ANGLO-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS
(1957 - 1970s)

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The British Government was very clear about its role in Malaysia and Singapore. In 1957, Duncan Sandys made it very clear that Singapore played an important role in maintaining their uninhibited freedom of movement across the seas. During the emergency the British played a vital role in weeding out the insurgents and their troops remained in jungles on active service conditions. Soon after the emergency was over the rehabilitation programme started and the troops were provided with accommodation and training space which indicated the British perception of their role in Malaysia-Singapore area in the years to come. In 1959, a full Commonwealth Brigade was stationed near Malacca in a new cantonment. The cantonment was constructed to house between 7,000 to 9,000 men and its cost turned out to be worth more than 9 million. In 1959, it was also reported that Britain would spend around 3 million to develop the R A F (Royal Air Force) base on the Singapore island. Similar development projects were undertaken by the British Government. Though there were signs of opposition to the maintenance of British Bases in Malaysia and Singapore, the Britishers were sure that their base at Singapore was the safest. The independence of Malaya had already posed many problems and when Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed the Malaysian Federation Plan, there was some sign of relief in Britain. The very formation of Malaysia provided more security to the British defence investments. The aims of the British policy in this region were mainly to

(a) get rid of its responsibilities of colonial rule,
(b) protect the region from Communist domination keeping in view Peking's role as perceived at that time.
In spite of the fact that Malaysia had constitutionally the freedom to have its own defence setup independent of any outside assistance, it was felt and recognized by Malaysians that in case of an external aggression, military help from outside would be indispensable. After independence a defence agreement was concluded with the United Kingdom which came to be popularly known as Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement. This agreement provided security against external threat and provisions for maintaining British troops and bases with mutual approval.

The Malaysian Government had always taken sections of the Chinese population as a security threat because they played a significant role as part of MCP (Malayan Communist Party) during the emergency. Apart from this there was generally a subdued feeling among the Asian countries to oppose the alignment with the Western powers. In the case of Malaysian agreement with Britain for maintaining their security, the forceful opposition came from Indonesia. The sizable Chinese population was also an important factor and the Government of Malaya decided not to join South East Asian Treaty Organization in order to avoid unnecessary tension with the Chinese population of Malaysia and the Peking Government. It was indeed a very desirable and calculated move on the part of Tunku Abdul Rahman to have an agreement with the Government of United Kingdom. Initially the treaty was not aimed against Indonesia because it was perhaps never perceived that Indonesia would oppose the formation of Malaysia at a later date with an intensity that was noticed in the early sixties.

Perhaps in view of the cordial relations between the two governments no time limit was specified in the treaty although it had provided for the review
as and when necessary. Even after the emergency, the British troops continued to be stationed in and outside the federation.

Tunku was well aware of the fact that the Government of Malaysia if left alone, to look after its defence would have to spend quite a large sum and this would drain out its economic resources required for reconstruction of the new society.

But the creation of Malaysia in 1963 left Tunku with no alternative but to revise the agreement which had no clause to provide the inclusion of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak and use of British troops directly for SEATO purposes without the permission or agreement of the Government of Malaya.

As long as Singapore remained within the Federation no controversial issue cropped up between the Government of Malaysia and the United Kingdom but soon after the separation of Singapore from the Federation in August 1965 some problems cropped up. The Government of Singapore insisted that restrictions must be put on the use of the troops though the Britishers could continue to maintain the base. While all these developments were taking place there was no evidence of any such perception of the British role which could demand greater commitment by Britain for the purposes of maintaining Malaysia's security.

Here it would be useful to note the attitudes of the Malaysian and Singapore governments on the question of security, in order to understand certain aspects of their defence policies. Both the countries gave the impression that the British presence contributed to the stability and security of the region of Southeast Asia.

Immediately after separation of Singapore from the Federation, the Singapore Government expressed its desire for control over the British Bases to prevent their use for aggressive purposes. Malaysia also expressed its
viewpoint acknowledging the importance of retaining the British Bases and at the same time reiterating that the bases would not be used for SEATO purposes.

Malaysian and Singaporean attitudes were also similar in many respects regarding the US role in the region. Lee Kuan Yew was not willing to consider the possibility of US presence in Singapore though his statements on Vietnam during late 1967 clearly indicated that Singapore Government attached great importance to the US presence in Southeast Asia for countering the extension of Chinese influence in the region. Malaysia took a similar view of the American presence with very cautious and careful diplomatic utterences. Tun Razak said on 16 September, 1965, that there was no question of bringing US forces into Malaysia. Malaysia also took a similar view to that of Singapore regarding Vietnam and Tunku said on 5 July, 1967, that an American defeat in Vietnam would result in Chinese domination of Southeast Asia.

As regards the threat evaluation of the two countries there were differences. The main threats to Malaysian internal security were the clandestine Communist Organization in Sarawak and the possibility of the revival of the guerrilla warfare by the MCP. An intensification of the communal conflict was considered to be a potential threat to the political stability but the Malaysian officials were sure that such a conflict if erupted will not take a military form.

There appeared to be two groups within the Malaysian Government which perceived Malaysian interests regarding Indonesia differently. One group was dominated by Tun Razak, and the then Secretary of the Malaysian Ministry for External Affairs, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie and the other group was dominated by Tunku. The former was of the view that the Malaysia's future role in the region was dependent on her ability to foster a close relationship with a non-Communist
Indonesia  The latter was of the view that politico-strategic ambitions of Indonesia might lead to deterioration in Malaysian-Indonesian relationships 16

It was believed by the governments of Malaysia and Singapore that the increasing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia was a major threat to the security of their countries 17 Singapore's existence as a largely Chinese State in a predominantly Malay region did provide her an opportunity to view its security problems in a different perspective 18 Singapore's view was bound to be different regarding threat from Indonesia and actually Singapore saw danger in a racial reappraisal between Malaysia and Indonesia 19 Lee Kuan Yew also maintained that their long term survival demanded that there was no government in Malaysia that goes with Indonesia otherwise it would be rather difficult for Singapore to survive being sandwiched between Malaysia and Indonesia 20

In view of these perceptions and problems it was felt that the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement must be renegotiated

According to the act of the Malaysian Parliament which provided for Singapore's separation it was clearly stated that

The Government of Singapore will after Singapore day afford to the Government of United Kingdom the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities occupied by their service authorities within Singapore and will permit the Government of UK to make such use of these bases and facilities as that government may consider necessary for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Singapore and Malaysia and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia 21
This clause provided for a continued British presence in Singapore in the immediate future. In the long term however the question of the renegotiation of the defence agreement to take account of the new situation was to loom large.

The most crucial problem was the future shape of the agreement and there seemed to be only two alternatives. A tripartite treaty could be negotiated between Britain, Singapore and Malaysia or else separate bilateral treaties could be negotiated between Britain on the one hand and Malaysia and Singapore respectively on the other.

