

THE FORM OF INTERNAL THREAT AFTER INDEPENDENCE : THE CONTINUOUSLY IMPACT ON MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Since gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia has faced various internal threats that have posed significant challenges to its national security. These threats have evolved over the decades, reflecting the changing socio-political landscape of the country. This article provides an overview of the key forms of internal threats that have impacted Malaysia's national security. The Malayan Emergency and 13 May 1969 Racial Riots became the most significant threats to Malaysia's national security not only after the independence but continuously give impact to Malaysia until the present days. In the years immediately following independence, Malaysia faced a significant threat from the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM). The insurgency which began in the late 1940s persisted into the 1980s involving guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage. The government's counter insurgency measures including the establishment of the New Villages and various security operations were crucial in eventually neutralizing this threat. Besides that, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country and maintaining harmony among its diverse population has been a persistent challenge. Periodic ethnic clashes such as the May 13 riots in 1969 highlight the volatility of ethnic relations. Additionally religious tension often exacerbated by political rhetoric and policies favoring one group over others continue to threaten social cohesion. The Malayan Emergency and 13 May 1969 Racial Riots bring to the current political instability that threatened national security with episodes of political violence and unrest. This article employs a qualitative approach to elucidate the threats, utilizing NVivo 12 software for data analysis. It concludes by highlighting the significance and relevancy of the threats on Malaysia nowadays.

Keywords: Internal Threats, National Security, The Malayan Emergency, 13 May 1969 Racial Riot, Impact

1.1 Introduction

The issues of national security has played a crucial role to the Malaysia's stability. National security refers to a state of being free from any threat, whether internally or externally to its core values (Prebilic, 2020). The state's government fully responsible for ensuring the national security are continuously safeguarded and well maintained. National security does not simply imply preserving territorial integrity. It also entails ensuring the country's rapid industrialization and the development of a unified, equitable and technical society. Anything that gets in the way of its progress whether inside or outside, is a national security threats (Singh, 2015). Threats are no longer mainly military in nature and security is not primarily about defending national boundaries. These non-military risks have become one of the focal points of state survival, as well as to the survival of populations that live within the state's boundary (Abdullah, 2010).

The issues of national security in Malaysia can be traced throughout history, impacting the state's future. When Malaysia which are before independence well known as Malaya was colonized by the British, the state's security issues were under the care of colonial power. However, after the independence, this country needed to organise itself to resist and counter challenges that endangered the national security. Additionally, there are two types of main component that affects Malaysia's national security since 1957 which is internal and external.

Over the long term, the separation influenced Malaysia's security strategies and defense policies. The need to safeguard its sovereignty led Malaysia to strengthen its military capabilities and seek regional cooperation frameworks, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to ensure collective security and stability. Furthermore, the economic competition with Singapore pushed Malaysia to adopt policies aimed at ensuring economic security, which is intrinsically linked to national stability.

1.2 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 analyse 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 Research Finding

1.4.1 The form of internal threats on Malaysia's national security.

The objective of the article is to identify and analyze the internal threats to Malaysia's national security following its independence. It explores how these threats have persisted and

continue to impact the state's security up to the present day. The analysis conducted in the article reveals that the primary forms of internal threats after Malaysia's independence can be categorized into two significant issues which are the Malayan Emergency and the May 13, 1969 Racial Riots.

The Malayan Emergency refers to the armed conflict between the Commonwealth armed forces and the Malayan National Liberation Army, the military wing of the Malayan Communist Party, which lasted from 1948 to 1960. The emergency was characterized by guerrilla warfare, political instability, and social disruption, posing a severe threat to the nascent nation's stability.

The May 13, 1969 Racial Riots marks a period of intense racial violence and riots primarily between the Malay and Chinese communities in Malaysia. The riots were triggered by the general election results in 1969, leading to significant loss of life, destruction of property, and a deep-seated impact on Malaysia's social fabric and national security policies.

The findings indicate that these historical events have left a lasting legacy on Malaysia's national security framework, influencing contemporary state's security concerns. The article underscores the importance of understanding these internal threats in a historical context to appreciate their ongoing impact on the nation's security landscape.

Table 1.1 : List of Threats on Malaysia's National Security

Threats to Malaysia's National Security After Independence		
Internal	The Malayan Emergency	13 th May 1969 Racial Riot

1.4.2 The Malayan Emergency

Based on the analysis conducted The Malayan Emergency revolves around the most related category (1) emergency threats to national security. Table 1.2 indicate the Malayan Emergency threats on Malaysia's national security.

