

**BRUNEI'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN
1966 AND 1984: CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES
OVER ITS SECURITY AND SURVIVAL**

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' The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own work and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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ABSTRACT

After conducting extensive research at the Public Record Office at Kew, London, which involved unearthing documents pertaining to Brunei–UK relationships between 1966 and 1984, I decided to focus my work on Brunei’s political development between those periods of time. While I focused my work on this field, it became obvious that Brunei’s security and survival remained the main issues that posed challenges and difficulties to the Sultans of Brunei.

Starting in 1966, it was indeed a crucial year because this was when Britain decided to end its protection over Brunei. As a result of this decision, Britain put more pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. Britain's insistence that the Sultan should implement the system was supported by Malaysia and Brunei’s local party. This demand for democracy posed challenges and difficulties concerning Brunei’s security and survival, as it could reduce the power of the Sultan and would bring Brunei within Malaysia. Britain's decision also troubled the Sultan, as it would leave Brunei inadequately protected from any internal and external threats or attacks. Consequently the Sultan was apprehensive over Malaysia, which still wanted to bring Brunei within the Federation of Malaysia, and Indonesia for its past support of the 1962 Bruneian ex-rebels and for harbouring the leader of the rebellion, Azahari, after the end of the rebellion.

In this study I hope to give a clearer understanding of Brunei’s history particularly between 1966 and 1984, as previous authors of Brunei’s history have either not touched at all or only touched briefly on Britain's demands on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government and Malaysia's persistent objective to bring Brunei within Malaysia. Furthermore, none of the authors of Brunei’s history has studied in any detail the issues arising from Malaysia’s intention to bring Brunei within Malaysia, i.e., the escape of Brunei’s 1962 ex-rebels to Limbang (which made Brunei’s call for the return of Limbang an urgent matter) and the ex-rebels' political activities outside Brunei between 1973 and 1975, which had the support of the Malaysian government and other foreign countries and international organizations.

This study benefits from the use of the documents pertaining to Brunei–UK relationships (from 1966 onwards) that are available at the Public Record Office but that previous authors of Brunei’s history have not used. Although there is a shortcoming in this study that is the unavailability of records for the period 1976 until 1984, I have used local and foreign newspapers and secondary materials which are available in various institutions both in Brunei and abroad. In addition, I have carried out interviews with key figures pertaining to the issues mentioned above in order to pursue the study. The method used in the study is chronological so that the events and issues highlighted in this thesis can be adequately discussed and followed.

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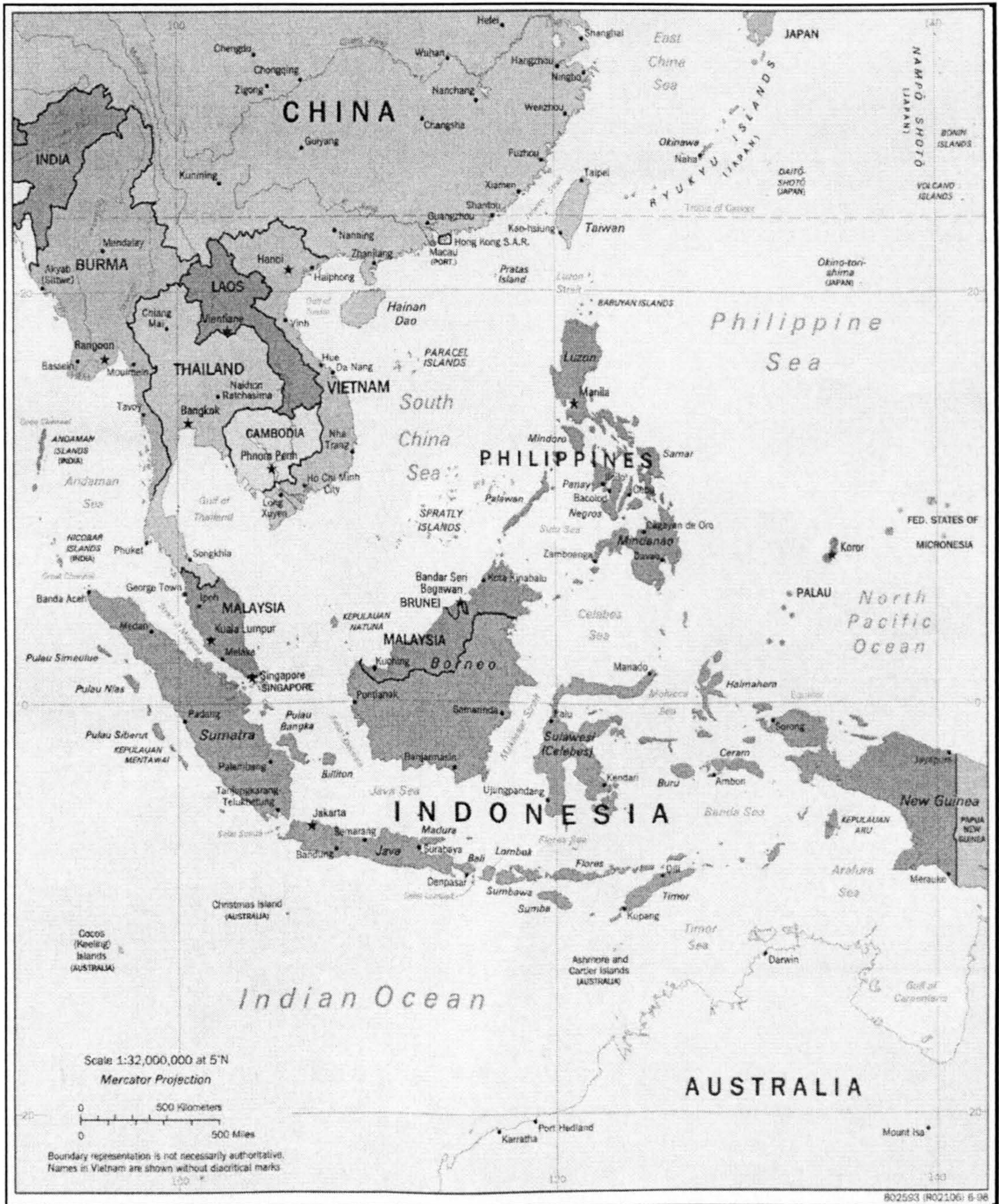
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MAP 1