It was also desirable to have defence relations between Singapore and Malaysia and Singapore and U.K. on a permanent legal basis. Here it will be useful to have a fresh look of the three governments concerned, i.e., U.K., Malaysia and Singapore. The British Government welcomed the idea of a new defence agreement with Singapore but could not reconcile to negotiate a tripartite agreement. Britain made it clear that the treaty with Malaysia remained operative but Singapore being an independent and sovereign State would have to negotiate a fresh treaty with Britain for her defence. On 31 August, 1965, a statement issued by the Commonwealth relations office affirmed that the British presence in Singapore was covered by the separation agreement, nevertheless it was to be revised because the agreement was between Britain and former Malaysia which included Singapore. In October, 1965, contradictory statements were made by Healey and Brown on the question of negotiating a new treaty with Singapore. Denis Healey told the House of Commons that there must be negotiations with the Singapore Government in due course to re-establish air defence relations to a formal basis. Brown was of the view that the British presence was provided for in the Separation Agreement and hence there was
nothing new to look at. The defence White Paper of 1966 stated that Britain would retain its military facilities in Malaysia and Singapore for as long as these governments had no objections to the agreed conditions. However, no mention was made of the question of renegotiating Britain's defence position in the area. On 15 July, Healey stated that the question of a new defence treaty between Britain and Singapore would be deferred until the Indonesian position on confrontation was clarified.

The Malaysian Government was consistently in favour of tripartite defence treaty. On 18 August, 1965, Tun Razak stated that Singapore had agreed to seek a new tripartite treaty, and not bilateral treaties as at first seemed likely.

The Singapore Government was less responsible to the idea. On 1 September, 1965, Tunku Abdul Rahman accused Singapore of being ready in discussing defence matters of mutual interest. The main emphasis of Singapore Government was on bilateral relations and negotiations with the United Kingdom. On 19 August, 1965, Rajarantnam stated that Singapore wanted the British Bases to remain and that the terms of their use would be renegotiated with the British defence authorities. Lee Kuan Yew, however, made it clear that the bases would not be used for acts of aggression against any neighbour in Southeast Asia and that Singapore would retain ultimate control. On 2 September Dr. Goh Keng Swee also stated that the government of Singapore was ready to have negotiations with Britain on a new defence agreement. This offer was not followed by any immediate action however. On 23 February Dr. Goh Keng Swee stated in the Singapore Parliament that the position of the British Forces in Singapore was still governed by Article 13 of the act of the Malaysian Parliament providing...
for Singapore's separation. He also reaffirmed that the existing agreement shall continue to be operative until renegotiated.

In 1966, April, talks took place between Wilson and Lee Kuan Yew on the question of the proposed defence treaty between Britain and Singapore. It was agreed that the treaty would be married with Britain's military arrangements in Asia. The trouble cropped up over the question of accommodating returning Singapore forces, which had served under Malaysian Command in Sabah, in their original barracks at Camp Temasek which had during their absence been occupied by Royal Malaysian Regiment troops. Tunku Abdul Rahman contended that under Article V of the separation agreement, the Malaysian Armed forces were given the right to remain in Singapore for the defence of Malaysia and Singapore, and that it was the responsibility of the Singapore government to seek alternative accommodations for the Malaysian forces before they could be asked to move out of the Camp Temasek.

The new agreement could not take place because of some reasons and the most important one was a strained relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. The differences which existed between the Federation and seceding Singapore continued to exist in different forms. This situation was further worsened by Malaysia's belief that Britain was favouring Singapore in the disputes between the two countries. In May, 1966, Tan Siew Sin (then Malaysian Finance Minister) was unable to obtain a loan of $630 million from Britain. While Britain explained the refusal of the request in terms of her balance of payments difficulties, Malaysia took the view that Britain was withholding aid in an attempt to speed the conclusion of a defence treaty between Malaysia and Singapore.

The ending of confrontation, by making defence matters of less immediate concern might have made the conclusion of new defence arrangements
appear less urgent. Also, with the uncertainty of British role in time to come, it might have been felt that a deferment of discussions on possible new arrangements was advisable until the position was clarified. Finally, one might suggest that the ad hoc arrangements on defence which had covered the situation in post separation period were reasonably satisfactory in their operation despite the differences between the parties involved. New defence arrangements could clarify the legal position of the parties involved but not settle the political differences and disputes.

In view of the British withdrawal the Anglo-Malaysian defence agreement was to be seen in a different light. The concerned parties indicated from time to time their respective viewpoints. The British Government wanted to have a new understanding which could fit in the changed conditions. Healey, at a press conference in Kualalumpur on 11 June, 1968, stated that revision of the treaty would have to be delayed until a new defence pattern for the area had emerged. Tunku also felt that some understanding was required in order to place Singapore's participation on the formal basis. But at the time of the June, 1968, conference, Tun Razak stated that there was no immediate intention of amending the agreement. On the other hand, Singapore acted very coolly and Goh Keng Swee said that Singapore was not unduly concerned that it had no separate defence treaty with UK. The Communique of the Five Power Conference stated that a new understanding about the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement would be necessary in due course.

In many respects an effective defence of Malaysia and Singapore required an integrated approach on the part of the two governments concerned. Singapore could not develop a policy of 'defence in depth' without Malaysian cooperation. As far as Malaysia is concerned it would be placed in a vulnerable position if
the defences of Singapore were weak or directed against Malaysia. Apart from failing to bring about a new arrangement for defence, Malaysia and Singapore failed to arrive immediately at a commonly acceptable model for defence cooperation. After the separation, Malaysia and Singapore continued to discuss the problems of defence cooperation at the meetings of joint defence council and combined operations committee to try to coordinate the activities for defence of the two countries.

By the end of 1966, Singapore decided to withdraw from these two bodies on the grounds that her interests were not adequately represented.

One issue which was symptomatic of the difficulties experienced in achieving credibility in cooperation was the dispute over the occupation of barracks in Singapore in February/March 1966. This dispute took a very serious turn when the 2nd Battalion of Singapore Infantry Regiment returned home from Sabah and wished to occupy barracks at Camp Tamasek which were being used by Malaysian troops. Malaysia took the view that her troops were entitled to occupy the barracks under the terms Article V (3) of the Separation Agreement. Singapore rejected the Malaysian interpretation.

A statement issued by the Singapore Government pointed out that Article V (3) declared that 'the Government of Singapore will afford to the Government of Malaysia the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities used by its military forces within Singapore.' Since Camp Tamasek was not used by its military forces at the date of the separation agreement, the continued occupation of the barracks had no legal basis.

A settlement of the dispute was reached on 11 March, 1966, when it was agreed that a temporary camp would be built at Bukit Sembawang in Singapore to
house the Malaysian troops who had been asked to leave Camp Temasek, the Singapore Government would provide the site, while the Malaysian Government would foot the bill of building the camp 47

On 23 February, 1966, Dr Goh Keng Swee commented on the implications of the failure to achieve effective defence cooperation

It is important that we should never lose grasp of the proper perspective of the fundamentals of our defence policy. Both Malaysia and Singapore do not have adequate defence forces at their command to deter aggression from their larger neighbours, nor are they able successfully to fend off any major assault that may be mounted upon us. So for sometime, until our defence forces are substantially increased, we shall have to depend on the military shield provided by our Commonwealth allies. But our Commonwealth allies will be willing to provide us with this shield only if they find their international political situation a tenable one and the domestic scene stable enough for their effort to be effective. If the governments of Malaysia and Singapore are unable to cooperate effectively in their common defence effort, this must in turn adversely affect the efficacy of the defence arrangements with Britain, Australia and New Zealand who are expending large sums of money and men in retaining their military commitments in this region. So, cooperate we must, but this cooperation must be as between two sovereign states and not as between big brother and his satellite 48. With this
view in mind, various consultations took place to prepare the way for new defence arrangements. On 5 March 1966, Goh Keng Swee and Tun Razak met to work out a mutual defence pact. It was subsequently reported that some understanding had been reached between the two countries but no formal agreement could take place. A number of meetings were reported to have been held in the beginning of 1968. Tunku had suggested to share the military installations for joint defence after the ultimate British withdrawal and to this, Singapore's defence Minister Lim Kim San responded favourably in order to strengthen the security of the region.

