pertaining to numerous issues including those on the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel. In his national statement at the 75th United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 2020, YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin

Yassin, the then Prime Minister underlined that Israel 'must withdraw its troops from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and surrounding Arab states'. The Prime Minister went further with that 'The acquisition of any territory by war or force is inadmissible and illegal'. Apart from that Tan Sri Muhyiddin also underscored the plight of the Rohingyas by calling State 'Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention to shoulder a proportionate burden and responsibility in addressing the problem by opening their doors for more refugees for resettlement and relocation'. The ongoing conflict in Syria, an equally serious issue that has been used by militants and terrorism organisations to recruit new cadres has not been left aside by Malaysia. There are at least 56 Malaysians in this war-torn country. They are split between Al-Hol camp and Al-Hasakah prison[15]. Statements issued by Malaysia at the UN Security Council (2014-2015) have been crafted to illustrate Malaysia's commitment to see a Syrian lead Syrian owned peace process to be agreed and implemented.

There are other important initiatives such as Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015 themed with the creation of an ASEAN Community in 2015. The creation of a regional identity and developing a sense of belonging to 650 million people was a powerful message itself. Even Malaysia's term as a non-permanent member at the UN Security Council from 2015-2016 was based on the theme "Peace and Security Through Moderation" that reflected Malaysia's approach that conflicts cannot be solved by military action, but instead through mediation and negotiation for lasting peace and security. In fact, Malaysia underscored that mediation and negotiations driven and led by local stakeholders as key in her messages on the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and at numerous UN Peacebuilding Commission meetings. Benjamin Lee argued that messaging can also seek to tell positive stories that attempt to challenge extremist narratives[16]. If this is true, policies and initiatives by Wisma Putra on a larger scale can play a role in providing a narrative, if not to counter extremism, at least underlines alternative lifestyle or worldview in instilling peace and security.

What is important is that the illustration of such narratives and messaging must be done in a credible way and by credible entity; a government that is legitimate. Such messaging must not be crafted to the flavour of a political agenda. If not, the message would be construed as a propaganda that is seen as stifling debate among the people and would undermine the overall objective of curbing radicalization attempts[17].

MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Extremism undermines our collective efforts towards maintaining peace and security, fostering sustainable development, protecting human rights, promoting the rule of law and taking humanitarian action. We must tread carefully espousing messages that are tailor made to exploit the vulnerable audience. ISIS continues to reach-out to Muslims around the world in an effort to recruit and galvanise Muslims' perception to fight for its cause. In 2017, this foul extremist organisation called on Muslims to defend Palestinian rights and used such narratives as an emotional recruitment pitch[18].

Countering such messages requires substantive knowledge. The US State Department has encountered difficulties in counter messaging as it lacked the substantive knowledge or deep understanding on the tenets of Islam in combating ISIS in cyberspace[19]. ISIS portrays an array of narratives, such as the so-called creation of a caliphate state simultaneously as a religious utopia, the preeminent military adversary of non-Muslims, and a sophisticated society governed by Islamic justice. In countering such messages, developing deeper knowledge on Islam and its tenets, the crisis that affects other religions and political motivation would be ever more important as they bring meaning to the message.

In Malaysia, SEARCCT was established in 2003 with the purpose of developing such narrative. The centre works together with local and international agencies in developing effective counter messaging. SEARCCT has been conducting capacity building programmes, lectures and seminars regarding radicalisation, counter messaging and deradicalisation work[20]. Managed by the Digital Strategic and Communications Division, these activities are primarily aimed at reducing the appeal of and support for terrorist and violent extremism ideology. The centre has been focusing on youth and messaging as part of its growing effort to develop awareness and capacity for youth who are active on the social media.

On a larger scale, Wisma Putra has seen an ever-increasing use of social media to promote its views and underline Malaysia's national interest. Twitter and Facebook have been the primary media platforms which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been active on.

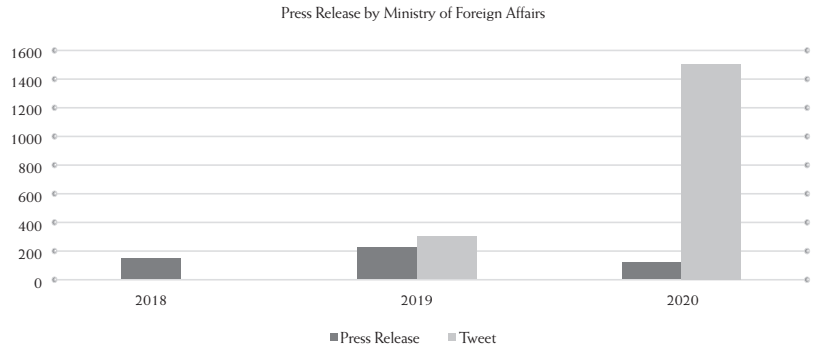

Figure 1: Press releases and Tweets by Ministry of Foreign Affairs – source BKDA (Communication and Public Diplomacy Division)

Tweets are an effective social media tool, in fact it is so much so that CNN referred to a tweet by YB Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein on 21 April that 'Malaysia is one of those (ASEAN) states that is determined to put a strong message for ASEAN leaders to follow'.[21] Some may argue that the message itself is insufficient to bring about change to the political upheaval, but one must not forget that the message is Malaysia's position and that it serves as a tool for others to follow in seeking for an amicable end in the Myanmar crisis.

With 110 diplomatic missions, messaging and conveying information with Malaysians overseas would mean a more personalised text from the ambassador, senior officials and the audience. Today, every Malaysian diplomatic mission display and manage a web-portal, a Facebook page, a Twitter account and an Instagram page. Apart from that, each embassy also publishes a newsletter to highlight activities and information for the public and can easily be contactable via Whatsapp and email address. For instance, the Malaysian Embassy in Ankara or Consulate General in Istanbul Turkey, these platforms not only ensure communications between Malaysians and the embassy remains strong, but it effectively allows Malaysians to seek consular assistance almost immediately should something unforeseen happens. In 2019, there were approximately 150,000 Malaysians who visited Turkey. Throughout that year, the Embassy managed to provide 85 cases of consular assistance to Malaysians ranging from stolen/lost passports, hospitalisation due to illnesses and accidents, and detention. Liaising with Malaysia Diasporas and Malaysian Students Association

in Turkey via social media platforms has afforded the Embassy to rekindle the spirit of *gotong royong* among Malaysians.