BRUNEI AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

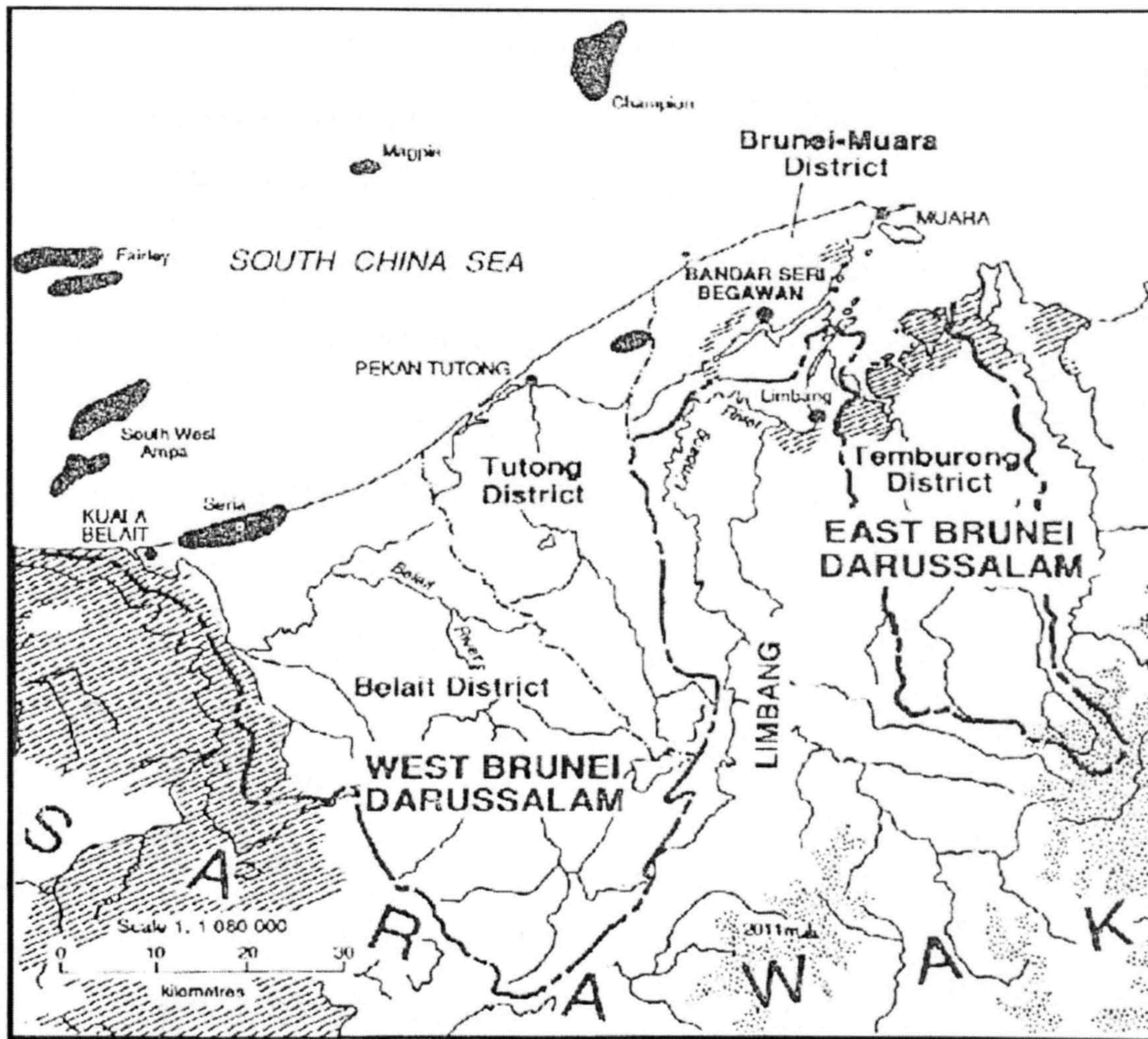


MAP 2
BRUNEI



MAP 3

LIMBANG



ABBREVIATIONS

AAPSO	Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization
AMDA	Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (1957)/Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (1963)
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BAKER	Barisan Kemerdekaan Rakyat
BAP	Brunei Alliance Party
BMJ	Brunei Museum Journal
BNO	Brunei National Organization
BPA	Brunei Party Alliance
BPFSP	Brunei People's Freedom Struggle
BUP	Brunei United Party
Cmnd.	Command Paper
CO	Colonial Office
DO	Dominion Office
DSI	Department of Security and Intelligence
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FEER	Far Eastern Economic Review
FO	Foreign Office
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangements
HH	His Highness
HM	His/Her Majesty
HMG	His/Her Majesty Government
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office