In the communique of the five Power Conference of June 1968, Malaysia and Singapore declared that the defence of the two countries was indivisible and required close and continuing cooperation between them. On 12 June 1968 Goh Keng Swee and Tun Razak both emphasized the importance of defence cooperation their two states. The communique also noted the intention of Malaysia and Singapore to establish a joint Air Defence System and to cooperate in naval defence.

Now looking at the impact of the British withdrawal, it will be necessary to note the changes in the Malaysian and Singaporean defence thinking. A few details on the importance of the British military presence to Singapore are significant to note. The presence of the British services directly contributed 60 million sterling per annum to Singapore's economy which was about 20-25 per cent of gross domestic
product. Between 30,000 to 35,000 local people were directly employed on the military base, with at least the same number of people being dependent on the base for their livelihood in a less direct sense.

In the period immediately after separation a continued British commitment to the defence of the region was assumed by both Malaysia and Singapore. At the same time one can perhaps detect in the anti-American tone of some statements by Lee Kuan Yew a certain fear that Britain might reduce its commitments. The deterioration in relations between Malaysia and Britain during 1966 might have indicated a lessened desire on the part of the government of Malaysia to maintain a British presence. Such an attitude could also be symptomatic of the reduction of tensions in the period which saw the formal ending of confrontation. Arrangements for the withdrawal of British forces from East Malaysia were made at talks in Kuala Lumpur and Denis Healey was also present on this occasion (7 July 1966).

During 1967, the fact that Britain contemplated not merely a reduction of forces, but a phased military withdrawal became evident. The visit of Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Herbert Bowden to Singapore and Malaysia in March 1967 was mildly reassuring to the governments concerned. Bowden gave an assurance that the Commonwealth Strategic Research would not be touched and that even after subsequent reductions, Britain would still retain a considerable force in the Far
East 60 Healey's visit to the two countries in the following month (April 1967) was the first indication that Britain contemplated actual withdrawal in long term. On this occasion, Malaysia emphasized Britain's obligation to continue to fulfil her commitments under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement. On 29 April, 1967, Tun Razak stated that he was confident that a withdrawal on Britain's part would not reduce the security of the region, Malaysia had enough forces to look after internal security and there was no need to expand local forces. Tunku Abdul Rahman on 24 May, 1967, stated that a British withdrawal would not affect the defence of the region so long as Britain could send help when it was required.

Before the publication of 18 July, 1967, White Paper on Defence, Lee Kuan Yew and Tunku Abdul Rahman visited London for further consultations. Firstly, Lee's visit was motivated by a hope to be able to retain some form of British presence which could contribute toward the maintenance of peace and security in South and Southeast Asia. He felt that Britain must ensure that a state of relative stability and security would continue to prevail.

Secondly, it was Lee's intention to gain sufficient time to enable Singapore to adjust adequately to the new situation. Hence his major problem was to prevent and ensure against a precipitate withdrawal of the British
The Tunku during his talks in London from 5 to 10 July, also stressed two main points

(a) Britain's obligation under the defence agreement
(b) Maintenance of British troops at pre-confrontation level

In view of the above, the reactions to the July White Paper, from Malaysia and Singapore were obviously expected. Lee Kuan Yew emphasized the need of self-reliance on the part of Singapore in order to cooperate with her allies. He said, "We must build, together with such friends and allies as have an interest in the security and future of the Singapore-Malaysia region, sufficient forces for our own security." He also stressed subsequently while speaking at the Parliament that adjustment to the new situation by making new arrangements was very necessary in order to have a successful regional security plan.

Statements by Tunku and Tun Razak emphasized that Britain would continue to honour her obligations under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement. The Tunku felt strongly that there was no reason to worry in view of the British assurance to help Malaysia as and when necessary with their Air and Naval support. The Five Power Conference which had been proposed on the eve of Tunku's departure for London (4 July) was seen as providing the means for evolving a satisfactory defence arrangement for the region after the withdrawal.

In January, 1968, Thomson's visit to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and the absence of Healey, the Defence Minister pointed the way of a crisp private pronouncement of another swing in British policy rather than 'negotiations'. Thomson's visit was to accelerate the withdrawal of British forces from the area. The Malaysian approach was again to emphasize Britain's obligation under
the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Arrangement 76

Lee Kuan Yew on the other hand expressed a more overt concern and suggested the possibility of retaliatory action against Britain if satisfactory arrangements were not made to enable Singapore to meet the new situation 77

Actually, for Singapore, telescoping the whole withdrawal, deepened the challenge to the economy and gave an impression that Lee's virutal Anglophilia had been a time wasting dead end 78

It was also reported that though the British troops were withdrawing from Malaysia they will continue to offer military aid to help them meet their security problems  Similarly, to keep Singapore satisfied it was decided to help them with liberal economic assistance 79 But Singapore as said earlier was unhappy about the situation and the Observer's correspondent noted that there were strong pressures on Singapore to pullout of the sterling area, reclaim its reserves of about 200 million, and cancel all economic preferences granted to Britain in case the Labour Government withdrew British forces before 1975 80

While answering Professor Michael Howard of the Department of War Studies, University of London in an interview Denis Healey told that by 1968 the situation had changed completely  In 1964, there were large scale operations in the East - and Britain had 50,000 troops involved in confrontation and at that time none could think about the future 81 Since the relations between Malaysia and Indonesia over the years since the end of confrontation improved considerably, there was no possibility of a war  Actually the two governments had started cooperating in dealing with the Communist terrorists on the border between Sarawak and Kalimantan  Malaysia saw no threat from the north  The critical issue governing the British withdrawal was that the local people must not lose confidence resulting into a catastrophe or anarchy
Though the withdrawal meant economic setback for Singapore, it was the principal saving action for Britain which could contribute to the overall defence cut between 400 million to 500 million pounds.

Lee's later trip to London was made in an attempt to soften the impact of the British withdrawal on Singapore. Malaysia had refused to send missions to support Lee Kuan Yew at London. The Tunku stated that Malaysia understood the British position.

Lee's trip did moderate the Britishers and the date for the completion of the British withdrawal was deferred from March to December 1971.

Britain also agreed to train Singaporean pilots and radar operators for the air defence system which could cover Malaysia and Singapore. In addition, Lee Kuan Yew hoped to obtain a formal agreement to enable Singapore to use British Guided Missiles and other anti-aircraft weapons.

In retrospect looking at Malaysian and Singaporean attitudes on British decisions of 1968 one finds two things very clearly:

1. There was an attempt to clarify the future British role in the area.
2. More attention was given to achieving self-reliance in defence.

