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The Malayan Emergency Threats to Malaysia's National Security

Fatimah Binti Kuzi^{1*}, Bushrah Binti Basiron²

¹ Department of Science Social, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: fatimah.kuzi@upnm.edu.my

² Islamic Civilization Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: bushrah@utm.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

The Malayan Emergency stands as a pivotal chapter in Malaysia's history, profoundly shaping its trajectory as a nation. This article delves into the multifaceted dimensions of the Malayan Emergency, analyzing its continuous impact on Malaysia's national security. Moreover, it examines the strategies employed by both the insurgents and the government, including the implementation of laws, counterinsurgency operations, and the resettlement of rural populations. By understanding the lessons learned from this tumultuous period, policymakers and scholars can gain insights into contemporary security challenges and devise more effective strategies for safeguarding Malaysia's national security in the 21st century. Through a comprehensive data collection of interviews, field studies, and secondary documents, this paper illuminates the complexities of the Malayan Emergency and its enduring ramifications on Malaysia's security apparatus. This article employs a qualitative approach to elucidate the threats from the Malayan Emergency, utilizing NVivo 12 software for data analysis. It concludes by highlighting the significance and relevancy of the Malayan Emergency to the current situation and environment in Malaysia.

Keywords: Communism, Malayan Emergency, National Security, Nvivo 12, Threat

Introduction

National security refers to a state of being free or reduced from any threat whether internally or externally to its core values (Singh, 2015). Malaysia's national security was influenced and formed by the Malayan Emergency. The twelve year emergency start from 1948 until 1960 was followed by an unbroken insurgency that lasted in 1989 (Singh & Liang Fook, 2021). Parts of the Emergency Regulations of 1948, replaced by a series of draconian laws designed to combat communist subversion and influence, were carried over into the Internal Security Act of 1960. These laws included the Sedition Act (revised in 1969), the Societies Act (amended in 1981), the Official Secrets Act (amended in 1986), and the Essential (Security Case) Regulations (1975) (Arifin, 2014). Later revisions have strengthened the legislation's authoritarian elements by enabling the government to restrict individuals' basic rights anytime it sees a danger to national security. Politics in Malaya during the 1948-1960 period were very much hamstrung by the Emergency regulations, which restricted freedom of movement, publications and speech (Kheng, 2009). As the regulations allowed detention without trial, anyone suspected of communist sympathies of left-leaning ideas was liable to be taken in for interrogation or detention as sympathisers or collaborators. Newspapers were required to obtain a license annually to publish. Censorship of information was enforced. All social organisations and political parties had to be registered under the Societies Act. Public assemblies or demonstrations were prohibited. These measures were defended as necessary for national security and political stability. Freedom and fundamental human rights were not nurtured in Malaya during the Emergency.

Methodology

This article was studied qualitatively. The qualitative approach aims to explore and understand a phenomenon by searching for relevant sources of information in the form of words or texts, which are then collected and analysed (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative methods allow this article to use interpretivist paradigms to perceive social reality as a phenomenon that can change rapidly, experience processes, and subjective meaning as a result of social construction (Lan, 2018).

Data collection was carried out through primary data and secondary data. Primary data involved interview with the informants from various background which is academicians, industry expert in the field of national security and also involved politicians. Secondary data came from libraries, documents, thesis regarding the Malaysia-Singapore Separation 1965 issues. The literature search focused on articles published in peer-reviewed journals to ensure the perspective was up-to-date and relevant to the study (Snyder, 2019). Through qualitative methods, this study can provide in-depth insights into the role of Malaysia-Singapore separation 1965 threats to national security.

NVivo 12 software has been used to analysed the data. According to Burns (2000), data analysis is about finding meaning from the data and then presenting it in a systematic form. There are three types of data that will be analyzed in this study. The data are obtained from in-depth interviews, field study and documents analysis. All the data are organized and prepared in text form called 'verbatim data'.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the analysis process occurs in two stages. The first stage begins during the data collection process. At this stage, the researcher may already have

a general idea of the themes and categories present in the collected data. The second stage occurs after the data collection process. In this stage, the data is specifically analyzed to understand and extract themes, categories, and subcategories. This second stage is called content analysis. The collected data is then interpreted based on themes derived from the literature review through a deductive process. Additionally, the data is analyzed to identify new themes from the study findings through an inductive process (Mohd Tobi, 2017). During the analysis process, tasks such as data cleaning, understanding the data, and generating themes and categories will be performed with the assistance of the NVivo 12.0 program.