ISA	Internal Security Act
JSEAS	Journal of Southeast Asian Studies
MAF	Malaysian Armed Forces
MAS	Malaysia Airlines System
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officers
NKKU	Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara (Unitary State of Kalimantan Utara)
OTC	Officer's Training Corps
OUP	Oxford University Press
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PRB	Partai Rakyat Brunei (Brunei's People Party)
PREM	Prime Minister's Office
PRO	Public Record Office (United Kingdom)
RBMR	Royal Brunei Malay Regiment
RMAF	Royal Malaysian Air Forces
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SIA	Singapore International Airlines
SNAP	Sarawak National Party
SOASC	Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin College
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
T	Treasury
TNI	Tentera Nasional Indonesia
TNKU	Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (North Kalimantan National Army)
UMNO	United Malays National Organization

UN United Nations

WO War Office

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background

This thesis aims to delineate Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984 by highlighting the problems and challenges faced by the Sultans (Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III [r. 1950 – 1967] and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah [r. 1967 -]) with regard to the security and survival of the Sultan and the Sultanate.

The study begins in the year 1966 when Britain decided to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei and withdraw its Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate. Under the 1959 Agreement, Britain was responsible for Brunei's external affairs and defence including internal security.

Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, and to withdraw its battalion from the Sultanate, posed a problem for Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III, as the British end of military protection and the pulling out of the Gurkha battalion would leave the Sultanate militarily weak to defend itself against any internal¹ and external threats. In particular, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien was concerned by Malaysia, which still wanted to bring Brunei within the federation despite the Sultan's reiteration that Brunei would not join Malaysia.²

The Sultan was also apprehensive over Indonesia which had not spelled out its policy towards Brunei since the end of the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation in 1966. The Sultan distrusted Indonesia because of its support of the 1962 Rebellion in Brunei and for harbouring the leader of the rebellion, A.M. Azahari, (following the end of the rebellion in 1963).³ The Sultan distrusted Azahari for having led the 1962 rebellion as well as for his ambitions to achieve early independence for Brunei and to form the Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara (NKKU), which would consist of Brunei and its

¹ F.C.O. 24/205 Brief No. 3, Meeting with Sultan of Brunei on 26th June 1967: The Gurkha Police Field and Internal Security.

² F.C.O. 24/209 Report by the Secretary of State for Wales, 28 July to 4 August 1968.

³ Ibid, 28 July to 4 August 1968.

former territories Sarawak and Sabah. While in Indonesia, Azahari continued to pursue his party's desire to form the NKKU with the Indonesian government's espousal.

The 1962 Rebellion broke out in Brunei because the Parti Rakyat Brunei (PRB), the People's Party of Brunei led by Azahari, was against the Malaysian Plan proposed by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaya, in 1961. The Malaysian Plan, backed by the British, proposed the formation of Malaysia which would consist of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei. Azahari, alternatively, wanted to form the NKKU, of which the Sultan of Brunei – Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III – would become the constitutional ruler. The Sultan, however, did not support the party's aim, as he did not want his power to be reduced to that of constitutional monarch and the Bruneians to be submerged by immigrants from Sarawak and North Borneo. When the PRB rebelled in December 1962 Britain, which was responsible for Brunei's defence and internal security under the 1959 Agreement, sent its Gurkha battalion to Brunei to crush the rebellion and thus saved the Sultan's throne.

Since the end of the rebellion and the Sultan's rejection of Malaysia in 1963, the Sultan had been relying on British military protection to secure his country and his throne from any internal and external threats. Britain however, following Brunei's rejection of Malaysia, was planning to bring Brunei within the federation at least by 1965.⁴ This plan, nevertheless, was unsuccessful as Brunei refused to take up Britain's suggestion of employing officers from Malaysia. Britain had hoped that doing so would bring Brunei closer to Malaysia and lead to its entering the federation.⁵

In 1966, the British Labour Government decided that its 1959 Agreement with Brunei would end in November 1970. As a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan came under more pressure to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The Commonwealth Office's insistence that the Sultan should implement a democratic system of government was a challenge to the security and survival of the monarch because if he implemented the system he would lose his power as an absolute monarch. Moreover, he believed that the closer Brunei moved towards a democratic system of government, the more likely it would be

⁴ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961 – 1967', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 2002, p. 137.

