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## Regional Dimension of Malaysia's Foreign Policy during the Cold War, 1957-1989: A Historical Evaluation

**ABSTRACT:** Malaysia, like other countries in the world, has formulated her foreign policy to achieve her national interests. Foreign policy of Malaysia has been developed since the independent, and regional dimension played an important role in shaping Malaysia's foreign policy. This article examines Malaysia's foreign policy since the independent from the regional perspective. It is understood that Malaysia's foreign policy is very much shaped from the Southeast Asia region, in particular ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) itself. Since the independent, Southeast Asia becomes one of the major concerns in Malaysia's foreign policy, where the region experienced major event happened directly and indirectly influenced foreign policy of the countries in Southeast Asia. In fact, regional dimension has shaped Malaysia's foreign policy from the beginning of the independent. The study, firstly, evaluate on historical background on Malaysia's foreign policy since the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, until Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Secondly, the study seeks to highlight main issues, orientation, and changes in Malaysia's foreign policy by examining the different administration. Thirdly, the article seeks to look the importance of Malaysia's foreign policy within the regional aspect.

**KEY WORD:** Malaysia's foreign policy, national interests, the roles of prime ministers, regional cooperation, security, and economic development.

**IKHTISAR:** Artikel ini bertajuk "Dimensi Serantau dalam Dasar Luar Malaysia semasa Perang Dingin, 1957-1989: Satu Penilaian Sejarah". Malaysia, seperti negara-negara lain di dunia, telah merumuskan dasar luar untuk mencapai kepentingan negara berkenaan. Dasar luar Malaysia telah dibangunkan sejak merdeka, dan dimensi serantau memainkan peranan yang penting dalam membentuk dasar luarnya. Artikel ini mengkaji dasar luar Malaysia sejak merdeka dari perspektif serantau. Difahami bahawa dasar luar Malaysia adalah sangat direka-bentuk oleh rantau Asia Tenggara, khususnya ASEAN (Persatuan Bangsa-bangsa Asia Tenggara) itu sendiri. Sejak merdeka, Asia Tenggara menjadi salah satu kebimbangan utama dalam dasar luar Malaysia, dimana rantau ini mengalami peristiwa besar yang berlaku secara langsung dan tidak langsung mempengaruhi dasar luar negara-negara di Asia Tenggara. Malah, dimensi serantau telah membentuk dasar luar Malaysia dari permulaan kemerdekaan. Kajian ini, pertamanya, menilai tentang latar belakang sejarah dasar luar negara Malaysia sejak Perdana Menteri pertama, Tunku Abdul Rahman, sehingga Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Keduanya, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetengahkan isu-isu utama, orientasi, dan perubahan dalam dasar luar Malaysia dengan memeriksa pentadbiran yang berbeza. Ketiganya, artikel ini bertujuan untuk melihat kepentingan dasar luar Malaysia dalam aspek serantau.

**KATA KUNCI:** Dasar luar Malaysia, kepentingan negara, peranan perdana menteri, kerjasama serantau, keselamatan, dan pembangunan ekonomi.

### INTRODUCTION

Malaya, later Malaysia, gained independence in 31<sup>st</sup> August 1957. Since her independence, Southeast

Asia becomes one of major concern in Malaysia's foreign policy. The establishment of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967,

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when countries including Malaysia together with Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, agreed to form regional organization among the Southeast Asia countries (Andaya & Andaya, 1982).

Malaysia, like other countries in the world, has formulated her foreign policy to achieve her national interests. In order to achieve national interests, foreign policy need to be formulated accordingly and should be implemented within the framework of national interests, where “*state act in their national interests*” (Nye Jr., 2009:50). Foreign policy of Malaysia has been developed since the independent, and regional dimension played an important role in shaping Malaysia's foreign policy. Southeast Asia or ASEAN to be more specific played a pivotal role Malaysia's foreign policy. Since establishment of ASEAN in 1967, ASEAN become one of the priorities in Malaysia's foreign policy.

Historically, the region has experienced many events that directly and indirectly shaped its orientation towards the other countries (Rosenau, 2006). The end World War II (WW2) and the emergence of the Cold War has given an impact to the region in many aspects, particularly in security, defence, economy, as well in political issues. Malaysia, like other countries, cannot escape from the Cold War environment which leads to shape Malaysia's foreign policy approaches and orientations (Azhari Karim, Howell & Okuda, 1990).