Malaysia seemed to place a greater emphasis on Britain's continuing responsibility for defence of the Malaysia-Singapore area than did Singapore. Though Malaysia wanted British presence it is interesting to note here that an ally like Malaysia for whom Britain was fighting decided suddenly to change, not merely its policies, but also the pattern of its existence, and deliberately kept the whole thing secret until it was too late for Britain to influence the
course of events. This was done by Malaysia in 1965 (August) and the Prime Minister had admitted it. On 31 January, 1968, the Tunku stated that he expected British help if Malaysia was harassed or attacked by a country more or less of her own strength. Singapore on the other hand thought more in terms of self-reliance. In an important speech to the Singapore Parliament on 9 May, 1968, Lee Kuan Yew declared that Singapore could and would build-up an adequate defence force by 1972. Malaysia and Singapore also undertook talks with the British Government on matters related to the British withdrawal. On 10 May, 1968, Tun Razak conferred with British Ministers in London to clarify, the nature and usefulness of the defence equipment which would be left behind by the United Kingdom. At the end of May, 1968, Lee Kuan Yew also went to London for talks with the British Government on economic and defence questions. As a result of this visit, Singapore was offered about a dozen jet trainer aircrafts for its airforce and training facilities with RAF for two groups of Singapore fighter pilots. Britain offered 50 million aid to Singapore and 25 million pounds to Malaysia. Both aid programmes were to cover a five year period.

At the Five Power Conference of June 1968 the objectives of clarifying Britain's future role and of achieving greater reliance in defence continued to be important. On the question of Britain's future role, the Tunku declared that, 'We sincerely hope that her general capability would not be more general than capable.' He also advanced a point which had not been raised before. "Britain especially cannot escape that continuing responsibilities arising out of Sabah and Sarawak since no one could have imagined that without the formation of Malaysia Britain would have been able to relinquish her entire responsibility towards these two states by 1971."
The conference communique clarified certain details of the planned development of Malaysia's and Singapore's defence forces in the direction of greater self-reliance in view of the indivisibility of their defence. In particular, Singapore continued her plans to develop an airforce to contribute to the joint air defence system. Malaysia indicated that she would be prepared to consider additional contribution over and above the existing strength of her armed forces which were already a substantial contribution to joint defence. Australia had also promised air support to the integrated air defence system up to 1971. In June, 1968, it was evident that Australia had not yet determined whether or not it would preserve a defence commitment in Southeast Asia after 1971 let alone assume a major share of the security responsibility upon the departure of the British. The Conference also agreed to hold joint ground exercises in the Singapore-Malaysia area after 1971. It was also agreed to establish a joint exercise planning staff and a jungle warfare training school on a multinational basis.

Britain stated that a major exercise should be held in 1970 which would be the forerunner of joint exercises to be held regularly after 1971. These exercises would enable Britain to test and improve its ability to deploy troops rapidly from the United Kingdom to Singapore if necessary after 1971. Response to the conference by Singapore and Malaysia was guarded with concern being voiced that Australia and New Zealand would only "take into account" the conference discussions in arriving at their long term defence policies.

After considerable intra-governmental debate and consultation, the Australian Prime Minister Gorton told in February, 1969, that Australia would maintain forces of all arms in that area after British withdrawal without setting any specific terminal date. The Prime Minister of New Zealand also
stated that his country would maintain its forces in Malaysia and Singapore even after 1971 and its supply and administrative functions will be merged with that of Australia and therefore New Zealand's policy was tied up with Australia.

Gorton made it very clear that the Australian presence would be maintained only if it is desired by Malaysia and Singapore as necessary and the forces would be made available to fight against externally inspired subversion and infiltration, provided it was deemed desirable by the Australian Government. He also made it very plain that if acting as a deterrent in any given situation was beyond the capacity of Australian forces, the support from outside allies would be necessary. But any decision to commit the Australian troops would be in view of its own interests, and circumstances at any given time. This statement was indeed important because it clearly indicated the future trend of Australian commitment.

May 13th riots of 1969 also threatened the establishment of the Five Power defence group. This riot had immediate reaction in Singapore but nothing significant happened there because of strict administrative measures. Australia perceived that the stationing of troops in Singapore-Malaysia area meant involvement even in a possible communal riot and a possibility such as this had been stipulated against in the Gorton policy statement of February 1969.

In June, 1969, a high level five power meeting took place in Canberra but nothing concrete could emerge due to Malaysian-Philippine tensions over Philippines' claim to Sabah and the May 13th riots. Australia wanted to remain neutral in any such situation in which the South East Asian Nations were involved. Gorton argued that Australians were committed to help in maintaining the security and defending Malaya but not Malaysia. West Malaysia is the predominant of the three states of the Federation of Malaysia.
reference to Malaya implied reluctance to become involved in any dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah. He was also concerned about possibly becoming involved in any future security operations on the Sarawak-Indonesian border which might pit Australians against Indonesian soldiers. He also questioned the indivisibility of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. The reactions were very sharp and Lee Kuan Yew commented that "while Britain remained in the Far East, Australia had always been in the role of deputy sheriff. But now that Australia had accepted the Sheriff's badge, she was showing that she did not know how to draw a six-gun."

As far as the military aspects of the proposed five power arrangement were concerned, the developments took gradually a new shape as a result of different advisory working groups set up during 1968 conference. These groups were discussing from time to time the issues concerned with logistics, force levels and a large scale joint exercise. The scheduled exercise was meant to test the British capability to airlift troops from Britain at short notice. These working groups also discussed about the jungle warfare school at Ulu Tiram in Southern Malaysia. The question of billets for Australia and New Zealand troops was also discussed and both the countries were reported to have insisted on shifting their units from Terendak near Malacca in Malaysia, to Singapore. But the Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew felt that Australian forces would be better employed in West Malaysia as a token of Australian commitment to maintain "forces of sanity and stability". This statement was linked with the 13 May, 1969, incident in which Chinese in Malaysia suffered considerable losses. He thought that the decision regarding the movement of the Australian and New Zealand troops to Singapore was taken particularly in view of the possibility of their involvement in a racial conflict besides the cost factors and
facilities. The ANZUK States continued to encourage continuing Singaporean-Malaysian defence cooperation, but the mutual distrust prevented any deeper understanding regarding such a cooperation.

Australian decision to move its troops to Singapore and public statements regarding its view about defending the whole of Malaysia irritated Tunku Abdul Rahman to such an extent that he publicly stated the uselessness of the Five Power defence arrangement. He felt that the only alternative to this arrangement was to have peaceful borders and good relations with neighbours, i.e., Indonesia, Thailand and to a limited extent Singapore. Such co-operations had already started at bilateral levels in order to co-ordinate the joint anti-insurgent operations.

After Britain relinquished her predominance as a senior partner, Australia assumed the responsibilities and provided a senior officer for the unified Air Command. However, during this interim period, Australian approach did not give Malaysia and Singapore a feeling of security.

The political developments in Australia also made one a little pessimistic regarding the future of a five power arrangement. The Labour Party clearly stated that after assuming power all the Australian troops from Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia would be withdrawn. Though in April, 1970, the five power-nations carried out a joint military exercise named Bersatu Padu (Malay for complete unity). It was believed in some quarters that this arrangement did not have much importance for Malaysia, but Tun Razak in an interview said that the five power arrangement was good for providing psychological support to Malaysia and Singapore in view of their inseparable defence problems.