As technology develops further, more and more diplomatic missions would turn to better software and terminals to ease the flow of applications or seek important information such as tax laws and excise that could facilitate trade and economics. Despite these developments, in messaging and counter-messaging efforts to curb radicalization, it would be important that such platform is monitored and managed by humans. This is important as we identify and connect better when we know someone is listening to us when we chat or speak.

Furthermore, external issues relating to social injustices on Muslim communities have long been noted as a prominent driver to radicalization. Social media is also understood to be the major enabler of the contemporary radicalization process. For example, all of the over 500 arrests made in Malaysia in relation to POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015) and SOSMA (Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012) in 2019 were cases in part facilitated by social media. Wisma Putra's presence in social media and strategic usage to promote its views and national interest is therefore vital in reinforcing Malaysia's narrative against terrorism messaging.[22]

ANTICIPATING WISMA PUTRA AS AN IMPLEMENTING MINISTRY OF THE NAP PCVE 2021-2025

Wisma Putra's role as one of the implementing ministry of the NAP PCVE 2021-2025 is expected to be significant in terms of sustaining Malaysia's narrative of peace and security in the international community while expanding on the function and collaboration of SEARCCT with other relevant ministries and agencies. It is in the interest of Wisma Putra for the development of the plan to ensure Malaysia complies with various UN Security Council resolutions on PCVE, and for the plan to be in line with various international and regional treaties e.g. *ASEAN Plan Of Action To Prevent And Counter The Rise Of Radicalisation And Violent Extremism (2018 – 2025)*, the Bali Work Plan or *Work Plan Of The ASEAN Plan Of Action To Prevent And Counter The Rise Of Radicalisation And Violent Extremism (2019 – 2025)* and *The Christchurch Call 2019*. The plan can also serve to advocate security input in terms of intelligence on bilateral and cooperation on economic and trade activities. It can also serve as a platform to require awareness and training of staffs on PCVE through security briefings, modules and workshops and also as part of Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) offerings to the international community.

As for SEARCCT, a specialised centre focusing on PCVE and CT, the plan will likely further help formalise and expand its function and collaboration in the national PCVE framework. It is already a reference or subject matter specialist on PCVE, identifying contemporary manifestations and challenges of extremism whether they are borne from hateful extremism, COVID-19 related religious and xenophobic narratives, ideology and identity politics, FRE manifestations in the region, self-radicalised or recruitment dynamics, the enabling role of the social media, structural drivers of VE. SEARCCT has over the years helped Malaysia address the threat of VE via research and publications, core training (including legal, infrastructure protection, crisis management and types of attacks, terrorism financing, and PCVE). SEARCCT also develops counter-narratives on social media by engaging with practitioners, academics, CSOs and vulnerable communities with a focus on youth. SEARCCT also embrace the desecuritisation measures of PCVE, emphasising on deradicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration. Furthermore, The NAP PCVE 2021-2025 framework is expected to facilitate collaboration possibilities, encourage continuity and sustainability of activities, and optimise resources and efforts and reduce wastage from programming overlaps with other implementing ministries and agencies.

NOTES

1 A part of this section had appeared earlier in digital form as 'State Paternalism and Community Resilience: Desecuritizing the Different Facets of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)' in SEARCCT's Selection of Articles, 2020.

2 (Khalil, 2019)

3 ((EU), 2019)

4 (Rosand, September 2018)

5 ((ARI-UiTM), February 2021)

6 (Wey, 12 June 2019)

7 ((MIDA), 2 March 2021)

8 (Yunyi, 12 October 2020)

9 (Yadi, 2004)

10 Activities included giving lectures on humanitarian laws and human rights laws.

11 (Nugroho, 21 April 2021)

12 (Bernama, 21 April 2021)

13 (@HishamuddinH20, 2021)

14 (Buan, 14 November 2017)

15 (Abdul Nasir, 26 May 2020)

16 (Lee, 11 July 2019)

17 Ibid, paragraph 9

18 (Dempsey, 18 January 2018)

19 (Byers, 5 May 2017)

20 (Parameswaran, 25 November 2015)

21 (Regan, 23 April 2021)

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An Overview of Malaysia's Look East Policy across Dr Mahathir's Two Premierships

Norraihan Zakaria & Imran Hakim Mohamedsha

ABSTRACT

Fundamentally guided by the Look East Policy (LEP), Malaysian economic relations with Japan were further elevated with the historic return of Dr Mahathir Mohamad to power after a 15-year hiatus. Given how both countries have always enjoyed close ties, the reciprocal bilateral commitments allude to efforts to take the partnership to even greater heights. While the motivation behind LEP was to make Malaysia a high-income nation by emulating the Japanese economic model and cultural traits, underlying political and personal ambitions were also central in explaining the extent of bilateralism. The so-called LEP 2.0 presents an opportunity to re-evaluate the scope and effectiveness of economic diplomacy. While LEP has benefitted Malaysia through investments, industrial joint ventures, and educational support, drastic transformation in global structures of political economy and interpretation of mainstream economic conventions implies that Malaysia must think out of the box in courting Japan. Incorporating major lessons from LEP, the paper proposes strategies to maximise the potential of LEP 2.0, particularly on advanced and sophisticated technological exchanges.

Keywords: Malaysia-Japan Relations, Look East Policy, Malaysian Foreign Policy, Economic Diplomacy, LEP 2.0, Malaysia-Japan Relations

INTRODUCTION

Upon returning to the helm in May 2018, Dr Mahathir Mohamad immediately made Japan one of his foreign policy priorities. His first international visit as Prime Minister was to the Land of the Rising Sun, just a month after entering office – with five more visits taking place between then and September 2019 – to explore prospective cooperation in education, technology transfers, and investments. In one of the first tangible outcomes from this reinvigorated tie, the Japanese government facilitated capital flows to Malaysia through the Samurai bond, an ultra-low-interest, Tokyo-based, yen-denominated bond, in November 2018. This swift reciprocity basically reflects the extent of