The establishment of ASEAN marked a very significant impact to all members of ASEAN, including Malaysia. With the policy of confrontation by Indonesia, Philippines's claim over Sabah, as well as separation of Singapore from Malaysia added with the domestic problem which was Communist insurgency, made Malaysia in the critical condition.<sup>1</sup> But, with the

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<sup>1</sup>The term of “Malaya”, gained the independence in 1957, was before the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. Throughout the article, Malaysia will

establishment of ASEAN, bilateral issues during that period also slowly resolved.

Since ASEAN was established until today, ASEAN play a key role and cornerstone in shaping Malaysia's Foreign Policy (MFP). Even though at the first two decades after independence, Southeast Asia was not at her top priority like British, but Southeast Asia from early time of independence consider as one of the national's priority. Leaders, from Tunku Abdul Rahman till today, have maintained that ASEAN should be an important entity in terms of security, politics, cultural, and economy for Malaysia. The study seeks to evaluate regional dimension of MFP from Tunku Abdul Rahman till Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.<sup>2</sup>

#### **FORMING FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION AND ORIENTATION: PRO-WESTERN, 1957-1970**

Tunku Abdul Rahman was Malaysia first Prime Minister. Tunku Abdul Rahman can be considered as the person who was shaping Malaysia's foreign policy after the independent. This was because Tunku Abdul Rahman also was hold position as Malaysian Foreign Minister. Major role was taken by Tunku Abdul Rahman alone during his administration, especially in foreign policy approaches, posture, and orientation.

His administration facing many events which directly shaped his foreign policy orientation and approach. During his tenure, Tunku Abdul Rahman's administration was facing internal and external problems that put Malaysia security at stakes. Tunku Abdul Rahman was appointed as Prime Minister of Malaysia during the time of the Cold War as well spread of

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be used instead of Malaya.

<sup>2</sup>This article is extended version of paper presented at an International Conference of Social Sciences and Humanities (ICOSH) at UKM (National University of Malaysia) in Bangi, on 12-13 December 2012, with the title “Regional Dimension of Malaysia's Foreign Policy from Tunku to Tun Mahathir: An Evaluation”.

Communist insurgency in Southeast Asia, where Malaysia was mostly affected from these events.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's time as a Prime Minister can be marked as forming a foreign policy for a new independent state and its orientation of the nation towards other nations. Taking position as a Prime Minister as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs showed that influenced in the foreign policy decision making was very influential. His influence can be seen in terms of foreign policy direction and orientation. His influence of the nation's foreign policy was shaped by his close relations with the former colonial power (Britain).

His pre-dominant of nation's policy formation later shaped mostly from his policy of anti-Communist and pro-Western stand during his time. Cannot be denied that Tunku Abdul Rahman was a major actor in shaping Malaysia's foreign policy. But, the role of other bureaucrats during his tenure also important, where different ministers were helping Tunku Abdul Rahman in his foreign policy (Ott, 1972).

Under Tunku Abdul Rahman's administration, Malaysia is still new to maintain its own defence and security. For any new states, matter of defence and security become one of the fundamental aspects that leader should take more serious attention in order to ensure survival of the state in the future. Malaysia close relation with Britain provides Malaysia with defence and security assistance and alliance. Through the Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement (AMDA), Britain provides a security umbrella to Malaysia. AMDA considered as a foundation of Malaysia's security and defence policy.

With this agreement, parties that involves agreed to assist each other in case if there is any attack attempt on every states. According to AMDA, "*the Government of the United Kingdom undertakes to afford to the Government*

*of the Federation of Malaya such assistance [...] for the external defense of its territory*".<sup>3</sup>

Malaysia was formed with the inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore in 1963. With the formation of Malaysia, neighbouring states feel uncomfortable with the new federation and react against it. Indonesia sees the formation as a type of neo-imperialist (Saravanamuttu, 1983:63); and Philippines claimed Sabah as their territory from the historical point of view.

These were two majors' events happened after the creation of Malaysia. Indonesia declared *Konfrontasi* (confrontation) against Malaysia right after the establishment of new federation. Philippines, on the other hand, claimed over Sabah creates a diplomatic problem amongst both nations, Malaysia and Philippines (Saravanamuttu, 1983:62-63).

### **CONFRONTATION POLICY BY INDONESIA**

Establishment of Malaysia, which consists of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore in 1963, gives big impact to Malaysia. Her neighbouring countries did not recognized this new federation and threaten to takes action against Malaysia. Because of that, Malaysia relations with certain states in Southeast Asia become worst compared to prior of the establishment of Malaysia.