During the process of constructing categories and themes, the researcher assigns codes (open coding) for each theme along with operational definitions. These definitions are specific to this study, regardless of whether they align with established definitions or not. This is because the use of themes refers to the meanings used by the study participants and informants.

Literature Review

After Malaya gained independence in 1957, national security became its top priorities (Rönnbäck et al., 2022). Internally, during the early years of its independence, the state continued to deal with the threat posed by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), according to (Karl Hack, 2021), Peter Edwards (2015), and Asiqah (2019). Because of the current security situation, the military's strength was maintained, although at a lower level than it had been during the Emergency, the communist insurrection's height (1948-1960). Malaysia's national security have continued to advance in the initial years after independence.

However, according to Bridget Welsh (2020), political polarisation over issues of race, religion, and reform has plagued Malaysia for decades and has influenced the state's policies long before 1957. Ethnic conflicts in Malaysia go back to the fight for independence from British rule. A crucial turning point occurred in 1946 when the British created the Malayan Union, a single administrative entity for the ethnically varied nations that would eventually become a component of Malaysia. Malay elites mobilised in reaction and founded the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) the following year, it became an ethnic-nationalist party that fought for exclusive Malay rights. The Malayan Emergency did not just increase the danger to Malaya but other factors, such as the ethnic conflict, also posed a severe threat to the state and have persisted to the present. This essay examines the dangers posed to Malaya, not just by communists.

The Malayan Emergency, which lasted from 1948 to 1960, has come under scrutiny as a danger to the state's national security, according to Karl Hack (2021) in his book *The Malayan Emergency: Revolution and Counterinsurgency at the End of Empire*. At its peak in 1951-1952, 40,000 troops, over 70,000 police and more than 250,000 Home Guards confronted seven to eight thousand armed insurgents. Led by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), the guerrillas were backed by Min Yuen (Mass Organization) cells for suppliers, women, youth, and beyond by supporters and sympathisers estimated to be peaking at anything up to a million. They operated in the equatorial jungle that covered two-thirds of the country, on mountains and hills, in *belukar* (dense, scrubby secondary jungle), in the marsh at the forest's edge in rubber plantations and close to small villages and squatter settlements. The administration's aim was to protect, control, coerce and cajole a population that rose from just under five million in June 1948 to six million in 1956, particularly those living along the forest fringe. (49%) Malay, (38%) Chinese, and (11%) Indian made up the population in 1948. Government initiatives like

pressing villages, resettling them, and trying to change people’s “hearts and minds” have a good effect on quelling the insurrection. (Yaakop et al., 2020).

In order to combat a communist-led guerrilla war in their regions on and around the Malayan peninsula, the British colonial rulers declared martial law in 1948, dubbed the subsequent 12-year conflict the “Malayan Emergency,” as explained by Peter Edwards (2015) in *The Malayan Emergency*. The Malayan Emergency turned out to be a crucial test of Australia’s statecraft in the years after 1945. Australian political and military leaders were still feeling the effects of the Malayan Emergency decades later. The Australian government’s sending of soldiers to Malaya in 1955 further demonstrated its sincere desire to support the counterinsurgency effort in Malaya.

The Malayan Emergency Leaflets: Its Roles and Effects in The “Psychological War” against Communism During The Malayan Emergency Period by Asiqah (2019) explains that the leaflets were a crucial component of the psychological warfare tool used to fight the communist influences ever since the early Malayan Emergency. The goal and operations of counterinsurgency operations got increasingly sophisticated with the introduction of the Emergency Information Service in the early 1950s. Since the 1950s, Cantonese, Hakka, and Mandarin have been the main Chinese dialects used by the Psychological War Section to generate millions of leaflets every month. The notice also includes translations into other languages, including Malay, Tamil, English, and other regional dialects. The vast majority of the communists’ “dropping zones” during that period were isolated villages and regions of impenetrable forest. The civilians also received kinds of leaflets to keep them well-informed of the British principles against the communist. This is one of the ways Malaya’s government counter the insurgent and this method successfully addresses the insurgent. This article attempt to examine the government method used to overcome the issue of guerrilla war by the communist. The psychological warfare and propaganda were successful in overcoming the communist.