Malaysia's economic diplomacy with Japan in Dr Mahathir's second stint as the Prime Minister, which arguably mirrors that of the Look East Policy (LEP) – a policy he previously introduced in 1981 to emulate the Japanese economic successes and cultural traits. While Malaysia could replicate the approaches of the policy in managing bilateral economic diplomacy – given how Japanese investments, academic exchanges, and joint ventures were central in Malaysia's rapid economic growth – it must also recognise the passage of time. That is, drastic changes to international political economic structures and interpretation of conventional economic principles, mostly driven by the breakthrough in disruptive technologies and the greater embeddedness of globalisation, should fundamentally require a departure from the status quo in Malaysia-Japan relations. Considering the complex global challenges of the 21st century and beyond, how must Malaysia then ensure that its bilateral partnerships are managed in such a way that would align with, and best benefit, its national interests? The paper aims to provide a renewed perspective on the relationship between Malaysia and Japan, which, to date, remains largely focused on LEP under the first Dr Mahathir administration. It is structured into three distinct themes. First, a review on the fundamental principles of economic diplomacy to outline the foundation of Malaysia-Japan relations. Second, an exploration of both LEP and LEP 2.0, particularly highlighting its similarities and differences. Third, a proposal on how to enhance the LEP 2.0 based on the lessons learned from the implementation of LEP.

PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

As an extension of diplomacy, economic diplomacy generally describes the institutional and political instruments utilised by sovereign states to negotiate transnational economic matters, such as trade, foreign direct investments (FDI), and intellectual properties (Bayne and Woolcock 2016). However, changes in contemporary global political-economic structures – especially with the mainstreaming of globalisation thoughts in the 1990s and their effects on international political economy, international relations, and diplomacy – have resulted in the evolution on the theories and practices of economic diplomacy. In fact, the growing economic interdependence in today's increasingly-borderless world has essentially empowered the extent and effectiveness of economic diplomacy to include its inverse causal relationship: how advanced economies use their economic might to promote their political ambitions (Okano-Heijmans 2011). For instance, given its stellar economic rise, China serves as an example of such an inversion: leveraging upon its diplomatic statecraft to attract a continuous flow of FDI in light of its market economy reforms in 1978

has allowed China to capitalise on its vast economic wealth just 40 years later to exert its foreign policy ambitions, best exemplified by the Belt and Road Initiative (Reilly 2013). Subsequently, these theories and practices of economic diplomacy are then reflected in three distinct strands in the literature, albeit they are far from being exhaustive: political, economic, and development.

The political motivations of economic diplomacy can arguably be observed as far back as the Greek city-states, when Athens imposed a trade boycott on Megara in retaliation to the abduction of three Aspasian women (Taylor 2009, 14). In a more current timeline, these political goals often assume the role of upholding international norms (e.g., human rights) or preserving national interests (e.g., territorial sovereignty) (Reilly 2013). Nonetheless, this approach is then formalised into a two-pronged deployment of 'carrot-and-stick' economic instruments in international relations, with the 'carrot' implying promises of economic assistance (e.g., foreign aid) while the 'stick' alludes to threats of economic punishment (e.g., sanctions) in the process of influencing the political agenda. In theory, this two-pronged policy tool is designed to adjust the behaviour of external actors by targeting their incentive structures, in which both punishments and rewards would signal the expected outcomes of maintaining the "less ideal" status quo (Cortright 2000). With the increasing financial and political costs of modern conventional warfare – especially with the two-faceted effects of lost revenue from economic disruptions and fiscal burden to maintain military operations – countries have often relied on economic diplomacy as the next step after breakdowns in political diplomacy. For instance, the United States is notorious for deploying its economic arsenal as to both coerce (e.g., Iran has been under heavy sanctions for its alleged nuclear weapons programme) and reward (e.g., Pakistan has received billions in American economic and military aid for its assistance on the War on Terror) countries to support its policies. In view of the assumption of rational entities preferring greater economic utility *ceteris paribus*, the motivations behind economic diplomacy would then revolve around political ambitions – with their circumstances often constructed to the benefit of richer countries.

However, the idea of a politically-motivated economic diplomacy is rather constrained by its inconclusiveness. On one hand, the public choice framework implies that minimal sanctions can still produce policy changes if they are specifically designed to target key polities (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988). Conversely, Hufbauer, *et al.* (2009) have extensively written on the poorly-designed and implemented economic sanctions that not only failed to deter

"rogue behaviours" (e.g., ongoing sanctions on North Korea and Russia have unconvincing effects on its nuclear proliferation and interference in Western electoral institutions, respectively) but also mostly exerted disproportionate hardship towards the public. Consequently, the economic perspective reflects an underlying objective that relies on diplomatic norms, such as deliberation, representation, communication, and negotiation to achieve a mutually beneficial economic outcome (M. Smith 2014). In other words, this approach suggests that countries, regardless of their economic status, would engage in economic diplomacy to strive for greater economic efficiencies. More specifically, economic diplomacy would comprise efforts to reduce economic transaction costs, potentially through dismantling trade barriers and minimising imperfect market information. For instance, the renowned example of the trade of Portuguese wines and British textiles in the 18th-century – the real-life observation of comparative advantage theory coined by the renowned British classical economist, David Ricardo – highlighted the role of economic diplomacy, in which the substantial reduction of trade duties for both goods were partly facilitated by the 1703 Methuen Treaty between England and Portugal (Yakop and van Bergeijk 2009). Although the nature of this treaty was rather unequal as England was able to sell its textiles at no tariffs, Portugal would still benefit since it managed to undercut the exports of French wines to England, and thus, elevating its domestic industry.

Furthermore, the multifaceted nature of economic diplomacy in this context is exemplified by the further classification of the concept. The attempt of countries to capitalise on the free movement of capital through their overseas diplomatic representation – through market intelligence for outbound economic opportunities or trade and investment promotion for resource inflows – has practically obscured the distinction between economic and commercial diplomacies (Lee and Hudson 2004). While some scholars argue that commercial diplomacy is fundamentally different from economic diplomacy with the former's exclusivity on international investments and trade, Geoff R. Berridge and Alan James underlined the fluid and overlapping natures of economic diplomacy (2001). Moreover, its economic dimension is no longer limited to bilateral relations with the emergence of economic regionalism (e.g., the European Union and African Union) and supranational economic institutions (e.g., the World Trade Organization and World Bank). In this case, economic diplomacy then encompasses interaction with the setting of international standards and other guidelines that would possibly require greater

expertise in economics and diplomacy. The behaviour of such interactions, however, differs not only based on economic interests, but also the institutional design: the hegemonic stability of systemic theory and neo-functionalist theory of regionalism predicts that governments are more likely to pursue regional and bilateral trade agreements, over those of multilateral, if their hegemonic economic position has relatively declined in an international setting and the extent of regional economic integration has increased, respectively (Pekkanen *et al.* 2007, 949-950). Nevertheless, the core principle of economic diplomacy arguably persists in all geographical and economic dimensions, in which countries in a fair circumstance will conduct economic, commercial, or trade negotiations with both state and non-state economic actors to the best of their interests (Czarnecka-Gallas 2012).