Confrontation by Indonesia and Philippines claimed over Sabah not only creates bilateral problems with Indonesia and Philippines, but also with other international organization which Malaysia applied to become a membership. One of the examples was Malaysia application to be a member of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization was rejected because of the intervention from Indonesia and

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, Article 1 AMDA (Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement) in 1957.

China (Saravanamuttu, 1983:69); where Indonesia and China threaten to withdraw if the organization accepted Malaysia's application to become a member. This is considered as one of the attempts created by Indonesia to reduce Malaysia influence from getting more recognition in international arena.

Indonesia was the first country that reacted against the formation of Malaysia. It is clear that policy of confrontation introduced by Indonesia was because of action taken against Malaysia and its former colonial country, Britain. Formation of Malaysia, in Indonesia's perspectives, was one of form of imperialism in Southeast Asia. This is why in the eyes of Indonesian leaders, this formation was kind of "neo-imperialism" and "neo-colonialism".

In fact, Indonesia's reaction was not surprise because of conflict occurred between Malaysia and Indonesia during the confrontation. Indonesia's reaction against Malaysia to become member to international organization was motivated as reaction taken by Malaysia during the establishment of Federation. On the other hand, confrontation was directly makes Malaysia's security and defence at stakes. During the confrontation, Malaysia and Indonesia's relation was totally at the worst situation. This situation, during the confrontation, become worst as a result of involvement of Indonesian Army in supplying arms to the rebellion group in the border of Sarawak and Sabah (Sidhu, 2009:2-3).

#### ***On the Separation of Singapore.***

One of the major issues that reflect Malaysia's foreign policy was separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965. After the establishment of Malaysia, two years after that, Singapore was separated from the federation and become an independent state. Singapore's prior to the establishment of Malaysia was also British colonies, where Singapore considers as one of the vital state for British in Southeast Asia. Singapore joint other states in

order to form Malaysia in 1963 directly gave Singapore and other colonies in the region (Sabah and Sarawak) an independent. The coalition was to ensure that Singapore's internal security was maintained even though Britain was not presence after the independent was achieved.

Separation of Singapore from Malaysia, which later resulted of emergence of new independent country in Southeast Asia, was rooted by several problems. One of the major problems was internal conflict between Central government in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore government (Sopiee, 1976:183). Another aspect that can be considered was the high Chinese population in Singapore that can bring ethnic imbalanced, especially in Peninsula of Malaysia.

In fact, all of these events happened during the first decade of independent do not become an obstacle for Malaysia to have relations with the Southeast Asia nations, particularly with the neighbouring countries. This can be seen in 1967, where several countries in Southeast Asia form Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand becomes in founding members of this regional organization. Despite of all problems that facing Southeast Asia, this regional organization consider as a tool that can become a means to bringing all countries in Southeast Asia together.

#### **NON-ALIGNMENT ORIENTATION, NEUTRALITY, AND ASEAN AS CORNERSTONE, 1970-1981**

Malaysia's second Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, on the other hand, used different approach in Malaysia's foreign policy and relation. Tun Abdul Razak become Malaysia's Prime Minister after the ethnic clashes between Malay and Chinese on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1969. He succeeded Tunku Abdul Rahman on September 1970.

His approach in Malaysia foreign policy different from his predecessor in terms of Malaysia's stand over a certain issues. Compared to Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak consider as one of the leader in developing countries who are taking stand not to side any of superpowers during his time. This can be sees during his time when he becomes amongst the leader who are recognized China even though China is a Communist state.

During Tun Abdul Razak's administration, nature of MFP (Malaysia Foreign Policy) was also changed its direction. MFP can be seen has changed in terms of Malaysia stance from pro-Western policy and anti-Communist policy to Neutralism. Johan Saravanamuttu (2010) mentioned Malaysia's stance of Communist countries changed by opened up Malaysia's diplomatic relations with China. Johan Saravanamuttu mentioned as follows:

Malaysia's opening up to diplomatic relations with China was part of an overall transition in its foreign policy from a pro-Western to a Non-Aligned stance and recognition of the imperative for coexistence among Non-Communist and Communists state in the global system (Saravanamuttu, 2010:1).