Research Finding

The Malayan Emergency

Based on the analysis conducted The Malayan Emergency revolves around related categories (a) emergency threats to national security (b) reasons implemented the Malayan Emergency (c) communism ideology. Table 4.1 indicate the Malayan Emergency threats on Malaysia’s national security.

Table 0.1 The Malayan Emergency

Bil	The Malayan Emergency	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
a)	Threats to National Security	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
b)	Reason Implemented Emergency	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
c)	Communism Ideology	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

(a) The Malayan Emergency threats to national security

The Malayan Emergency threats as in table 4.1 is composed of eight main themes which are emergency threats to national security; characterised by communist; the event without closure; economic and financial burden; society feel insecure; overthrown government by force; slow state’s development; and violating the rules.

Table 0.2 The Malayan Emergency Threats to National Security

Bil.	Threats	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
1.	Emergency threats to national security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.	Characterised by communist	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.	The event without closure	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.	Economic and Financial burden	-	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.	Society feel insecure	-	X	-	X	X	X	-
6.	Overthrown government by force	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
7.	Slow state’s development	-	X	X	X	X	X	X
8.	Violating the rules	-	-	-	X	-	-	-

The first theme in research finding that forms the highest pattern are the emergency definitely threats to national security. Since Malaysia was independence in 30th August 1957, the huge and biggest threat to national security are the Malayan emergency (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS2, 2023). The Malayan Emergency was change the Malaysia’s state policies and the government itself (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023). In the context of international politics in the post Second World War, there was insurgent of communism worldwide and it was a global threats (IVNS6, 2023). This statement was proved by the informant IVNS5 (2023) said *“It is true that the effect of the emergency are huge and the effect of the emergency in terms of ethnic relations are to restore relations between Chinese and Malay especially it is become the major causes for state instability. Besides that, during the emergency it posed a significant and imminent danger internally and externally for the state’s security”*. This statement was supported by document analysis DANS3 (2009), *“The companies insurgency can be said to be the most important single factor that shaped Malaysia’s national security considerations throughout the Cold War threats from communism was perceived both in external and internal dimensions. The 40 years war against insurgency had great psychological and political impact on the country”*

The second theme was related to the Malayan Emergency was a conflict characterised by communist insurgent (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS4, 2023). This statement was proved by the informant IVNS6 (2023) said *“Emergency as you concern is a threat by the communist against our country”* and IVNS2 (2023) *“The Communist Party Malaya (CPM) actions undeniable pose a significant danger to the national security of Malaya”*.

The third theme was related to the Malayan Emergency was the event without closure to Malaysia (IVNS6, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS5,

2023). This statement was supported by IVNS6 (2023), *“So it is still an event without closure in Malaysia and it was an emergency”* and IVNS6 (2023) *“There is a lot of issues in Malaysia hanging over near emergency, others issues do not really have an impact. In term of security regulations and security mentality, we are in a mental condition where we feel insecure”*. Malaysia gained independence during the emergency. Emergency regulations are on. A lot of emergency policies have a long-term impact on Malaysia’s politics. In terms of rules and regulations for example ISA, it was introduced during the emergency in 1948 and then in 1960 to deal with communist terrorists. It took Malaysia until 2011 to 2012 to have any seriousness to abolish. Not only non-Malay people were detained for communism but how many Muslim Malay people are the victims when ISA is used against terrorism and extremism. And moreover it was abused or manipulated by politicians for their own purposes. Especially in 2008 put that thing on some people and it has been ranked as a demand for the abolishment of ISA. SOSMA introduced. If you follow the politician, Mahathir especially uses whoever he uses. There is an emergency hangover and a long term impact of the emergency.

The fourth theme related with the financial burden by the Malaysia government during the Malayan Emergency (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS5, 2023). According to IVNS4 (2003), *“Emergencies exert a significant influence on the nation, political affairs, and economic stability. The emergency occurs during our pursuit of national independence, and its effect on stability is the substantial financial burden imposed on the government to fight the communists. Therefore, it exerts a significant moral effect on individuals. These impacts cast a blemish on the history of our nation. Simultaneously, it hinders the progress of development. We confronted with a threat that must be addressed and resolved as a priority. Progress has come to a halt. The Timur Barat road, connecting Gerik to Jeli and Kuala Kangsar, was constructed in response to an emergency situation. The construction procedure resulted in the loss of numerous lives, including both security personnel and civilians. A significant number of individuals were sacrificed, which impeded the progress of economic development”*.