⁵ Ibid., p. 137.

to enter Malaysia.⁶ This was because the Sultan was aware that some Bruneian politicians who were urging him to implement a democratic system of government were interested in Malaysia's political system.⁷

The Malaysian government also wanted to see the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei, as it believed that only an elected government would be susceptible to the attractions of the federation.⁸ Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaysia, therefore persuaded the Commonwealth Office to urge the Sultan to implement the system, as he believed that the British had the power to do so.⁹ The Commonwealth Office on the other hand did not object to Malaysia's intention to bring Brunei within the federation as such a union would ensure the security of Brunei and Malaysia in the longer term.¹⁰

Since the Sultan did not want to lose his power as an absolute monarch and did not want Brunei to join Malaysia, he had consistently refused to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Nevertheless, the Sultan had been refusing to implement the system since the 1950s. During the 1962 Rebellion, the Sultan suspended the Executive and Legislative Councils and declared a State of Emergency. It was only in July 1963 that the Sultan reinstated both councils and ended the State of Emergency. When the Executive and the Legislative Councils were re-established, none of the members of the councils were elected; the Sultan nominated them all.¹¹

The Parti Barisan Kemerdekaan Rakyat Brunei (the BAKER party), the People's Independent Front of Brunei, called for the implementation of the constitutional proposals contained in the White Paper 4/65 following the elections for the Legislative

⁶ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961-1967', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 2002, p. 206.

⁷Ibid., p. 206.

⁸ DO229/8, Brunei and Malaysia, 8 November 1967.

⁹ DO229/8, British High Commissioner to Malaysia to J.O.Moreton, 8 November 1967.

¹⁰DO229/8, Brunei and Malaysia, 8 November 1967.

¹¹ B.A. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain: The Making of Brunei Darussalam*, Kuala Lumpur, 1995, p. 351.

Council on 25 March 1965.¹² The paper contemplated the introduction of a ministerial system of government, but the Sultan did not implement it fully.

When the British High Commissioner, F.D. Webber, was to be transferred to Australia in October 1967 by the Commonwealth Office, Sir Omar asked the Commonwealth Office to stop the transfer. This was because he was anxious that any change in High Commissioner would presuppose a much tougher line by the Commonwealth Office on the issue of constitutional development in Brunei.¹³ When the Commonwealth Office did not heed his request, the Sultan abdicated. He did, however, remain an active power behind his son Hassanal Bolkiah, who became the twenty-ninth Sultan of Brunei in October 1967.

Since the Sultan and Sir Omar (the former Sultan) refused to implement a democratic system of government, in 1968 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which was formed in that year abandoned its efforts to persuade them to do so.¹⁴ Furthermore, the end of Britain's agreement with Brunei was approaching. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also abandoned its hope of bringing Brunei within Malaysia, as the Sultan and most of the Bruneians were not interested in becoming a member of the federation.¹⁵

Although Sir Omar was satisfied with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's decision to cease urging him and his son to implement a democratic system of government, he was not content with Britain's decision to end its military protection over the Sultanate. This was because the Sultan and Sir Omar were not confident that the Sultanate could defend itself against any internal or external threats or attacks. Consequently, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Sir Omar proposed that Britain agree to joint responsibility for Brunei's defence.¹⁶ However, Britain rejected the proposal, as it was not compatible with its plan to withdraw fully from the region by 1971.¹⁷ Consequently, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and his father tried to hire Gurkha soldiers from

¹² *Borneo Bulletin*, 26 November 1966.

¹³ WO32/21069, Webber to Commonwealth Office, 7 October 1967.

¹⁴ DO229/8, Walker to J.O. Moreton, 8 November 1967.

¹⁵ DO229/8, Commonwealth Office to Webber, 24 October 1967.

¹⁶ OD3989, Record of Meeting between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 22 December 1969.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 December 1969.

Nepal but were unsuccessful as the Nepalese King Mahendra did not want international communities to accuse him of supporting the archaic regime.¹⁸

The coming of the Conservative Party to power in Britain in June 1970, however, completely overturned the Labour government's plan to end its agreement with Brunei and withdraw its Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate. Under the 1971 Agreement, which was signed by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Anthony Royle, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Conservative government agreed to continue its responsibility for Brunei's external affairs and defence, where the defence of Brunei became the consultative responsibility of both Brunei and the British government.¹⁹ Moreover, under the agreement, the Conservative government relinquished its responsibility to advise the Sultan on the internal affairs of the state.²⁰ The Conservative government agreed to the retention of the Gurkha battalion in Brunei, although some conditions were imposed.²¹

The Sultan and Sir Omar were pleased with the coming of the Conservative Party to power as it saved Brunei from achieving full independence. Furthermore, the new government did not insist that Sir Omar and his son implement a democratic system of government. However, not everyone was satisfied with the Conservative government's decision to continue to be responsible for Brunei's external affairs and to defend Brunei based on consultation between the two governments. When the BAKER party learned that Brunei would not become independent in November 1970, Abdul Latif, the Secretary-General of the BAKER party, sent a memorandum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) seeking the UN's sponsorship for Brunei's independence.²²

¹⁸ FCO15/288, Dale to Oxley, 26 April 1967.

¹⁹ *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23 November 1971, Cmnd. 4932, London, HMSO, 1972. Also in FCO58/6814, *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ PREM15/384, UK responsibility for Brunei: Prime Minister's meeting with the Sultan of Brunei, 30 April 1971.

²² *Straits Times*, 17 October 1970.