One of the major significant contributions of Tun Abdul Razak, especially Malaysia's foreign policy, was change of Malaysia's policy orientation towards the countries like China. Policy of Non-Alignment and Neutralism later become Malaysia primary concern. Neutralism approach has greater significant for small country like Malaysia during the Cold War environment, which Jayaratnam Saravanamuttu (1983) explained reason why Third World countries, like Malaysia, prefer this stance. He explained further as follows:

[...] Neutralism has the advantage of having a broader meaning of Non-

Alignment in the Cold War or even perhaps non-involvement in any "hot" war with superpower participation or support. Neutralism should, however, not be confused with "neutrality" which is legal concept for non-combatant status in war situations. Very often, Non-Alignment and Neutralism are used synonymously and neutrality is taken to be neutralism (Saravanamuttu, 1983:2).

Tun Abdul Razak's foreign policy approaches were mostly motivated by the situation happened during the Cold War, where superpowers competing amongst each other to gained more influence from the developing countries. This situation becomes worst when the superpowers directly involve in conflict and support for the countries which directly involve in conflict. Taking position not to align with any of these superpowers ideologies considered as the best option that can be taken for developing countries like Malaysia.

One of the major actions taken by Malaysia during Tun Abdul Razak's time was the initiatives to ensure that Southeast Asia as free zone from any interference of any superpowers and proposed ideas of "neutralization" (Ott, 1972:237). This can be seen when Kuala Lumpur initiated the idea of Zone of Peace, Free, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971.<sup>4</sup> The idea was to ensure that there is no superpowers will interfere in terms of spread their ideology, influenced, and they need to respect Southeast Asia as a free region which taken stand not to align with either sides.

From Tun Abdul Razak onward, regional dimension on Malaysia foreign policy was taking place. During Tunku Abdul Rahman's time, regional dimension was not fully been focusing in Malaysia foreign policy, especially when there were conflict among the countries in Southeast Asia. Only when ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) was established, then,

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, "ZOPFAN Declaration". Available [online] also at <http://www.aseansec.org/1215.htm> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012].

regional dimension really took place in Malaysia's foreign policy. As a matter of fact, ASEAN dimension in Malaysia's foreign policy taking place during the Tun Abdul Razak, where major shift of MFP (Malaysia Foreign Policy) taking place during his time. Foreign policy orientation also different from pro-West posture to Non-Alignment posture.

When Tun Hussein Onn replaced Tun Abdul Razak in 1975, there are no major changes made by Tun Hussein Onn in his foreign policy. Rather, he strengthening what was inherited by his predecessor, Tun Abdul Razak. Tun Hussein Onn's foreign policy priority was basically more concern on regional aspect where during his time, ASEAN started to become a cornerstone in Malaysia's foreign policy<sup>5</sup> till the present day.

Issues of security and regional stability become one of the main concerns of Malaysia's foreign policy during Tun Hussein Onn. Southeast Asia nations, particularly ASEAN members, afraid that Communist ideology will spread among the Southeast Asia nations. After the defeated of USA (United States of America) in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, added by the fall of South Vietnam (Saigon) to the North Vietnam which practices Communist ideology makes security environment in Southeast Asia changed (Sodhy, 1991:343).

When USA was defeated by Communist in Vietnam, there are strong believed that Southeast Asia will again become a hot place for the superpowers competition, especially spread of Communist ideology throughout the region. After the fall of South Vietnam to the North Vietnam, the unification of South-North Vietnam become one unified state lead to insecure feeling among the states in the region (Baginda ed., 2009).

The threat also increased when Vietnam invaded Cambodia in late 1970s. Furthermore, conflict happened in Indochina states not only become state issues, but also become international issues that should be taken seriously. Increased of refugee among the Vietnamese in the region, especially to the neighbouring countries, also creates problems to the domestic issue. Malaysia also cannot run from the increased of refugees to whom run from the conflict happened in Vietnam (Saravanamuttu, 2010:167-168).

Tun Hussein Onn, like his predecessor, continues to strengthen relation with China. After the first visit during Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia enhances relation with China. This is in order to gain support and request for China to stop supporting Communist Party of Malaya or Malaya Communist Party, MCP (Hossain, 2008:277).

After USA withdrew from Vietnam and Vietnam invasion in Cambodia, there were feel that Communist will be motivated with what happened in Vietnam. Countries like Malaysia whom is facing Communist insurgency starting from the period after World War II (WW2) afraid with this events. Communist movement will creates instability in the country which the aim creating Communist state in Malaysia. Such perception and added with the presence of Communist insurgency for more than a decade's creates dilemma in Malaysia's security policy. With the enhancement of bilateral with China, Malaysia hopes that China will stop to supporting MCP.