The next theme related with the Malayan Emergency threat to national security because society feel insecure with the chaotic environment (IVNS3, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS3, 2023). This statement was supported by IVNS1 (2023) said *“if you try to overthrow the government by force. And then it would lead a country into chaos and would disrupt peace and the lives of citizens. So, security means you have to have peace and a conducive environment for citizens to live in. But by trying to overthrow the government then you are violating the rules for national security”*.

The six theme the Malayan Emergency threats to national security because communism want to thrown the government by force (IVNS3, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS5, 2023). This statement was supported by IVNS1 (2023) *“Because the emergency was actually an insurgency. So, what was the aim of this insurgency? It was to overthrow the government by force. You want to overthrow a legitimate government by force, and that is always considered as a threat to the national security of any country if you try to overthrow the government by force”*. Besides that, IVNS2 (2003) explain *“Upon initiating the Armed Rebellion, the Communist Party of Malaya aimed to overthrow British rule and establish the Malaya as a republic. This communist had already asserted the fundamental principles that the British held at that time”*.

The next the for the Malayan Emergency threats to national security because it is slow down the development proses (IVNS3, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS5, 2023). IVNS4 (2003:) explain “*Simultaneously, it hinders the progress of development. We confronted with a threat that must be addressed and resolved as a priority. Progress has come to a halt*”.

The last theme for the Malayan Emergency become the threats because it is violating the government rules (IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS4, 2023). IVNS1 (2003) defined “*security means you have to have peace and a conducive environment for citizens to live in. But by trying to overthrow the government then you are violating the rules for national security*”.

(b) Reason for the Implemented Emergency

The reasons for the Malayan Emergency implementation as in table 4.3 are composed of three main themes which are to manage the security; give power to jurisdiction; and to control the situation.

Table 0.3 Emergency Implementation

Bil.	Implementation	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
1.	Manage security	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2.	Power to jurisdiction	-	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.	Control situation	-	x	x	x	x	x	x

The first theme the Malayan Emergency was implement because the government want to manage the security of the state (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS2, 2023). This statement was supported by IVNS5 (2023) “*An emergency is a proactive measure implemented by the government to mitigate the escalation of a situation. Therefore, it pertains to the control aspects and the management of security itself*”.

Secondly, the implementation give power to jurisdiction (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS3, 2023). IVNS5 (2023) explain “*without invoking a state of emergency, the jurisdiction would lack the power to regulate matters pertaining to race and religious characteristics. The reason for this is the declaration of an emergency*”.

Thirdly, the implementation of emergency because the government want to control the situation (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS2, 2023. IVNS5 (2023) explain “*during the era of communism, it posed a significant and imminent danger. Communism, during that period, encompassed not only the dissemination of ideology but also the utilisation of weaponry to accomplish its political objectives*”.

(c) Communism Ideology

The practicality and application of communism has been widely debated and critique. Historically, various countris have attempted to implement communist ideologies mostly notably Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Vietnam and others. However in practice many communist regimes have deviated from the idealist principles of communism leading to authoritarian rule, economic inefficiencies and exist the human rights abuses. The communism ideology in Malaysia can be understand as in table 4.4 and there are composed of four main themes which are alien ideology in Malaysia; emphasize on no God; change the government system; and autocracy.

Table 0.4 Communism Ideology

No.	Communism	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
1.	Alien ideology in Malaysia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2.	Emphasize on no God	x	-	x	x	x	x	x
3.	Change the government system	-	x	x	x	x	x	x
4.	Autocracy	-	-	x	-	-	x	x

The statement communism is an alien ideology in Malaysia suggests that communism is perceived as foreign or unfamiliar within the context of Malaysian society (IVNS3, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS3, 2023). From historical context, Malaysia has never been governed by a communist regime, unlike some other countries in Asia such as China, Vietnam, or North Korea. Instead, Malaysia has a history of British colonial rule followed by independence and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. The communist ideology never gained significant traction as a governing system in Malaysia. The statement from IVNS1 (2023) explain *“this is quite obvious because CPM is espoused communism and communism was and remains an alien ideology to Malaysians especially to the Malay. In Malaysia, the government espoused western Liberal Democracy and of course later this Western Liberal Democracy was mixed and we also accepted for example Islam etc. So yes of course this clash of ideology according to the agenda of the communist party”*.