The party also called upon the Sultan to introduce a democratic system of government in Brunei.²³

The BAKER party's demands posed a challenge for the Sultan and Sir Omar, as they could have affected the security and survival of the monarch and the monarchy. The demands of the PRB could have lead Britain to relinquish its remaining responsibilities towards Brunei and forced Brunei to accept full independence. The Sultan and Sir Omar, who did not want to see the end of British protection over Brunei, halted the activities of the BAKER party. They suspended the Legislative and District Council elections in 1970 and 1971 and extended the State of Emergency in Brunei.²⁴ By doing so they effectively ended the political activities of the BAKER party.

Although the Sultan and Sir Omar had successfully ceased the activities of the party, they nevertheless continued to face challenges and problems over Brunei's internal and external security as a result of Malaysia's intention to bring Brunei within the federation. Between 1970 and 1975, the Malaysian government under its new prime minister Tun Abdul Razak continued Tunku Abdul Rahman's policy to bring Brunei within Malaysia.²⁵

In 1973, the Malaysian authorities used Azahari, who was living in Indonesia, to push the British to grant Brunei independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Azahari on the other hand demanded that the Malaysian authorities meet certain conditions, one of which was the release of Brunei's ex-rebels from the Berakas detention camp in Brunei.²⁶ Consequently, the Malaysian authorities inspired the 1962 Bruneian ex-rebels to escape from the camp to Malaysia by promising them that they would be granted political asylum if their escape was successful.

As a result of the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang, Sir Omar's calls for the return of Limbang from Malaysia to Brunei became an urgent matter. He wanted Limbang to be returned to Brunei in order to ensure the security of the Sultanate.

²³ Ibid., 17 October 1970.

²⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 6 February 1971.

²⁵ In September 1970, Tun Razak succeeded Tunku Abdul Rahman as the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

²⁶ Author's interview with Mahmud Murshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

Indeed, Brunei had been reclaiming Limbang from Britain since 1890 and Malaysia since 1963. In September 1970, Sir Omar revived Brunei's claim to Limbang publicly as he argued that Limbang rightfully belonged to the Sultanate.²⁷ Limbang, which had once been part of Brunei's territory, was annexed by Charles Brooke in Sarawak in 1890. This annexation split Brunei into two wings – the west and the east wings--with Limbang in the middle. In 1945, Limbang became a part of British colony and then part of Malaysia when Sarawak joined the former in 1963.

Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam (r. 1885 – 1906), who ruled Brunei during Brooke's occupation of Limbang, maintained that Brunei had rights over Limbang, as he had never surrendered it to either Sarawak or Britain.²⁸ After his death, however, his successor Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam (r. 1906 – 1924) was not able to make any claim on Limbang as his rule was under the tight control of the British residents.²⁹ When Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin (r. 1924 – 1950) ruled, he tried to claim Limbang from Britain, but his untimely death in 1950 virtually ended his claim over the territory.³⁰ Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III, who revived Brunei's claim over Limbang in the early 1960s, failed to open up a discussion with the British government, as the latter did not want the Sultan's claim over Limbang to hinder the formation of Malaysia.³¹

After the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, the Sultan revived his claim over Limbang to the Federal Government by letter, as Limbang had then become part of the Malaysian State of Sarawak.³² However, neither the Sultan nor the Brunei government received any reply from Malaysia. In 1965, Marsal Maun, Brunei's

²⁷ *Pelita Brunei*, 30 September 1970.

²⁸ DO169/54/42219, Brunei Claim to Limbang District of Sarawak, 'Annexation of the Limbang District'.

²⁹ See Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, pp. 18 – 19, D.S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983: Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore, 1984, p. 112 & Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 146.

³⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 176 – 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³² CO1030/1671, Record of a Meeting between the Secretary of State and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, at Commonwealth Relations Office, 29 July 1963 (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 172).

Chief Minister, wrote a letter to the Malaysian government reminding the latter of the Sultan's letter which the Malaysian government had not replied to.³³

As mentioned earlier, in September 1970, Sir Omar revived his claim over Limbang publicly,³⁴ but Tun Abdul Razak refused to discuss this issue with the Brunei government,³⁵ claiming that Limbang rightfully belonged to Malaysia. The escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang in July 1973, however, made Brunei's claim on the territory an urgent matter as the escape could have caused instability in the Sultanate. Tun Abdul Razak, who did not want to discuss the issue of Limbang with Brunei, closed the Limbang issue in December 1973.

In Limbang, the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels used the territory to spread their propaganda to the people of Brunei with the support of the Malaysian Chief Minister of Sarawak, Abdul Rahman Yakub, who focused his campaign directly on Brunei with the aim of pushing the British to grant Brunei independence and to destabilise Brunei. When the British warned the Malaysian government about the activities of the escaped ex-rebels in Limbang, the Malaysian government did not heed the warning and continued to support them. The ex-rebels did not get support from the Malaysian government alone, but also from other countries and international organizations.

With their support, in November 1975 the PRB successfully presented their case at the UN. Following this presentation, the Brunei Resolution was adopted by the Fourth Committee of the 30th Session of the General Assembly.³⁶ The Brunei Resolution called on Britain as the administering power to facilitate the holding of free general elections in Brunei, the lifting of the ban on all political parties and the return of all political exiles to Brunei so that they could participate fully in the elections.³⁷ The adoption of Brunei Resolution at the UN put pressure on the Sultan and Sir Omar over Brunei's situation in the international arena.