Another of the major actions taken by Tun Hussein Onn was to established relationship with Indochina countries (Jaafar, 2007:105). Relations with other ASEAN countries during Tun Hussein Onn become closer and there are two major declaration signed by the ASEAN members which also explained their state's foreign policy. Declaration of ASEAN Concord and Treaty of Amity

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<sup>5</sup>See, for example, "Malaysia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs". Available [online] also at <http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/evolution> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012].

and Cooperation was signed in 1976.<sup>6</sup> These two declaration explained states' external behaviour toward each other in the region and also maintaining the region as a free zone area.

**PRAGMATIC AND NEW FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION UNDER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, 1981-1990**

Tun Mahathir Mohamad become a fourth Malaysia Prime Minister. Compared to his predecessors, Mahathir Mohamad becomes Malaysia first Prime Minister who has different background. He comes from medical background where he studied at University of Malaya in Singapore and graduated not from Britain; where all of his predecessors graduated from British universities which describe why most of his predecessors favour Western countries compare to others (Wariya, 1989).

**First decade of his administration during the Cold War.** Foreign policy of Malaysia under Mahathir Mohamad's administration has been marked by his new approach in the direction and theme of the policy itself. Mahathir Mohamad's foreign policy marked by his major shifted by looking at the new potential for Malaysia's national interests. With the emphasize more of the issue of economic development of the nation and active role in international organization. His foreign policy shifted from the security concerned to economic issues, where unlike his predecessors concerned on security and defense (Dhillon, 2009:2).

Unlike other former Malaysia's Prime Ministers, Mahathir Mohamad view of Britain and other Western countries was not really rely on them. This can be seen right after he took place as Prime Minister, he introduced "Buy

British Last" or BBL (Dhillon, 2005:235). Mahathir Mohamad introduces BBL as a result of dissatisfaction of him towards the British looking at Malaysia as their former colony not as a sovereign and Free State (Pathmanathan & Lazarus, 1983:45).

This changes can be said unexpected came from the former colonies of British, especially Malaysia since independent rely mostly on British in terms of economic, security, and defense issues. Mahathir Mohamad's anti-West and anti-colonialism perception creates some problems with other Western countries, where his view on these two aspects was reflected by his personal experienced during the time of WW2 (World War II) and Japan's invasion in Southeast Asia, 1942-1945 (Md Khalid, 2011:430).

As a result of his anti-Western perception, Mahathir Mohamad look at another potential partner and cooperation. This led him to play an active role in South-South Cooperation and emphasis on the regional aspect of interdependency. Like other leaders in Third World countries, Mahathir Mohamad considered as one of the leader that very out-spoken personal and always calling for the Third World, or developing countries, to strengthening cooperation and self-reliance among the Third World countries (Md Khalid, 2011:431).

During his first decade at office, Mahathir Mohamad introduces many changes as a result of the need of the nation to cope with the external environment. Mahathir Mohamad not only introduced BBL, but also redirected Malaysia's economic policy towards the other side of the world. By introducing "Look East Policy", Mahathir Mohamad hopes that Malaysia will not depending on the West in terms of economic and other aspect of development.

His ambition is to develop a country, which has strong economic capability, motivated him to focusing on economic issue rather than security issue, where

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, "Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Indonesia: 24<sup>th</sup> February 1976". Available [online] also at <http://www.aseansec.org/5049.htm> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012]; and "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation". Available [online] also at <http://www.aseansec.org/5047.htm> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012].

developing countries are always been used by the developed countries, because they do not have economic capability. Because of that, developing countries will always been exploited by developed countries (Baginda ed., 2004; and Harun ed., 2006). By introducing Look East Policy, Mahathir Mohamad sees potential for Malaysia to learn from the East Asia countries, in particular Japan, to industrialized the countries and accelerated economic growth.

Look East Policy was a mechanism that been used by Mahathir Mohamad in his foreign policy to enhance Malaysia's economic interests. For him, historically, Malaysia since Tunku Abdul Rahman never looks at the Eastern part of the world as an example for Malaysia, especially in work ethics and economic strength (Saravanamuttu, 2010:187).