This approach of economic diplomacy is further enlarged to (more) accurately manifest the asymmetric political-economic interdependence among countries, especially between those of developed and developing. Kishan S. Rana, a former Indian ambassador, illustrated the spectrum of economic diplomacy: on one end lies a more integrated participant of the international economic opportunities that is actively seeking to graduate from its developing status while the other end is occupied by a victim of political-economic fragility that relies on foreign aid for life support (2013). Thus, the incorporation of the developmental dimension in economic diplomacy should then clarify potential concerns regarding the practical inseparability of both political and economic ambitions, in which it is rather complex to distinguish whether a country is pursuing only one over the other. Similarly, this academic expansion would also address the blurring between economic and developmental objectives that arises from the assumption of rational leaders formulating socioeconomic development (regardless of its subjective definition) as their economic ambitions. In other words, the political-economic infusion in the developmental framing incentivises both aid recipients and donors to pursue a symbiotic relationship: while the former benefits from greater financial and/or technological assistance, the latter also enjoys the extension of its political and economic objectives (Okano-Heijmans 2011). More specifically, the multi-dimensional nature of the developmental dimension – from its association with soft power to the flexibility in engaging with both non-state and state actors – indicates a relative preference of this thought of economic diplomacy, especially with the greater perceived benefits to both (de Haan 2011, Zielinska 2016).

LOOK EAST POLICY AS THE CORNERSTONE OF MALAYSIA-JAPAN RELATIONS

First introduced by Dr Mahathir on 8th February 1982 at the 5th Joint Annual Conference of the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association in Kuala Lumpur, LEP was designed to reflect a shift in Malaysia's development model – away from the *laissez-faire* capitalism propagated by the West to the developmental state policy adopted by Japan and South Korea (Zainuddin 2015). That is, the complementary state-business relationship in Japan had inspired him to replicate such an idea in Malaysia, in which the state can direct and facilitate private sector investments to promote socioeconomic growth, especially given his belief that the unrestrained Western capitalism would fail to alleviate the economic gap between the Malays and non-Malays (Lee 2016). Essentially, this form of state intervention relies on the establishment of state-owned enterprises to invest in strategic sectors with the profits being reinvested into public domain. However, pursuing the Asian development model posed a challenge to Malaysia – it lacked the intensive capital and human resources to promote an export-oriented, heavy-industry manufacturing. Subsequently, Dr Mahathir introduced LEP to extensively court Japanese investments and technological knowledge to address such constraints to heavy industrialisation (Furuoka 2007). As he also insisted that the Oriental virtues and values, work ethic, and management style were paramount in the Japanese post-war productivity boom, there was an embedded emphasis on education and training within LEP that targeted undergraduate students and working professionals (Furuoka 2003). In fact, Japan allocated USD400 million in loans and grants to Malaysia in 1998 for educational scholarship to mitigate the effect of the Asian Financial Crisis, benefitting around 2,000 Malaysian science and engineering students in Japan (Furuoka 2007, 10).

However, the decision to look East was not motivated solely by Dr Mahathir's economic vision or Malaysia's physical constraints towards development since it also incorporated explicit political connotations. This embracing of Japan can be perceived as the manifestation of his anti-West and nationalist sentiments, especially when Japan has demonstrated its historical and contemporary abilities to stand on an equal footing with the West. In addition to being one of the main pillars of Malaysian foreign policy in the 1980s, LEP could also be perceived as complementing the 'Buy British Last' (BBL) policy. Introduced by Dr Mahathir in 1981 merely months after rising into power, BBL was the culmination of the deteriorating relations between the United Kingdom and Malaysia that were partly driven by the exorbitant tuition fee hike for Malaysian students at British

universities and the hostile reception from the London Metal Exchange to an attempted takeover of Guthrie, a then British company (Overtoom 2014). Additional factors such as economic nationalism, perceived lack of reciprocity, and socioeconomic grievances were also identified as reasons behind BBL, which Daud (2017) promptly outlined as: 1) preferential treatment towards British firms over those of Malaysian-owned in the domestic procurement processes; 2) "unfriendly and disrespectful" British attitude that reeked of an arrogant colonial mindset; 3) friendly business relations between the local ethnic Chinese-owned firms and local British subsidiaries that basically side-lined Malay entrepreneurs, and; 4) growing trade deficits between Malaysia and the United Kingdom. Consequently, the shift towards Asia was fundamentally necessary to fill the vacuum vacated by the British – while Dr Mahathir believes downgrading bilateral ties with its former colonial master was justified given their perception of being lopsided against Malaysia's interests, he also realised that Malaysia needed economic assistance from developed economies to support its economic growth.

Furthermore, the fact that Japan could benefit, and had benefitted, from LEP has made it far from being a one-sided or altruistic initiative. Despite the rather unequal footing between both countries, especially in the 1980s, there exists a symbiotic relationship as LEP offered an opportunity for Japan to reframe its geopolitical and geo-economic sphere, what more after decades remaining under the American satellite post-1945, as to be more aligned with its Eastern values through looking inwards into Asia Pacific (Meng 2017). Previously, Japan has remained largely apolitical in matters beyond its immediate borders (i.e., the threat from the Communist bloc in East Asia) by the virtue of the American hegemony in the region. However, its growing economic might had prompted the United States to pressure Japan to occupy a more proactive role internationally, particularly on regional defence and security in the onset of the Cold War (Ponniah 1987, 75). Ironically, this push for self-reliance by Washington was only in its self-interest as Tokyo's refusal to join, let alone lead, the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), a regional economic grouping of Asian states proposed by Dr Mahathir, was due to Washington's opposition towards the association (Furuoka 2007, 14). Similarly, Japanese foreign policy was initially inclined towards solely maximising its economic interests – even at the risk of being deemed as exploitative – in which the political neglect eventually resulted in anti-Japanese riots during the visit of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei to Jakarta in 1974 (Chinwanno 1987). As Japan's economic fortune is deeply intertwined with the regional political headwinds, it then issued the Fukuda Doctrine, named

after Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, as an initiative to strengthen non-economic cooperation with an underlying focus on development aid and "heart-to-heart" diplomacy (Ponniah 1987, 80). Hence, Japan had a vested interest to participate in LEP as it basically provided an avenue to pursue mutually beneficial political engagements with the rest of Asia, and particularly, ASEAN.