³³ FCO24/734, Marsal bin Maun to the Minister of External Affairs, Federation of Malaysia, 17 April 1965.

³⁴ *Pelita Brunei*, 30 September 1970, *Straits Times*, 10 October 1970 & *Daily Star*, 1 October 1970.

³⁵ FCO24/1679, Tun Abdul Razak to Anthony Royle, 14 December 1973.

³⁶ Haji Zaini bin Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei: Selected Documents*, Petaling Jaya, Insan, p. 69.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 69.

The adoption of the Brunei Resolution at the UN happened at the same time that the British Labour government (which came to power in October 1974) reconvened its negotiations with Brunei. When the Labour government returned to power, it revived its 1966 decision to end its responsibilities towards Brunei's external affairs and defence. In November 1974, the Labour government gave one year's notice to Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to review the terms of the agreement.³⁸ This took effect in November 1975 and negotiations began in January 1976, thus putting further pressure on the Sultan and Sir Omar, who were not in favour of full independence as they were still not confident over Brunei's security.

Malaysia's continuous hostilities towards Brunei reflected in its support of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in December 1975 and its comparison of Brunei's situation with East Timor worried the Sultan and Sir Omar.³⁹ In 1976, however, Lord Goronwy Roberts, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, assured the Sultan and Sir Omar that there was no possibility of military intervention in the Sultanate.⁴⁰ His assurance came at the time when Malaysia and Indonesia suddenly changed their policy towards Brunei.

When Hussein Onn came to power as the prime minister of Malaysia (following the unexpected death of Tun Abdul Razak) in January 1976, he moved away from the adventurist policy of Tun Abdul Razak to a friendly policy towards the Sultanate. Indonesia which did not want any radical regime emerged in Brunei for fear that it would cause instability in the region, spelled out its goodwill policy towards Brunei.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) concept of peace, stability, mutual tolerance and co-operation which was manifested in the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia in 1976 had also influenced Malaysia and Indonesia to change their policy towards the Sultanate.⁴¹ Because of this change, the PRB lost the support of the Malaysian government and this became one of the factors which led to the demise of the PRB.

³⁸ Parliamentary Debated (Hansard), 21 January 1976.

³⁹ FCO24/2998, G.A. Dugan to Muir, 26 November 1975.

⁴⁰ *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 January 1976.

⁴¹ Donald E. Weatherbee, 'Brunei: The ASEAN Connection', *Asian Survey*, 23(6), 1983, p. 730.

The transformation of policy of both the Malaysian and Indonesian governments towards the Sultanate as well as the weakened PRB reduced the Sultan and Sir Omar's feelings of tension over Brunei's security. It also produced a favourable atmosphere for Brunei and Britain to eventually conclude the 1979 Agreement whereby Brunei would gain full independence at the end of 1983.⁴² Under this agreement, the British government would at the request of the Brunei government assist the latter in the fields of external affairs and defence before it became independent.⁴³ The five-year transition period was used by the Sultanate to strengthen its internal and external security by re-establishing and strengthening its relations with Malaysia and Indonesia and by venturing into ASEAN and the UN. It also reinforced, re-equipped and expanded its forces and retained the Gurkha battalion in order to protect the Sultanate from any internal and external threats.

Thus in this thesis, a study of Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984 will highlight the problems and challenges faced by Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (with regard to Brunei's security and survival). This study will argue that Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei posed challenges and difficulties to Brunei's security and survival. When Britain decided to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan's position as an absolute monarch and the position of the Sultanate were endangered, as the British put increased pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The Sultan did not want to implement the system as it would reduce the power of the monarch. Moreover, the implementation of the system would only bring Brunei closer into the Federation of Malaysia.

Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei also caused challenges and difficulties to the Sultanate regarding its security and survival as Brunei would not be able to defend itself against any internal and external threats or attacks (because of its small population and army). This study will also argue that the cause of Brunei's

⁴² *Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei with Exchange of Notes*. CMND 7496. London: HMSO, 1979 (hereafter cited as *Treaty of Friendship and Commerce*).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

insecurity was Malaysia's hostile attitude towards Brunei. Malaysia's continuous attempts to bring Brunei within the federation (which was initially supported by Britain), its support of the local Bruneian parties and Brunei's ex-rebels caused the Sultan and Sir Omar to feel apprehensive over Brunei's security when it became independent. A further issue to be examined is Brunei's insecurity over Indonesia, as the latter had not spelled out its policy towards Brunei after the end of its confrontation with Malaysia in 1966.

This study will also show that the change of policy of both the Malaysian and Indonesian governments from an aggressive to a friendly one and the demise of the PRB reduced the Sultan and Sir Omar's anxiety over Brunei's security and survival, creating a favourable atmosphere for the signing of the 1979 Agreement (whereby Brunei would attain its independence in 1984).

1.2. Literature review

Although there are a number of authors who have written about Brunei's political development from its early periods until its independence, they have either not mentioned or only mentioned in passing the problems and challenges faced by Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah over Brunei's security and survival (for the period between 1966 and 1984).