The reasons of introducing Look East Policy is because of the success made by the Eastern countries (Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong) to make the countries become highly industrialized in short of time; and the other reason was the nature of Western economic is exploitative in nature (Saravanamuttu, 2010). Mahathir Mohamad, through the Look East Policy, clearly wants Malaysia to achieve Newly Industrializing Country (NIC). By adopting and stressing on Eastern value, achieving NIC consider as a positive result.

Despite on his Look East Policy dominated his first decade in office, Mahathir Mohamad also look at the other potential cooperation among the developing countries. Establishment of South-South Cooperation and G-15 (Group of Fifteen) comprised of several developing countries further enhance Mahathir Mohamad's leadership as well as known as a Third World spokesman (Robani, 2009). By enhancing economic cooperation among the developing countries, it will directly reduced dependency on Western countries. G-15 consider as catalyst on mutual

economic cooperation<sup>7</sup> that can provide its members positive impact.

#### ***Post-Cold War foreign policy.***

Demised of Soviet Union in late 1980s brought new perspective in national security discussion among the leaders. The rise of unipolar international system describes the dominant of Western democracy and its influence throughout the global (Kofman & Youngs eds., 1996).

The external influence also important in influencing Malaysia's external behaviour. Post-Cold War time can be describe as strengthening intra-regional relations in aspects of political, economics, and socio-cultural relation. ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) growing its memberships by accepting Indochinese countries as ASEAN member. Malaysia is the country who strongly agree and initiate to expanding ASEAN membership by inclusion of Indochinese countries.

ASEAN remains as Malaysia top priority in her foreign policy. Relations with other ASEAN countries in post-Cold War time was strengthen by the introducing of several mechanisms that can benefit Southeast Asian countries. In aspect of economy, Mahathir Mohamad was one of the leaders in ASEAN which stress the important of intra-regional cooperation, especially looking at the Northeast Asia countries as an example and the important of regional cooperation in the aspect of economy. Mahathir Mohamad's spoke about the idea of East Asia Economic Grouping (EAEG) and, later, ASEAN's leader agreed to establish ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).

Increase of intra-regional cooperation, especially in economic aspect, is important to ensure that ASEAN did not rely mostly on the Western countries. With AFTA, economic relation among the member's states will increase

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<sup>7</sup>See, for example, "Group of Fifteen: Aims and Objectives". Available [online] also at <http://www.g15.org/gfaims.html> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012].

automatically if it endorsed according to the plan. With the inclusion of Indochinese countries and Myanmar, AFTA's plan was later been modified to ensure that Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV) can cope with the idea of free trade area.

Furthermore, matter of national security also important during the post-Cold War time. Malaysia sees the emergence of China as regional power in Asia as a threat. Because of that, Malaysia was the country who is taken serious consideration to bring another country to become ASEAN members to minimize that threat. Malaysia agreed with the inclusion of Vietnam as a result to reduce China's influenced in Asia-Pacific region (Singh, 2004:13-14).

In summary, Malaysian foreign policy has been changed since the first year of independent. From Tunku Abdul Rahman's time up to the Prime Minister of Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia has shown many faces of its foreign policy orientation (Baginda ed., 2007).

## CONCLUSION

Like other state in the world, forming a good foreign policy is necessary for any countries in the world. Foreign policy of one country might be varied from another countries, but the main reasons of forming foreign policy is to achieve and protect national interest of the state itself.

Malaysia's foreign policy orientation has been evolved and different from the early time to the present time. The fundamental change in Malaysia's foreign policy was not surprised consider that foreign policy is changeable and according to the need of the state. State act and react to the change of the environment which came from the domestic demand and external pressure, where the nature of every foreign policy is not static and require change if needed and necessary.

Country like Malaysia has experienced many changes in its

foreign policy. But this changes are not meaning that Malaysia's did not have strong position over a certain issue. Rather, it is a result of constructive approaches that been used since the first year of independent.

Malaysia's approach during the Cold War and post-Cold War time might be differ in terms of the orientation as well priority. Historically, change in foreign policy has been always made by the country's leader.

During the Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's foreign policy was pro-Western and anti-Communist. When Tun Abdul Razak become a Prime Minister, his approach was different because the orientation was Non-Alignment. After that, during Tun Hussein Onn, regional dimension come into a place and maintain as a cornerstone in MFP (Malaysia's Foreign Policy). Indeed, major shift in Malaysia's foreign policy taking place under Tun Mahathir Mohamad. From security concern to economic development of Malaysia become his priority during the Cold War and after that.

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