Additionally, the disproportionate trade balances caused by aggressive growth in Japanese exports also provided economic incentives for Japan to embark on this 'special relationship'. At the peak of its post-war economic miracle, Japan established itself as a leading global exporter of advanced manufactured goods, such as semiconductors, electronics, and automotive products, to both developed and developing countries, with its trade surplus culminating to USD82.7 billion in 1986. While disproportionate trades have economic consequences, such as prolonged net imports might imply losses in domestic employment, the effects in the long-run are often muted as trade deficits are fundamentally offset by capital and/or financial surpluses. Nevertheless, this trade imbalance, especially during the Reagan administration, had put Japan in an awkward position. Fuelled by the rather irrational economic nationalism, the United States openly threatened to impose trade barriers on Japanese automotive exports with severe economic repercussions (Griffiths 2019). Therefore, LEP was basically a sight for sore eyes by offering Tokyo a new commercial prospect that would not only alleviate its trade conflict with the United States through the emergence of new export markets, but also maintain the profitability of its corporations through production outsourcing (Suzuki 2014). Although the eventual tariffs on Japanese goods meant that LEP was unable to overturn the nationalist sentiments in the United States, the persistent trade deficits in Malaysia from 1984 before peaking at RM11.3 billion in 1991 (Aslam and Piei 2006, 24) highlighted the extent of Japanese firms successfully shifting their export ventures. It is then possible to argue that the longevity of LEP has been partly driven by the fact that Japan has benefitted both politically and economically from its implementation.

SAMURAI BOND: A CATALYST TO LOOK EAST POLICY 2.0

Under the second Dr Mahathir administration, the renewed bilateral relations drew heavy parallels with the yesteryears as it comprised reciprocal policy pledges by both Putrajaya and Tokyo in encouraging greater economic cooperation. For instance, in one of the official visits by the Malaysian contingent, the then Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe expressed similar commitments to boost relations, particularly on prospects to deepen exchanges in science and technical education, human resource competency, and technology transfers (The Star

Online 2018). The foundation of this mutuality is not simply built on a pure sentimental view or historical legacy, but arguably also leverages on the global economic environment. More specifically, the growing internationalisation of bond markets, i.e., the ability to issue foreign-denominated bond by non-residents, has prompted governments to seek for alternative, and often affordable, financing options abroad. For example, Malaysia has relished the prospect of issuing low-rate Samurai bonds from Japanese capital markets given how most indicators on the Japanese interest rates – from the overnight Central Bank Rates to the 10-year long-term Government bond yield – have remained below 0.5%, or even negative, since the Great Depression in 2008 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2019). In theory, low interest rates can boost investments today as the cost of credit is literally at its lowest and could only increase in the future (barring the unlikely mainstreaming of negative rates). Securing a yen credit then offers a venue for Malaysia to not only finance its domestic development at a lower cost, but also improve its fiscal cash flow by freeing up funds to dispose costlier agreements – such as the RM5 billion, 30-year, government-guaranteed bond issued by the scandal-ridden 1MDB at 5.75% annual interest rate (Edgeprop.MY 2018).

The response from the Japanese government regarding the Samurai bond could imply to an interaction that is built on a more equal footing, relative to the first LEP. It is possible that the fact Malaysia was granted access to Japanese capital markets to issue the Samurai bond in March 2019, the first after a 30-year absence, can perhaps be viewed as a recognition of heightened bilateralism. The 10-year bond that is guaranteed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) at 0.63% per annum was approximately oversubscribed by 1.6 times at the value of JP¥324.7 billion against the initial offering of JP¥200 billion (The Star Online 2019), in which the greater demand for the financial instrument signals investment creditworthiness. In fact, this notion of economic confidence is further illustrated by the preferable amount and rates secured by Malaysia relative to those of its ASEAN peers – e.g., Indonesia only issued JP¥100 billion at 1.27% per annum while Philippines raised JP¥40.8 billion at 0.99% per annum (Tay 2019). Although economic fundamentals and market confidence are essentially paramount in their weightage to determine the terms of debt issuance, in which Malaysia arguably outperforms most of its neighbours, close diplomatic relations may offer additional reassurance on such agreements. Given his insistence of Malaysia maintaining a strong fiscal standing, Dr Mahathir instructed for the negotiations of an even larger issuance of the second Samurai bond to proceed – especially with Japan offering a lower interest rate of 0.5%

(The Star Online 2019). Hence, it is only imperative that this approach serves as an impetus to further strengthen cooperation in other fields.

LOOK EAST POLICY 2.0 – STATUS QUO OR A COLLABORATIVE BREAKTHROUGH?

Interestingly enough, the second wave of LEP – or also known as the Look East Policy 2.0 – was officially initiated shortly before its 30th anniversary in 2013 at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo, with a sustained focus on technical education, economic cooperation, maritime security, and regional community-building (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013). This policy also included reinvigorated ties with South Korea in 2015, particularly on further developing strategic sectors, exploring new areas of collaboration, and building on the existing human capital development initiatives (Ministry of International Trade and Industry 2015). However, the paper defines LEP 2.0 as the framework of Malaysia-Japan relations under Dr Mahathir's second stint in office. Whether LEP 2.0 is simply a manifestation of the diplomatic status quo from the 1980s or a breakthrough in bilateral relations, certain policy parameters of the LEP 2.0 are eerily similar to its predecessor. For instance, the notion of emulating Japanese work ethics, values, and cultural habits through institutional cooperation in education and training still remains paramount in Dr Mahathir's approach of LEP (Mansor 2018; Borneo Post Online 2019; Nakano 2019). Despite both cultures having some similarities – mostly when compared to that of the West – the cultural gap was still substantial and had resulted in tensions surrounding the efforts to promote the Japanese management style several decades ago (Imaoka 1981; Jain 1990). Thus, inasmuch as cultural compatibility is rather inelastic and seems unlikely to have shifted substantially over the past three decades, to what extent would this policy persistence then pay off? There is also a sense of mirrored continuity within the scope and approach of LEP 2.0, with high-level coordinating committee meetings often embarking on the mechanisms and procedures in themes ranging from attracting greater Japanese investments and business presence in Malaysia to enhancing human resource competency, among many (Amarthalingam 2018; Yunus 2019). Although the Malaysian socioeconomic development still needs financial and technical assistance from developed nations, Malaysia should have taken this opportunity to set a new milestone in Malaysia-Japan ties that is not bound by sentimental idealism and policy inertia, but rather an inclination towards advancing Malaysia's pragmatic interests.