When Britain decided to end its agreement with Brunei, the British government began to put more pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government. Britain's insistence that the Sultan should implement the system was a challenge to the security and survival of the monarchy, as it could reduce the power of the Sultan and would bring Brunei into the federation.

The Sultan was apprehensive that the ending of Britain's agreement with Brunei would result in the Sultanate being unable to defend itself against any internal and external threats or attacks. He was particularly concerned over Malaysia, which still intended to bring Brunei within the federation. The Sultan was also apprehensive over Indonesia, which had not indicated its policy towards Brunei after the end of Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation in 1966.

Although D.S. Ranjit Singh⁴⁴ and K.U. Menon⁴⁵ have written about Brunei's security and survival from its early times until independence, they have not discussed in detail the issues of Brunei's security and survival between 1966 and 1984. Ranjit Singh only discusses in detail Brunei's security and survival from 1839 until 1963. In his study, he identifies two factors which almost caused the extinction of the Sultanate. The first resulted from European territorial encroachments in the 1800s and second was due to various merger proposals in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁶

As mentioned earlier, Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from Brunei in 1970 presented a problem for Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien as it would have left Brunei militarily weak to defend itself against any internal and external threats. Malaysia's intention to bring Brunei within the federation and Indonesia's unclear policy towards Brunei worried the Sultan. On this issue, neither Menon nor Ranjit Singh has pointed out Malaysia's intention to bring Brunei within Malaysia or Indonesia's attitude towards Brunei.

Moreover, neither author has discussed Britain's insistence that Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien and later Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah implement a democratic system of government in Brunei before the end of the British agreement with the Sultanate (in November 1970). The Commonwealth Office's insistence that Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien and later Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah introduce the system posed a challenge to both of them as it would have reduced the power of the monarch. Moreover, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien believed that the faster Brunei moved towards a democratic system of government, the more likely it was to become part of Malaysia.

The pressure to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei did not come only from the British, but also from the BAKER party and the Malaysian government. In the context of the BAKER party, Ranjit Singh only mentions the formation of the BAKER party without explaining in detail its political activities between 1966 and 1970 (which posed challenges and difficulties over Brunei's security

⁴⁴D.S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983: Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore, 1984.

⁴⁵ K.U. Menon, 'Negara Brunei Darussalam from Protectorate to Statehood: The Ceaseless Quest for Security', Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1988.

⁴⁶R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 35.

and survival).⁴⁷ Menon, like Ranjit Singh, has not discussed the BAKER party's political activities between 1966 and 1970.

The Conservative government which came to power in Britain in June 1970, however, agreed to be consultatively responsible over Brunei's defence and control Brunei's external affairs fully. The Conservative government's decision disappointed the BAKER party and as a result, it called upon the UN to sponsor Brunei's full independence.⁴⁸ This posed a problem for the Sultan and Sir Omar, as they feared the BAKER party's call to the UN would put pressure on the British to release their remaining responsibilities towards the Sultanate. On this issue, once again none of the authors has pointed out the pressure posed by the BAKER party to either the Sultan or Sir Omar. The Sultan and Sir Omar's action in suspending the Legislative and District Council elections in 1970 and 1971 (which was aimed at halting the BAKER party's political activities and ending the plan for a democratic system of government in Brunei) has also not been mentioned in detail by any of the authors.

Furthermore, they have not discussed fully the problems faced by the Sultanate concerning the Limbang issue. As noted previously, the Limbang issue had become a sticking point between Brunei and the Malaysian government since Limbang had become part of Malaysia in 1963. On this issue, Ranjit Singh only discusses briefly the Sultan's claim on Limbang, which created conflict between Brunei and Sarawak from 1970 until 1974.⁴⁹ Similarly, Menon also only briefly mentions the Sultan's claim on Limbang between 1970 and 1974. In 1973, Brunei's claim on Limbang became an urgent matter when Brunei's ex-rebels escaped to Limbang.

The issue of the escape of Brunei's 1962 ex-rebels from Berakas Detention Camp in 1973 to Limbang has also not been discussed in any detail by either author. Although Ranjit Singh and Menon have mentioned that the ex-rebels escaped with the connivance of the Malaysian government, they have not mentioned why the Malaysian

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 210.

⁴⁸ *Straits Times*, 10 October, 1970.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 203 – 204.

government was involved in the episode. Similarly, although Zariani Abdul Rahman⁵⁰ has written about the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels, she has not mentioned the reason for the Malaysian government's involvement in the episode. With the Malaysian government's backing, the ex-rebels were able to solicit support from other countries and international organizations (before the Brunei Resolution was adopted by the Fourth Committee of the UN in November 1975). Although Ranjit Singh has mentioned this in his work, he has not discussed fully their activities and the problems and challenges they posed for the Sultan and Sir Omar over their country's security. Similarly, Menon also has not mentioned in any detail their activities and the threat they posed to the state's security, although he has mentioned the support the ex-rebels obtained from Malaysia and other countries. Neither Zariani nor Zaini Haji Ahmad⁵¹ has written in detail about the problems and challenges the ex-rebels posed as a result of their activities.