Table 1.2 The Malayan Emergency

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-7	OM 1-2	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
1.	Emergency threats to National Security	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

1.4.2.1 The Malayan Emergency

The Malayan Emergency threats as in table 1.3 are composed of two main themes which are i. Emergency threats to national security and ii. Emergency continues threats.

Table 1.3 Emergency threats to National Security

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-7	OM 1-2
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
i.	Threats to National Security	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
ii.	Emergency continues threats	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-

i. The Malayan Emergency threats to national security

The Malayan Emergency threats as in table 1.4 are composed of six main themes which are emergency threats to national security; emergency threat by communist; government by force; emergency event without closure; slow down development proses and effect economic stability. All themes creates polarity.

Table 1.4 Threats to National Security

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-7	OM 1-2
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
a.	Malayan Emergency threat to National Security	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
b.	Emergency threat by communist	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
c.	Government by force	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-
d.	Emergency event without closure	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	X	-

e.	Slow down development process	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
f.	Effect economic stability	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-

The primary theme identified in the findings, which emerges as the most prominent pattern, is the significant threat posed by the Malayan Emergency to national security. Since Malaysia gained independence on August 30, 1957, the Malayan Emergency has represented the most substantial and significant threat to the state's security. (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; DANS1, 2023). IVNS5 (2023) proved this statement, "It is true that the effect of the emergency are huge and 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". Beside that, the Malayan Emergency contribute to the changes of the Malaysia's state policies and the government (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).

The second theme related to the Malayan Emergency was the threat posed by communist insurgent (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; DANS1, 2023). This statement was substantiated by the informant IVNS6 (2023), "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 success of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China in 1949 inspired communist movements across Asia including the CPM in Malaya. The CPM was led by Chin Peng adopted a strategy or armed insurgency to achieve their political goals, drawing on communist ideology and tactics.

The third theme the Malayan Emergency threatens to national security because communism want to throw the government by force (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVSN6, 2023; IVNS7, 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 conflict primarily caused by a communist insurgency that sought to overthrow the British colonial administration and establish a communist state in Malaya.

The fourth theme was related to the Malayan Emergency was the event without closure to Malaysia (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; DANS1, 2023). This statement was supported by IVNS6 (2023), “So it is still an event without closure in Malaysia and it was an emergency” and “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. Expecially in 2008 put that thing on some people and it has been ranked as a demand for the abolishment of ISA. SOSMA introduced. There is an emergency hangover and a long term impact of the emergency.

The next the for the Malayan Emergency threats to national security because it is slow down the development proses (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023). According to IVNS4 (2023), “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 last theme was the Malayan Emergency effect the economic stability (IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023). IVNS6 (2023) explain the insurgency during the Malayan Emergency significantly disrupt the economic activities such as plantation and mining sectors. Malaya’s economy was heavily rely on rubber and tin production. The insurgent frequently targated these sectors by attacking plantations, mining operation and transportation network, causing substantial economic losses and disruption in production. The insurgent sabotaged infrastructure such as railways, roads and bridges which hampered the transportation of goods and raw materials further slowing economic activities.

ii. Emergency Continues Threats

The Malayan Emergency continuous threats as in table 1.5 are composed of one main themes which are a. continuous threats to Malaysia’s national security.

Table 1.5 Emergency Continuous Threat

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-8	OM 1-2
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
a.	Continuous threats	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	-

The theme in research finding that forms the highest pattern are the emergency continuously threats to Malaysia's national security (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVNS8, 2023). IVNS5 (2023) explains the Malayan Emergency could be dangerous if the concept results in a radical escalation in weapon use, and it perceives as a peril to the nation. This statement was agreed by IVNS6 (2023), the Malayan Emergency continuously threatens Malaysia's national security. The threat can be seen through Malaysia's voting pattern which is a hangover from the Malayan Emergency. IVNS8 (2023) said the dynamic of the threats has changed but the fear or prejudice towards the communist still exists. Because all the troubles started with communist trouble, communist parties, and terrorism and the British introduced the Emergency Act.

1.4.3 13th May 1969 Racial Riot

Based on the analysis conducted the 13th May 1969 Racial Riot revolves around the two related categories: (1) emergency threats to national security and (2) ethnic conflict effect to continuous conflict. Table 1.6 indicates the Malayan Emergency threats on Malaysia's national security.