The Military reality was completely overshadowed in this exercise because
in reality there was no conventional threat. Threats to the security of Malaysia and Singapore came mainly from active insurgency conducted by MCP. During the exercise, the Communist terrorists of the Malayan Communist Party ambushed a patrol of Malaysian Rangers and killed seven members of the unit. In such a situation, the exercise clearly indicated that ANZUK forces would never be committed for fighting insurgents and therefore ANZUK forces had no utility against the guerrillas operating from sanctuaries in southern Thailand and Malay-Chinese riots.

Though the British efficiency during this exercise indicated their interest in rotating units to this area, it had no significance for the security of Malaysia and Singapore but for psychological boost which they got in any case due to the five power arrangement. It created an illusion of security.

After this exercise, Malaysia Singapore forces never cooperated in the same way and actually this was the first and the last exercise in which Singapore troops operated in Malaysian territory.

Though it was maintained by the Malaysian government that the jungle training centre in Johore Bahru was meant for training 5 power nation's troops in Jungle warfare, Tun Tazak felt that the Australians, New Zealanders and Britishers needed the facilities much more than Singaporeans. On the other hand in Singapore, the author was given to understand that the Malaysians did not want to train Singaporeans because they feared Chinese domination in an insurgent operation against Malaysia. Perhaps Malaysians thought that in a Chinese-Malay conflict in Malaysia which could have spillover effect in Singapore, it was quite likely that the Chinese of Singapore trained in jungle warfare are used against Malaysia.

After the conservative victory the 5 power arrangement got a new life.
because they thought that Australia and New Zealand would be able to take over
from Britishers in due course of time and shall help Australians and New
Zealanders in taking greater responsibilities. They also thought that Malaysia
would be able to buy time to resolve its internal communal problems and the
rotation of British troops would not be costlier than Labour government's plan.
They agreed for equal participation and continued to hand over bases and other
facilities to Singapore. The Britishers also gave an assurance to participate in Five Power Arrangements after 1971 and ANZUK States accepted the
idea of consultations on future security threats to Malaysia and Singapore. On
21 April, 1971, all the Five Power Nations decided to have an agreement
stressing that in the event of any armed attack, the member countries would hold
an immediate meeting for consultations to decide about joint and independent
measures for dealing with the threat. The implication was that the actual
deployment of foreign military assistance under the terms of the arrangement
will be determined by the circumstances of a specific situation that can be
shown to be seriously detrimental to the plan and security of the
Malaysia-Singapore region. Apart from the nature and extent of the threat, and
the issues it gives rise to, any foreign military assistance will depend on the
ability of the governments of Malaysia and Singapore to contain the potential or
actual threat.

It was quite clear now that Singapore and Malaysia would have to take care
of their own security in view of their indivisibility for the defence purposes.
The cooperation in this field started getting evolved slowly because it was also
realized that the foreign countries were no longer willing to take
responsibilities of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore for many more years to
follow. The differences continued to exist on housing arrangements for ANZUK
forces and the operation of Jungle warfare school in Johore (Malaysia) which was to be run by British until November, 1971 124

The dispute regarding the housing problem was finally resolved with Australian and New Zealand units moving into rent free quarters in camps they had not chosen and Singapore being extended an invitation to train her artillery and tank units in Australia. Like Israel, Singapore relied on quality to compensate for numbers - quality of men, morale, training and equipment. Initially, the Singapore government had Israeli officers as advisers at the Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute (SAFTI) 125

On 1st November, 1971, letters were exchanged between Malaya and Britain to bring about an end to the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA). For Britain the replacement of AMDA by the 5-power arrangements was of considerable importance for it could help in establishing a closer identity with her vital interests in Europe. It would be unrealistic if one did not take into account the assumption that in the 1970s and beyond Britain will see her ultimate defence and security tied up more closely with circumstances in Europe where her military contribution is considerable 126. Australia and New Zealand also wrote letters to Malaysia to terminate their association with the AMDA. Instead of a treaty, letters were exchanged between the ANZUK states and Malaysia and Singapore setting out the arrangements which would apply in post 1st November period. ANZUK forces were around 6000 strong with Australia bearing the maximum manpower load 127. The ANZUK comprised of

a) 3 Infantry Battalions
b) 5 to 6 destroyers or frigates
c) 2 submarines and supporting fighter bombers, helicopters,
long range reconnaissance and transport aircraft

Malaysia and Singapore supported this force with

a) Infantry
b) Amphibious personnel carriers,
c) Tanks and artillery

This effort was quite an important indicator to show the interest on the part of ANZUK forces to cooperate. But one thing was clear that this force was quite inadequate to defend Malaysia and Singapore from an external attack. The 5-power forces had their own limitations. The ground units were limited in their effectiveness because of the scarcity of training areas and their circumscribed mission. They represented the unpractical aspect of the arrangement. In view of their capability, in a given situation of external attack, the ground forces would require strong reinforcement or withdrawal.

The integrated air defence system could not work very efficiently because of high technicality involved in it. Malaysia and Singapore both were trying to acquire expertise in the field of air and missile systems. The ANZUK units kept rotating from time to time. The most important and significant area of cooperation was naval activities which were very pragmatic. The ships patrolled the Straits of Malacca and the adjacent waters. This helped in controlling the piracy and smuggling to a great extent.

On the whole the ANZUK forces operated quite independently and the Malaysian and Singaporean forces had hardly anything to do. The cooperation was limited to a few instructors who functioned within the Malaysian and Singaporean military. Britain had even gone to the extent of making it very clear that she...
would not participate in any joint control except in the case of the Jungle Warfare School at Ulu Tiram near Kota Tinggi in Johore. The only significant joint training operation which can be cited is Bersatu Padu exercises and this indicates that proper attention was not paid to have more educative joint training exercises and perhaps this was motivated by the desire to maintain the dominant role of the senior partners, i.e., Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom. Actually these partners could have taken greater initiative to help developing a stage of self-sufficiency for Malaysia and Singapore. Since they did not do so even today Malaysia and Singapore depend upon the outside powers in a hypothetical situation of external attack. The lack of senior partners' help in solving the defence dilemma of Malaysia and Singapore can also be attributed to lack of co-operation and mutual distrust between Malaysia and Singapore. The partners had clashes of national interest and this retarded the advance for genuine cooperation.

The five-power arrangements helped in providing a sense of security to the foreign investors and in reducing the chances of confrontation between Malaysia and Singapore. Actually ANZUK was an extension of American maritime interests in Southeast Asia and these forces limited the activity of Soviet Naval arms in the Straits of Malacca area.

The five-power arrangement had a very uncertain future because of the 1972 elections in Australia and New Zealand where the labour parties had promised to withdraw its troops if it came in power.

Malaysia was quite aware of the limitations of the 5-power arrangements and the idea of neutralization was strongly floated by the Malaysian government stating that they would withdraw from 5-power arrangement. Neutralization was an alternative model for Security that the Malaysian leadership had in mind.
Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew also felt that as long as the U.S. stayed in Asia the "Five Power Arrangement can go "130

Australia announced in 1973 that her ground combat troops would be withdrawn by the end of the year and the rest of the troops by 1975. New Zealand decided to maintain its troops as part of the 5-power arrangement in Singapore instead of withdrawing with Australia.