The devil is often in the detail with further scrutiny of the LEP 2.0 highlights progress from its predecessor. For example, the commitment by the

Japan government in selecting Malaysia to host its first ever university branch abroad – in which the move to establish a local branch of the University of Tsukuba (Ariff 2019) – demonstrates an impressive achievement in bilateral ties. Once materialised, the prospect of a direct exposure to the Japanese education system and student exchanges at a more affordable cost will contribute dearly to deeper cultural and educational understanding, and hence, the likelihood to adopt Japanese work ethics. In contrast, the current system of sending local students to study abroad – which is limited by financial constraints and the complexities of foreign enrolments – understandably has a less pronounced effect on a large-scale cultural replication since there are only around 250 Malaysians, on average, being sent to Japan annually under LEP (Nakano 2019). With the perceived information asymmetry and mismatch – Malaysia arguably having a greater knowledge of Japanese culture, but not otherwise, because of the wider reach of the latter's cultural export – such narratives could be mitigated through the possibility of Japanese students from the home campus to pursue a study exchange in Malaysia. Hypothetically, this intercultural initiative can highlight and harmonise the best of both Malaysian and Japanese values, and hence, avoid mindlessly transplanting foreign practices without comprehending their extent of compatibility with local circumstances.

Furthermore, recurring tenets of economic cooperation within LEP 2.0 should not be simply perceived as a broken record, but rather a manifestation of the realities on the ground – concentrating solely on advanced technologies without enhancing the essential prerequisites of high-skilled human capital and mature high-technology industrialisation mechanisms is essentially equivalent to putting the cart before the horse. On one hand, it is reasonably crucial now for Malaysia to capitalise on Japan's technological prowess as to not let itself be left behind in the epoch of rapid disruption of conventional economic understanding, structures, and practices that are upon us – through the emergence of Industry 4.0, big data, artificial intelligence, Internet-of-Things, and other technological products. After all, the 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index – measuring how innovative countries are based on their research and development intensity, patent activity, tertiary education efficiency, productivity, value-added manufacturing, high-tech public company density, and researcher density – has listed Japan as the ninth most innovative economy in the world while South Korea retained its first spot for the sixth year running (Jamrisko *et al*. 2019). Yet, it is equally important for Dr Mahathir to reiterate his receptiveness towards Japanese investments and technology transfer to assure that domestic structures have the capacity and ability to accommodate sophisticated technological

exchanges, which will be conducive to the development of productive local industries that are suited with the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. Thus, while the economic scope of LEP 2.0 might invoke heavy comparisons to its predecessor, its more comprehensive nature is more aligned towards Malaysia's aspirations of being a high-income nation by 2025.

The expansion of LEP 2.0 to include non-economic agreements also imply a shift in Malaysia-Japan relations. While foreign policy under Dr Mahathir's first stint in power has often been characterised as one of commercial and developmental diplomacy rather than security and defence (Dhillon 2009, 2), the recent defence cooperation between both countries could be perceived as a form of "soft"-balancing in the region. The image of a pacifist Japan – being rendered powerless under the American hegemonic order in Asia Pacific post-WWII – is arguably long gone with the more nationalistic and outward-looking Japan. More specifically, the modernisation efforts of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces – ironically to counter the rising China – could benefit Malaysia as Japan has expressed its willingness to offer military technology and retired equipment to Malaysia in strengthening its capacity to maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia (Hamid 2018). In addition, a defence collaboration agreement between Japan and Malaysia that was signed in September 2018 also manifested the similar defensive concerns shared by both countries – particularly those involving China's presence in the South China Sea (Parameswaran 2018). While this cooperation was not explicitly packaged in LEP 2.0, it could potentially be attributed to the warming bilateral ties. In other words, the fact that Dr Mahathir turned to Japan can perhaps be seen as an effort to lend credence to his "silent" protest towards the persistent Chinese encroachment in Malaysian territorial waters. Tokyo also has vested interest to incorporate a heightened defence partnership in LEP 2.0 as it shares similar sentiments towards Chinese geopolitical expansion – of which it hopes to make Putrajaya an ally in reinforcing the centrality of freedom of navigation in South China Sea (Sukumaran 2018).

LESSONS FROM LOOK EAST POLICY

After over three decades of its implementation, LEP has offered valuable lessons on managing bilateral economic partnerships. Its varying degrees of success – from outright failures to the emergence of competitive native industries – has highlighted the importance of effective structural, policy, and individual factors in attracting foreign involvement. Seeing the similarities between LEP and the renewed Malaysia-Japan ties today, promoting economic and political efficiencies is important to guide the execution of LEP 2.0. The necessity of this

approach is to ensure that the latter is proven to be a calculated decision, not a mere manifestation of a personality-driven worldview.