The second theme communism ideology emphasizes on no God (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS3, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS2, 2023). IVNS5 (2023:..) said *“At that time of the Malayan Emergency, communism emphasized that there was no God. It's becoming sensitive to the people and there is no religion in communism”*.

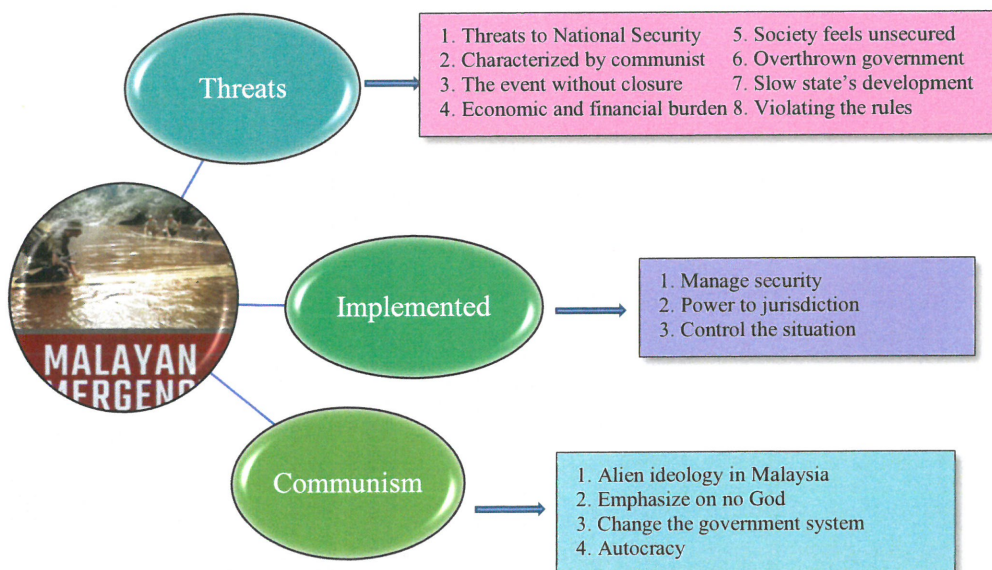
The third theme communism ideology want to change the government system (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVSN8, 2023; DANS2, 2023). In fact, the assertion of communism poses a global threats extends beyond its solely within Malaysia. IVNS1 (2023) *“the insurgency one of the reasons they want to overthrow the existing government, change the government system”*.

Autocracy are part of communism ideology (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS7, 2023:.. ; IVSN8, 2023; DANS5, 2023). IVSN4 (2023) *“Nevertheless, this communism is characterised by its ideological framework, which includes the absence of religion and an economic system where all wealth is owned collectively by the populace. In this system, individuals are not allowed to accumulate personal riches, but instead, they are expected to contribute to the state”*

and its citizens, eventually benefiting only the leader of the state. Examine nations that implement socialism, such as Libya under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, Syria under Bashar al-Assad, and previously Egypt under Jamal Abdul Nasser, characterised by a somewhat authoritarian regime. This autocracy is inherently associated with the essence of communism and socialism”.

5.0 Produce Model The Malayan Emergency to National Security (MME-TNS)

Figures 1.0 demonstrates that MME-TNS is a model that generates patterns through the study of data. Multiple elements contribute to the threats to national security. Each element contributes to the creation of the final model, which is based on the refined theme.



Figures 1.1 : Model The Malayan Emergency to National Security (MME-TNS)

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) presented significant threats to national security, profoundly shaping the region's political and social landscape. The conflict, primarily between the British colonial government and the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), highlighted several critical security challenges. The Malayan Emergency underscored the complexities of combating an insurgency that intertwined military, economic, social, and psychological dimensions. The conflict's resolution, leading to Malayan independence in 1957, demonstrated that a comprehensive strategy addressing both security and socio-political issues was essential

for restoring and maintaining national security. The lessons learned from the Malayan Emergency continue to inform counter-insurgency strategies worldwide, emphasizing the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict alongside immediate security threats.

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