Table 1.6 13th May 1969

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-8	OM 1-2
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1.	Ethnic threat to National Security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
2.	Ethnic conflict effect to continuous conflict	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-

1. Ethnic threat to National Security

The May 13, 1969, racial riot, as outlined in Table 1.7, encompasses four main themes. Three of these themes generate polarity: the ethnic conflict as a threat to national security, the notion that ethnic stability ensures national stability, and ethnic tensions contribute to instability. The fourth theme, concerning national security policy, does not contribute to this polarity.

Table 1.7 Ethnic threat to National Security

No	Theme	INVS								DAN S1-8	OM 1-2
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		

i.	The ethnic conflict as a threat to national security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
ii.	Ethnic stability ensures national stability.	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-
ii.	Ethnic tensions contribute to instability	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-
v.	National Security policy	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The first theme in research finding that forms the highest pattern are the 13 May riot definitely threats to national security (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS3, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; IVNS8, 2023). The 13th May 1969 racial riot in Malaysia refers to a significant outbreak of interethnic violence that occurred primarily between the Malay and Chinese communities in Kuala Lumpur and other parts of the country. IVNS1 (2023) explain “If you have an ethnic conflict everything will be collapse. It were led to the breakdown of the current arrangement of ethnic relations. Ethnic conflict will definitely be a threat to Malaysia's national security”. IVNS2 (2023) “The presence of ethnic conflict poses a significant threat to Malaysia's national security. Given our nation's diverse ethnic composition, maintaining racial unity is of utmost importance for ensuring national security” IVNS3 (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”.

The second theme in research finding that forms the highest pattern are ethnic stability will bring national stability (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS3, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; IVNS8, 2023). IVNS3 (2023) emphasizing on the ‘ethnic stability will bring national stability’ and ethnic issues always related to the state security because Malaysia are the plural society.

Third theme related with the 13 May racial riot, ethnic tensions contribute to instability (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS7, 2023; IVNS6, 2023). IVNS1 (2023) “Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society or country. Therefore any violation of the present rules or arrangement that we have would contribute to instability. Meaning that we cannot cause ethnic conflict would destroy all this tolerance. The government have the rules”. The 13th May 1969 racial

riot in Malaysia significantly contributed to instability in the country due to the reasons which are, the riot deepened existing ethnic tensions between the Malay and Chinese communities. The violence and bloodshed intensified animosities, leading to heightened distrust and hostility between ethnic groups (IVNS6, 2023). The riot resulted in loss of lives and extensive property damage, particularly in urban areas like Kuala Lumpur. This destruction of property and loss of livelihoods created a climate of fear and uncertainty among the population. In response to the riot, the Malaysian government declared a state of emergency and deployed security forces to restore order. While these measures helped contain the violence, they also raised concerns about civil liberties and human rights abuses (IVNS4, 2023)

2. 13th May 1969 Continuos Threats

The 13th May 1969 Racial Riot as in table 1.8 are composed of one main themes which are the 13th May continuous effect

Table 1.8 Ethnic conflict effect to continues conflict

No	Theme	INVS								AD1	OM
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	-8	1-2
i.	13th May Continues effect	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-

The theme in research finding that forms the highest pattern are the 13th May 1969 Racial Riot continuously threats to Malaysia’s national security (IVNS1, 2023; IVNS2, 2023; IVNS4, 2023; IVNS5, 2023; IVNS6, 2023; IVNS8, 2023). IVNS7 explain ‘Yes, the threat continues. Because the problem of self-identity can be discarded. The government of any kind cannot throw away the identity of a nation or its religious beliefs. All the Indonesian people are Indonesians. Indonesia is a country with a state and a nation. We are Malaysia, a country that has a country but no nation, which is very dangerous. Indonesia has an ethnic problem, too, but the way violence is used is not as bad as ours’. IVNS1 said ‘If you have an ethnic conflict everything will be collape’. IVNS4 explain ‘That thing we want to say is 100 percent missing, no. The prejudice continues’. IVNS 6 explain ‘In fact, by May 13th, the British had gotten what they wanted. I mean, Tunjku Abdul Rahman sees foreign policy as very pro-westener. Very wellined relations between Malaya and the western. But the long-term effects are very unattractive to the ethnic situation and relations. It left an indelible imprint on ethnic relations in the country. That becomes a DEB, emergency’. ‘‘If you look at the latest ISIS study, written by Mardzuki and Sufiyan. Malaysians' voting patterns are still polarised, with a strong emphasis on ethnic issues. It's been a long time. Just though society has changed but still hasn't changed, politics is new, but it's still not changing much. So in that context, there's still much to be done and given that it's a hangover from May 13, an emergency is inevitable.

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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