(a) Creating conducive economic incentives

Considering the substantial capital constraints faced by Malaysia in replicating the export-oriented manufacturing model to accelerate its economy, one of the central tenets of LEP revolved around attracting constant FDI inflows. At first, initial statistics seem to illustrate that Malaysia managed to provide a conducive economic environment that offers profitable returns to investment. For instance, Japan is the largest cumulative source of manufacturing FDI in Malaysia since 1980 – totalling at RM88.5 billion as of 2016 (The Star Online 2017). The effectiveness of this capital flow can be in part supported by the uninterrupted period of rapid economic growth from Dr Mahathir's industrialisation drive in 1980s to the Asian Financial Crisis in mid-1990s, with the annual growth rate averaging almost 8% (Yusoff 2014). However, the actual extent of Malaysia facilitating foreign inflows under LEP may have been overstated given how Japanese FDIs in Malaysia only accelerated after the 1985 Plaza Accord. That is, the (enforced) depreciation of the US Dollar against the Japanese Yen incentivised Japanese firms to scour for investment opportunities abroad as foreign ventures were made more affordable with a stronger yen (Anazawa 2006). For example, there exists a significant disparity in Japanese FDI pre- and post-1985 – the values ranged from RM32.6 million to RM308.7 million between 1970 and 1984 and RM116.3 million to RM4.2 billion between 1985 and 1991 (Aslam and Piei 2006, 28). In other words, given Malaysia's level of development was (and is still, albeit to a lesser extent) far advanced relative to most of its peers in Southeast Asia then, it is highly likely that Malaysia would have been one of the main beneficiaries of Japanese FDI and outsourcing even without LEP. Malaysia must then realise foreign capital inflows – from the Samurai bond to joint ventures – are not mostly motivated by political goodwill or altruism but are also heavily dependent on sound macroeconomic fundamentals.

Similarly, further scrutiny of the policy has highlighted that producing a thriving and externally-competitive heavy industry in Malaysia cannot be achieved simply through – and even with – "unlimited" funding and the entirety of the state bureaucracy. That is, the successes of heavy industrialisation are also influenced by external factors and the nature of these industries: generally, sectors that are exposed to stiff export markets and import competition tend to falter or would require continuous state intervention while domestic-purposed manufacturing tends to be more successful. The lessons from the inconclusive outcomes of LEP

can be exemplified through the costly joint ventures between East Asian firms and subsidiaries of the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (HICOM). Firstly, the automotive venture between Mitsubishi, a Japanese carmaker, and Proton was initially deemed a success as it enjoyed the comprehensive privileges by the virtue of being an infant industry – not only Proton essentially received a blank check from the government, Dr Mahathir also imposed high import tariffs on imported cars while denying local production licenses for foreign carmakers (Jomo 2006). However, the extremely-tight margins within the automotive industry meant that Proton was heavily affected by Thailand's decision to allow American and Asian carmakers to establish their factories in the region, in which the greater economies of scale from the regional-fitted production in Thailand made Malaysian cars more expensive (Noor Shams 2016). By early 2000s, Proton was losing its market share to more expensive imported brands and Perodua, the second local carmaker established in 1993, recording continuous losses, and receiving billions in bailouts from the government (Jomo 2006). This failure is ironically attributed to over-protectionism, with the inability to compete on a level playing field and capitalise on Malaysia's lower wages to produce cost-competitive cars meant that it was limited to domestic market and small-scale exports (Tong *et al*. 2013). However, its current partnership with Geely, a China-based carmaker, has managed to revive its prospects with the rather optimistic trends on its new releases and a more streamlined management.

Secondly, the steelmaking venture between Nippon Steel of Japan and Perwaja illustrated the complexities of incorporating new technologies in infant industries with no prior native industrialisation, in which the latter underwent insolvency in 1988 and 1997 (through its state-owned successor, Perwaja Steel) with debts totalling to at least RM7 billion (Adnan 2010). Although this project was later revealed to be littered with corruption and misappropriation of funds, it arguably lost its market competitiveness due to the higher costs of the logistical mismatch (i.e., the steel plants were built in Terengganu, a state in the East Coast, despite most of the steel was being consumed in the West Coast states – a decision justified by Dr Mahathir as bringing industrial development to less developed regions) and the inexperienced domestic managers that were selected to lead the steel sector albeit lacking academic and/or professional knowledge (Ahmad Khair *et al.* 2015). In contrast, the cement production venture between Hanjoong Daewoo of Korea and Perak Cement was basically one of the relatively successful partnerships established during LEP with Malaysia's then second largest integrated cement producer being eventually acquired by YTL Cement, a local player, in 2004 (Fong 2004). While the growth of Perak-Hanjoong

Cement was partly driven by rent-seeking, in which its revenue was generated through a monopoly on the domestic cement production, the economic boom in the 1980s and 1990s produced additional aggregate demand that essentially mitigated the loss of consumer welfare through market inefficiency (Perkins *et al.* 2017).

In his second stint, Dr Mahathir intended to replicate the development model of LEP to fulfil his economic vision for Malaysia of a sustained growth in productivity and individual welfare. Considering how the focus on economic development as an end places attracting high-value FDI and technology transfers as a policy priority under the guise of accelerating and supporting heavy industrialisation and value-added industrial upgrading, Malaysia must acknowledge and respond to the 'supreme authority' of economic incentives. As promptly illustrated by the Japanese outflows towards Asia in the aftermath of the Plaza Accords, FDI will often naturally flow to destinations that can guarantee profitable returns to investments. In other words, the successes of LEP 2.0 cannot rely solely on political goodwill and altruism but must also require an economic structure that facilitates high ease of business and global competitiveness, among others.

On industrial policy, economic theories suggest that the government identifies and invests in sectors with comparative advantage so that domestic firms can then produce manufactured goods at greater structural and cost effectiveness. However, the discourse on industrial comparative advantage is perhaps more nuanced and persists as one of the main sources of intellectual tensions within the field, which was extensively captured by a series of academic debates between Justin Lin and Ha-Joon Chang, both development experts: should developing countries conform to their current advantages or artificially create new comparative advantages? Lin argues that developing countries should pursue comparative-advantage-following approach, of which firms acquire existing technologies in industries that are appropriate to their current endowment structure (i.e., their labour, capital, and natural resources) rather than establishing often-expensive and high-skilled frontier industries (Lin and Chang 2009, 486-487). This view is perhaps best reinforced by the failures of Proton and Perwaja, with the attempt to "defy" comparative advantage incurring substantial financial and opportunity costs. In contrast, Chang believes that effective industrial upgrading is only possible by delving into the actual production process – albeit with a caveat: increasing deviation from the comparative advantage is only beneficial up to a certain point, in which both

tangible and intangible costs of deviation (e.g., excessive subsidies and rent-seeking) would exceed the benefits (Lin and Chang 2009, 496-497). While the past is not necessarily an indicator of the future, the exorbitant financial costs of previous failures could perhaps incentivise Malaysia to focus on less riskier ventures, although at the expense of a potential breakthrough. To address the question of appropriate risk-taking level, Malaysia can emulate approaches of advanced nations towards technology and scientific transfers such as forming tri-sectoral research sectors (i.e., industrial, academic, and government) with specific yet complementary functions. For example, they can extract multiplier effects of foreign ventures and minimise the development gap between foreign-based academic knowledge and domestic-based industrial outcomes through institutional collaboration in the commercialisation process (World Intellectual Property Organization 2012).