All the member states held the view that the pact was useful in some way but the magnitude of the credibility of the 5-Power pact seemed to be on the lower side. In spite of the fact that for Malaysia and Singapore, reliance for some time on external powers was quite useful, a strong desire for self-reliance seemed to be prominent in the minds of the leaders.

This arrangement is essentially to be seen as a stopgap one because of being a transitional provision for the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. Nobody could completely rely on it unless it was converted into a formal treaty. This arrangement was also necessary from the point of view of Britain, Australia and New Zealand. For Britain, the five Power arrangement permitted a substantial reduction in her military commitments for the protection of Malaysia and Singapore. The decision to introduce changes in Britain's position East of Suez together with the cancellation in the middle of 1970 of all 50 F-111 aircraft ordered from the United States and a general reduction in force levels amply indicated that Britain could not afford to maintain military bases outside Europe and the Mediterranean apart from independent territories and certain other exceptions. As maintained earlier Britain's defence cuts were an economic necessity and it was unlikely that her defence policy would undergo any dramatic changes in the coming years. Replacement of AMDA by five power Defence Arrangement was expedited fast in view of the fact that Britain would more
easily guard her interests in Europe. On the other hand, it was a sop to the
conscience that some machinery be devised to replace its traditional military,
presence then being wound up. In spite of early replacement of AMDA by five
power arrangement nothing substantial followed and one reason why it never
really got off the ground, was differences in individual objectives of the
member states and as a matter of fact the differences were far deeper than
the agreement. In such a situation, it was no wonder that minor differences
seemed exaggerated whether it was a Singapore government statement on the need
for tanks or the use of "Malaya" instead of "Malaysia" by a visiting Australian
leader, events which emphasized the political incompatibility of the partners.
For some time the arrangement seemed to be three power argument with Australia,
Malaysia and Singapore frequently at loggerheads. During this period Australia
often seemed to be in the wrong. By delaying for more than a year its decision
to leave forces in the area after 1971, it created uncertainties in Singapore
and Malaysia. Australian reluctance was also accompanied by disturbing reports
that Prime Minister Gorton favoured some sort of Israeli-type home defence,
presumably operating within the country's natural frontiers.

In such a situation when uncertainty prevailed regarding the role of
partners of the 5 power arrangement, rethinking started in all the capitals and
particularly in Malaysia and Singapore.

Before trying to understand the dynamics of post five power arrangement
period it is necessary to understand the attitudes of Australia and New Zealand
toward Malaysian Security. Australian attitudes towards Malaysia cannot be
accepted as part of their general attitudes to Southeast Asia. A concern for
Malaysia-Singapore was reflected in the past and it is interesting that a token
military presence has been maintained till recently.
Soon after the victory of the Labour Party in the New Zealand national election (November 1972) the Australian elections also took place and the Labour Party came to power. The new governments in both the countries decided to pull out of Malaysia-Singapore region in view of the British withdrawal and there were hardly any differences between the two governments. Australia was ready to pull out immediately whereas New Zealand wanted it to be a gradual process. New Zealand proposed to leave her forces in the area for sometime in order to contribute to the stability of the area and as a result an independent New Zealand command was created at the end of January 1974.

New Zealand's action was part of their broad approach to the Pacific and Asia region. But all this was part of a transitional behaviour. The approach of the Australian leaders illustrated the extent to which the five power arrangement meant different things to different parties at different times. What was important was not so much the arrangement itself as the presence of Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore within its framework of defence strategy. The main reason for Australian presence was to help prevent the spread of Communism. The idea was also to let the old order pass away in a gradual and undisruptive way. Australia had to work in the past towing western line of approach for the region by blending together the British and American approaches. It is of significance here to note that Sir Robert Menzies once argued that "if battle against Communism is to be an effective one, it must be won as far north of Australia as possible." It was well understood by Malaysia and Tun Razak had stated during his April 1967 visit to Australia that Australian assistance to Malaysia would in turn benefit Australia because Malaysian area could be the Australian front line in the event of aggression from north. He was also confident of Australian and New Zealand support because
these two countries had always regarded a threat to Malaysia as a threat to themselves.

It was therefore assumed throughout the whole of the Menzies Era and during successive administrations of the Liberal Party, that Australia's line of defence began in Southeast Asia. But the Australians later started looking at the region in a different perspective. A policy was adopted to bring about closer co-operation with the countries of the region through bilateral relations. Their defence assistance scheme for Indonesia is a case in point. Since this assistance scheme came into being there grew a feeling that Five Power Arrangement was actually of no use. But they decided to continue with the arrangement as long as Malaysia and Singapore wanted them for building up their air defence and allied capabilities. For Australia to commit its ground troops after the Vietnam experience was rather difficult. To them, providing equipment, training and technical support was the only way to maintain their role in the region.
NOTES

1 Times, 2 October 1957

2 WO (War Office), Memorandum of Secretary of State for War relating to army estimates 1959-60, Cmd 669 (1959), also see Times, 16 June 1959 and Daily Telegraph, 13 January 1960

3 Daily Telegraph, 13 October 1959

4 For details of the agreement see Cmd 263 For a clear understanding of Malayan view of Britain's role see Tunku's statement on 16 October 1961 in Parliamentary Debates, III, no 16, cols 1610-1614 Dewan Ra'ayat

5 Once in 1959, when questioned on SEATO, the Tunku somewhat apologetically replied, "Well, I do not count, you know. As the representative of my people I have to do as they want and SEATO is rather unpopular among my people. I do not know for what reason." (See R O Tilman, Malaysian Foreign Policy, Report RAC-R-63-2 Mclean Va Research Analysis Corporation, March 1969, p 6)

6 See Straits Times, 1 December 1959

7 Tunku always maintained that the very formation of Malaysia in which Singapore was also included did not leave any option for the British troops to make use of the Singapore Base for fulfilling British interests and in a circumstance when it will be required for use, prior permission of the Government of Malaysia will have to be sought. MALAYSIA, Select Documents on International Affairs No 1, Canberra Department of External Affairs 1963, p 6 Also see T H Silcock, "Development of Malayan Foreign Policy," Australian Outlook, vol 17, no 3, 1963, p 51 For details of Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, July 1963 see Article VI, HMSO, Cmd 2094 of 1963

8 See in particular statements by Rajaratnam (Straits Times, 20 August 1965, p 9) Lee Kuan Yew, Straits Times, 27 August 1965, 1 September 1965, Sydney Times, 12 September 1965

9 See statement Tunku Abdul Rahman in Straits Times, 3 September 1965

10 For an analysis of Lee Kuan Yew's anti-American attitude see Bulletin (Australia), 25 September 1965, pp 23-24


12 For a detailed account of US-Malaysia relations see Rene Peritz, "American-Malaysian Relations Substance and Shadows", ORBIS, vol 11, no 2 (Summer 1967), Peter Boyce, Malaysia and Singapore in International Diplomacy (Sydney University Press, 1968), chapter 10
On reflection now, it can be said that a break with Singapore might have made Indonesia more amenable to negotiation with brother Malays because of their strong anti-overflow Chinese tradition.

Here it is useful to note that Malaysia considered Singapore as the Israel of the Malay world in the context of closer association between Malaysia and Indonesia. Israel is notoriously the only subject to arouse Arab unity and there is a Pan Islamic sympathy for the Arabs among Malays and Indonesians. In April 1967, Israel agreed to provide Singapore with military advisors and instructors, they were in Singapore till mid-seventies.

The terms of the separation agreement relating to defence were as follows:

(1) Both governments would establish a joint defence council for external defence and mutual assistance.

(2) The Malaysian Government would give 'reasonable and adequate' assistance for Singapore's external defence.

(3) The Malaysian Government would continue to maintain military bases in Singapore and would be permitted to use these bases for defence purposes.

(4) Neither government would enter into any treaty or agreement with a foreign country which may be detrimental to the independence and defence of either.
Until a permanent agreement was concluded on defence between Malaysia and Singapore, their relationship in this respect would be governed by the terms of the Separation Agreement. See Straits Times, 10 August 1965.

Straits Times, 19 August 1965

Ibid, 1 September 1965


Ibid, cols. 350-351, 28 October 1965

Cmd 2901, Chapter II, para 24

Straits Times, 16 July 1966

Times, 19 August 1965

Guardian, 2 September 1965, Straits Times, 1 February 1966

Straits Times, 27 August 1965

Ibid, 3 September 1965

'This provided for the continuation of treaties, agreements, conventions entered into before separation between the government of Malaysia and other countries', see Singapore Parliamentary Debates, vol. 25, no. 1, col. 30

Ibid

Straits Times, 25 April 1966. This implied a close relationship with the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement and with ANZAM.


Also see for a British view of strains in Anglo-Malaysian Relations. Statement by British Prime Minister on 28 June 1966. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, vol. 730, no. 692, col. 1588

David C. Hawkins, "Britain and Malaysia - Another View. Was the decision to withdraw entirely voluntary or was Britain pushed a little?" Asian Survey, July 1969, vol. IX, no. 7, pp. 546-62


It was confirmed in an interview with the author that on 17 June Tun Tan Siew Sin had told the Dewan Ra'ayat that on the eve of his departure for
Europe on 22 April 1966, he had been informed by the Deputy British High Commissioner (M J R A Bottemlay) that no further aid would be forthcoming unless defence treaties between Malaysia and Singapore and between Britain and Singapore were concluded. This meant that if Singapore chose to refuse or to delay the conclusion of these two treaties with Malaysia and Britain, then Malaysia would suffer. Author's interview with Tun Tan Siew Sin on 5 July 1972, Also see Harvey Stockwin, "Aid for Instability," Far Eastern Economic Review, 14 July 1966, pp 60-65

38 Straits Times, 12 June 1968
39 Ibid, 11 June 1968
40 Ibid, 12 June 1968
41 Canberra Times, 12 June 1968

As far as Malaysia was concerned, it was felt that the duty to defend it was of Britain. Though Britain did not desire to withdraw its military support soon after the end of confrontation, it desired to know before allocating additional resources whether Tunku could seek better support from the indigenous people than those who have been in the region due to Vietnam war.

42 Before separation the joint Defence Council had been known as the National Defence Council
43 Straits Times, 31 March 1966

On the joint defence council the representation had been the same as for the National Defence Council before separation, viz 8 Malayan Ministers, one Minister each from Singapore and the Borneo States. A new joint Defence Council which took account of Singapore's objection was to be established in place of the old one.

44 Views expressed by S. Rajaratnam, Foreign Minister of Singapore in an interview with the author, May 1972
45 Ibid, Also see Straits Times, 19 February 1966
46 For a clear view of the Singapore position, see a speech by Dr Goh Keng Swee, Singapore Parliamentary Debates, vol 25, no 1, cols 16-30, 23 February 1966
47 Straits Times, 12 March 1966. Subsequently all Malaysian Army units were withdrawn from Singapore by the end of 1967. Also see Singapore Parliamentary Debates, Vol 26, no 16, col 1105, 24 January 1968
48 Singapore Parliamentary Debates, vol 25, no 1, cols 20-21
49 Sunday Times (Singapore), 6 March 1966
These meetings were between Dr Goh Keng Swee and Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kualalumpur on 20 January. See Sunday Times, 21 January 1968. Between Lee Kuan Yew and Tun Razak in Singapore on 5 March. (Straits Times, 5 March 1968)

Sunday Times, 19 May 1968

Canberra Times, 12 June 1968

Straits Times, 12 June 1968

The conference recognized that an integrated air defence system covering both Malaysia and Singapore was needed. In the sphere of naval defence, the conference noted the intentions of the Malaysian and Singapore governments to develop forces which would cooperate effectively in coastal defence, the agreement of the Singapore Government that the Royal Malaysian Navy continue to use the Woodlands Naval Base and such other facilities in Singapore as might be agreed, and the intentions of both governments to agree on arrangements for controlling after 1971 what was then known as Naval Base Waters.

See Canberra Times, 12 June 1968

Economist, 20 January 1968, p 69

See Lee Kuan Yew's statement of 31 August 1965 in Straits Times, 1 September 1965. K G Tregonning argues that Lee's criticisms of United States were not meant to win Afro-Asian support but rather was indicative of deeply rooted fear that in fact Britain might become disillusioned and that America might intervene in Malaysia, such intervention could result in Malaysia becoming another Vietnam. However, this appeared to be a farfetched idea. See Bulletin, 25 September 1965

Ibid, 25 September 1965. Two matters in particular highlighted the deterioration which occurred in Malaysian British relations. Malaysia believed that the UK favoured Singapore in the question of new defence arrangements. She also alleged that Britain was undermining the loyalty of the Borneo population to the Kualalumpur Government. Also see M Leifer op. cit., Modern Asian Studies, vol 1, no 3, July 1967, pp 283-96, at p 292. House of Commons Official Report, vol 730, no 42, 28 June 1966, cols 1588-89.

On 11 May 1966, Tunku Abdul Rahman had even accused Britain of negotiating with Indonesia for an end to confrontation without consulting Malaysia and said, "Britain has no right to speak for us." Such utterances also irked the British leadership. See Times, 12 May 1966.

Straits Times, 8 July 1966
In February 1967, Razak had introduced his defence estimates - 15 million pounds. It was announced that the Malaysian Army was to be increased to 13 Battalions. Malaysia had intended this to be 20 Battalions but Britain could not pay for an increase on this scale. What is remarkable is that Malaysia considered doubling its infantry Battalions from nine to twenty after confrontation with Indonesia had ended. This indicated greater need for the future in view of the pending British withdrawal and the Singapore decision to expand its army from 2 to 5/6 battalions. (See Observer, 30 April 1967)

Though some kind of British presence could contribute towards the maintenance of peace and security of Southeast Asia, it seems rather difficult to accept that keeping a military presence in the area to prevent friction between Malaysia and Singapore was as simple as sounded to be. Any struggle which could be seen as essentially Malay versus Chinese would not find Indonesia in a neutral corner and therefore Britain thought it desirable to leave the region in order to avoid friction or conflict with Indonesia at a greater scale keeping in tradition with their non-involvement in Vietnam and Nigeria and avoiding a horrible combination of both.