(b) Balancing idiosyncratic motivations and tangible outcomes

Although there were credible motivations behind Dr Mahathir's decision to elevate bilateral ties under LEP, his personal admiration of the Japanese culture, work ethic, and successes in a Western-dominated world – further inspired by his Global South activism and nationalistic stance – has raised the concerns of an idiosyncratic foreign policy. The idea of idiosyncrasy is attributed to James N. Rosenau, who defined the role of individual personality as one of the leading independent sources of foreign affairs (Rosenau 1971). Seeing that a state derives its fundamental and political legitimacy from individuals, it is then inevitable for policy directives to reflect the personality traits (e.g., ideologies, motivations, and values) of those in power. In fact, Dr Mahathir essentially built his reputation as a "one-man show" in guiding the direction of Malaysian foreign policy during his first premiership, in which unilateral decisions during LEP led to inefficient outcomes: he intervened in the procurement process for Syarikat Gula Padang Terap, a local sugar firm, in which a Japanese tractor model was chosen over that of the British despite the latter being 20% cheaper (Daud 2017, 82). Similarly, albeit in a slightly different context, his persistence to resuscitate companies that have basically failed in the state-driven industrialisation push, notably Perwaja Steel, illustrated the rather steep price of excessive idiosyncrasy. However, the complexity then arises in the process of choosing winners and losers: when is an entity defined as having outlived its usefulness? Pulling the plug too soon may jeopardise premature deindustrialisation while the converse could expose Malaysia to exorbitant risks. In embarking on new joint ventures with Japanese firms in LEP 2.0, the Government could perhaps set a spending ceiling or a timeline to ensure that precious capital is not wasted on a failing initiative.

Moreover, pursuing a special relationship with Japan should not dissuade Malaysia from maintaining expansive ties concurrently, especially when LEP also comprised partnerships with and drew inspiration from South Korea and Taiwan. Prioritising a sole partner not only could bound Malaysia into a lopsided relationship – in which it is reduced to be source of cheap commodities and the destination for Japanese exports – but also distort the extent of capital flows in cases of foreign turmoil. In retrospect, it made sense for Malaysia to concentrate solely on Japan during LEP as the latter was at its peak of a 45-year run of rapid economic growth that averaged 6.8% annually from 1955 to 1990, in which this Japanese Miracle prompted economists to predict that the United States will no longer be the world's largest economy by 1990s (Stancil 2010). However, as history would have it, its economy capitulated in 1992 due to the asset bubble crash and has remained in a state of durable low growth and deflation until today. Despite being partly confined within its boundaries, the crisis arguably hampered Japan's capacity to sustain capital outflows notwithstanding other omitted variables – Japanese FDI in Malaysia fell from almost USD1 billion in 1991 to USD371 million in 1995 (Aslam and Piei 2006, 28; Japan External Trade Organization 2019). Since Japan is one of the largest sources of capital inflows to Malaysia, this sharp disruption could interrupt the momentum of economic growth and should serve as a lesson on balancing between idiosyncrasy and pragmatism in LEP 2.0. Although Dr Mahathir publicly reiterated in his second stint how China remains a vital partner to Malaysia, Putrajaya is motivated to elevate ties with Beijing while pursuing LEP 2.0 to ensure that its economic fortune is not entirely intertwined with that of one county.

Nevertheless, a deeper theoretical dissection on this issue would assume a natural inclination towards the equilibrium, in which there is an incentive for each perspective to gradually respond to extremes by gravitating towards the centre. Ojieh (2016) deliberates on the academic tensions surrounding these effects of idiosyncrasy on policymaking: while powerful leaders can blur the lines between personal and national ambitions, their personalities are not the end all of policy outcomes as the extent of personal influence among both bureaucratic and political elites – especially in a democratic society – is often restrained by global and domestic norms. Hypothetically, the notion of perfect information in maximising a country's self-interest seems unlikely as some leaders would prefer to be weakly worse off by pursuing engagements with their traditional allies. Similarly, the idea of a whimsical leader putting their foot down on policy directives would also be limited by either resource constraints or threats towards political incumbency. In fact, while Dr Mahathir's personality, leadership style,

and political ideology are clearly apparent in his foreign policies, the former is fundamentally intertwined with the need to promote Malaysia's national development, national integration, and regime maintenance (Dhillon 2009). In sum, while the paper states that balancing between idiosyncrasy and pragmatism arguably has a natural recalibrating mechanism, the extent of leadership personality in LEP 2.0 could perhaps be alleviated by the immediate approach of outlining policy action plans and the long-term approach of ensuring domestic frameworks and policy tools are adequate to constrain errant policymakers.

CONCLUSION

The prompt financial relief through the issuance of Samurai bond inherently signals the positive reaffirmation of Malaysia-Japan relations under Dr Mahathir's second stint as the Prime Minister, which is arguably reminiscent of LEP. The efforts to resurrect the special partnership of the past has been openly expressed by Malaysia – especially through various forms of economic diplomacy – with Dr Mahathir himself recording six state visits in less than 18 months. While he might be tempted to make LEP 2.0 a carbon copy of its predecessor, it must be acknowledged that almost 40 years have elapsed since then. For so much has changed globally and domestically for both countries, Malaysia must avoid letting the enormous potential of a greater collaborative breakthrough go unfulfilled by limiting the extent of bilateral cooperation. Drastic shifts in global structures of political economy and the application of economic conventional wisdoms – mostly attributed to the emergence of disruptive and transformative technologies – have inherently put Malaysia at a crossroads: Putrajaya could maintain the status quo in pursuing its ties with Tokyo – just like Dr Mahathir's first stint in office – or it could be bold by recognising, and hence, incorporating responses to, these complex challenges of the 21st century and beyond. Regardless of its chosen path, its implications must be carefully dissected to ensure that Malaysia is not blindsided by historical sentiments in exploring other, or even more, beneficial partnerships – or even worse, falling into lopsided and/or unfair deals.

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