In an interview on 5 July 1967, Lee Kuan Yew told that his people were prepared to fight and die for themselves. But it was unreasonable to expect them to train and produce the kind of technicians who had to maintain and operate the complicated and sophisticated instruments and weapon systems just over night. (See Straits Times, 6 July 1967)

On 17 July 1967, Malaysian Foreign Ministry issued a statement reminding Britain that the Joint Defence Treaty expressly indicated the Federation's right to a say on the strength of British forces in Malaysia. (See Straits Times, 6 July 1967 for statements of Tunku and Tun Razak, Times, 8 July 1967)

Tunku believed that without British troops, Malaysia would be unable to defend herself against sudden attack by any big country. He also argued that the defence cuts would have an adverse economic effect and damage the security of the region which would assist the designs of such countries which wanted to exploit the situation.
71 See Singapore Parliamentary Debates, vol 26, no 3, col 173, 8 September 1967, Straits Times, 10 November 1967

72 Straits Times, 20 and 21 July 1967

73 Ibid, 21 July 1967

74 Ibid, 20 July 1967

75 The Times, 6 January 1968

76 Australian, 9 January 1968

77 Age, 9 January 1968

78 The Times, 6 January 1968

79 The Observer, 7 January 1968

80 Ibid This was just the beginning of Singapore's harsh arithmetic. They estimated that Britain will save a maximum 70 million in foreign exchange between 1971 and 1975 by abandoning her bases early. But they could be made to pay for her desertion by sacrificing earnings through Singapore worth some 75 million every year for about 100 years. Lee Kuan Yew had also stated that Japanese could fill up almost everything Britishers leave behind. Though the Japanese could not defend Singapore, he added, we can make our arrangements. See Daily Mail, 9 January 1968 for Lee's BBC interview reports.

81 Sunday Times, 7 January 1968

82 Sunday Telegraph, 7 January 1968

83 Explaining his arguments against a speedy withdrawal Lee Kuan Yew said that all he wanted was sufficient time for his investors both in Singapore and outside (Britain, Hong Kong, Japan or elsewhere) to find it credible that there will be continuing security. He never demanded economic aid particularly because Singapore was doing rather well and requested only for sufficient time to develop muscles of his own. He could not afford to pursue Britain not to go ahead with an early withdrawal and the only alternative was a sensible argument of facts and figures in which he had mastered. Also see Evening Standard, 13 January 1968 and The Financial Times, 13 January 1968.

84 Eastern Sun (Malaysia), 14 January 1968 However the subsequent warning by Dr. Ng Kam Pon (Malaysia's Assistant Finance Minister) that Malaysia might take action against British interests in the Federation if Britain did not provide sufficient aid to cushion the effect of its withdrawal. Also see Sunday Telegraph, 14 January 1968 and Age, 8 March 1968.
Singapore-Malaysia relations had been marked by hostility and distrust prior to 1968. Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia which was fractured in 1965 because of partisan political activity of Lee Kuan Yew and racial incompatibility. In Singapore racial riots incited by Pro-Indonesian extremist Malays from July 1964 had resulted in more Malaysian deaths than had the war in Borneo. In the riots, 35 were known to have been killed and some 600 injured. A large number of people remained missing. Later reports suggested that at least 100 people were killed in these riots. See Times, 2 February 1966. According to Separation Agreement Singapore and Malaysia had pledged to cooperate in defence matters. There were hardly any signs of cooperation until the announcement of British withdrawal. Instituting a joint defence command with all of its inherent political aspects would have been impossible with two of the members hostile to each other.

85 Ibid, 12 January 1968
86 Straits Times, 19 January 1968
88 For critical comments by Dato Ja'afar Albar and Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamed, influential alliance young Turks see Straits Times, 17 June 1966, ibid, 28 June 1966, Far Eastern Economic Review, 14 July 1966, Guardian, 10 August 1965, Daily Mail, 13 August 1965, Times, 16 August 1965. In addition to all this, Britain was accused of being imperialist and causing interference. This was done at a time when British troops were still fighting in Borneo. Even when Britain promised continued support in 1968, P. M. Tunku was reported to have said "getting blood from a stone is easier than getting money from the British." See Times, 8 August 1968.
89 Straits Times, 1 February 1968
90 Ibid, 10 May 1968
91 Australian, 11 May 1968
92 Ibid, 31 May 1968
93 Ibid, 11 June 1968
94 Ibid
95 Australian, 11 May 1968
96 Ibid
97 Canberra Times, 12 June 1968
98 Ibid

Straits Times, 12 June 1968

See Current Notes on International Affairs (Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra), vol 39, no 6, June 1968, pp 249-50


Ibid, p 45

Ibid, pp 43-44 It is generally understood to be United States as outside 'allies'

Observer (London), 8 June 1069 and Times (London), 9 June 1969

Current Notes on International Affairs (Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, vol 40, no 6 (June 1969), p 300

Canberra Times, 21 June 1969

Author's interview with the Secretary of the Ministry of Defence (July 1972)

Sydney Morning Herald, 19 June 1969

Straits Times, 2 August 1969

Ibid

Ibid

Times (London), 22 October 1969

About 25,000 troops participated. The exercise ("HANESIA") was to repel invasion of Malaysia by conventional forces. It is interesting to note here that the exercise was considered to be a political necessity to provide a psychological boost against an external threat

Dick Wilson's interview with Tun Razak reproduced in New Nation (Singapore), 19 June 1972

Britain airlifted units of infantry, artillery and helicopters in record time from the UK to Singapore

New Nation, 19 June 1972

Author's interview with S R Nathan, Chief of Internal Security, Singapore May 1972
One may relate to this the decision of the Singapore Government, after British withdrawal from East of Suez, to building her own defence resources in the form of compulsory national conscription for full-time military training. This defence strategy helped in raising a reserve force of approximately 50,000 trained soldiers.

Integrated Air Defence System, Naval cooperation and the establishment of Naval defence Council composed of one senior officer from each member country were encouraging signals. Besides this, a joint consultative council was established to provide a framework for political-military discussions i.e. crisis situation.

It is interesting to find that at the close of 1974 the British defence minister argued that Britain could not in 1975 and beyond, continue to meet all her commitments to NATO on its various fronts in view of its state of economy.

Australia in 1971 had 3000 men, Britain had 2000, and New Zealand 900 only. (See J D B Miller, "The Mutual and Shared Commitments of Australia and New Zealand"). In Australia Outlook, vol 22, no 1, April 1968.

It means "Firmly United". It was a combined defence exercise designed to simulate conditions as they could be after Britain's withdrawal. It had assumed an invasion of West Malaysia in 1975 by an imaginary state, "Ganasia" from the northeast. This, and various other assumptions seemed to be designed to fit the contingency to British capability rather than to test Britain's capacity to meet the contingency.

Australia, with New Zealand in tow, came into the picture belatedly with less than compelling sincerity. It was motivated by internal factors rather than by the regional security interests.
Singapore and Malaysia had their own profound differences, including the lingering suspicion that they were potential adversaries. Malaysia was inclined towards non-alignment. But Singapore, obsessed with the need to win international business confidence found in a well publicised defence pact with Britain and Australia a short cut to political stability and security. The five power arrangement was actually a five way clash of interests. From the point of view of the government's local political stance, what is important is not so much the arrangement itself as the presence of Australian forces in framework. This is put across in an affirmation of the Australian government's determination to prevent the spread of communism, to be contrasted with the opposition Labour party's lack of credibility in this regard. The old order of forward defence had to go in view of British withdrawal and running down of American commitments. The five power arrangement provided a framework within which the old order could pass away in a gradual and undisrupted manner.