The two other authors of Brunei's history, namely G.E. Saunders⁵² and B.A. Hamzah⁵³, also have not mentioned Britain's decision in 1966 to end its agreement with Brunei in 1970. Saunders has not discussed the Malaysian government's continuous attempts to bring Brunei within Malaysia or the British, the BAKER party and the Malaysian government's insistence that the Sultan implement a democratic system of government between 1966 and 1970. Although Saunders mentions the Limbang issue, the escape of the 1962 Bruneian ex-rebels, the revival of the PRB in Kuala Lumpur and the passing of the Brunei Resolution at the UN in 1975 (which posed further problems over Brunei's security and survival), he only mentions these in passing without going into detail.

Like Saunders, Hamzah has not mentioned Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei. Hamzah maintains that the British were reluctant to grant Brunei independence because of their oil interests in the Sultanate. According to Hamzah,

⁵⁰ Zariani Abdul Rahman, *Escape from Berakas! 1962 Brunei Revolt*, Kuala Lumpur, Al-Ahad Enterprise, 1992.

⁵¹ Zaini Haji Ahmad, Haji (ed.), *Brunei Merdeka: Sejarah dan Budaya Politik*, Bandar Seri Begawan, De'Imas Printing and Trading Company, 2003.

⁵² G.E. Saunders (2nd ed.), *A History of Brunei*, London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2002.

⁵³ B.A. Hamzah, *The Oil Sultanate: Political History of Oil in Brunei Darussalam*, Kuala Lumpur, Mawaddah Enterprise, 1991.

‘Great Britain could have granted Brunei independence in 1959, 1962, 1971 or 1979; instead on each occasion it renegotiated and renewed its political commitments to Brunei.’⁵⁴ Indeed, in 1966, the British Labour Government was intending to end its agreement with Brunei and grant Brunei full independence in November 1970. The coming of the Conservative party to power in June 1970, however, reversed the Labour government’s decision to grant Brunei full independence in that year.

Since these authors have not mentioned Britain’s decision to end its agreement with Brunei, there is a significant gap in the study and analysis of Brunei’s history. As mentioned previously, Britain’s decision to end its agreement with Brunei put the Sultan and the Sultanate’s position in jeopardy, since Britain subsequently put more pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. The introduction of such a system (although to Britain a way of ending its agreement with the Sultanate) was a challenge to the Sultan, as it could have affected the security and the survival of the monarch and the monarchy. It could have led to the reduction of the Sultan’s power as well as to Brunei’s entry into Malaysia. As mentioned before, the call for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei did not come only from the British but also from the BAKER party and the Malaysian government. The Malaysian government was anxious for the system to be implemented as it believed that only an elected government in Brunei could possibly be persuaded to enter Malaysia.

Indeed, Malaysia’s intention to bring Brunei within Malaysia was an important part of Brunei’s history: it created challenges and difficulties over its security and survival, as the Malaysian authorities backed Brunei’s politicians and ex-rebels in their efforts to achieve this aim. As a result, the Sultanate became apprehensive over establishing full independence and thus did so relatively late. Moreover, since the introduction of a democratic system of government could have led to the reduction of the Sultan’s power

⁵⁴ Hamzah, *The Oil Sultanate: Political History of Oil in Brunei Darussalam*, p. 183.

and the admission of Brunei to Malaysia, the Sultan and Sir Omar ended the prospect of democracy in Brunei.

This study also aims to continue what previous authors namely, Muhammad Hadi Abdullah⁵⁵ and B. A. Hussainmiya⁵⁶, have been examining. Muhammad Hadi Abdullah and Hussainmiya have studied in depth Brunei's political development from 1950 until 1967, that is, from the time Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III ruled Brunei until his abdication in 1967 (when the Labour government first announced its decision to withdraw from east of Suez). This was a critical moment for the Sultan, as he maintained that Brunei would not be able to defend his country against its predatory neighbours if Britain withdrew its forces from Brunei.⁵⁷

It was also during his reign that the Malaysian Plan was proposed by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the 1962 Rebellion occurred, the Malaysian Plan was rejected and the conflict between Malaysia and Brunei started. Both authors have studied these events in depth. Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, however, goes further by examining the origins of the Malaysia–Indonesia Confrontation,⁵⁸ which occurred as a result of the formation of Malaysia in 1963 and the Limbang issue between 1890 and 1963.⁵⁹ The significance of this study is that it will continue from where the above left off, that is, from the time the British decided to end its agreement with Brunei in 1966 until Brunei achieved its independence in 1984. This study, however, will focus on the challenges and problems faced by the Sultanate concerning its security and survival.

Since this thesis will also touch on the reign of the new Sultan – that is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah – whose rule began in October 1967, it will contribute to the writing of Brunei's history as no detailed studies about him (between those periods of time) have been written before. Although in this regard Lord Alun Chalfont⁶⁰ has written

⁵⁵ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961–1967', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 2002.

⁵⁶ B.A. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain: The Making of Brunei Darussalam*, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.

⁵⁷ OD39/89, Brunei Internal and Economic Situation, Call by Sultan of Brunei, 22 December 1969.

⁵⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 206–243.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165 – 205.

⁶⁰ Lord Alan Chalfont, *By God's Will: A Portrait of the Sultan of Brunei*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989.

about the rule of the monarch from 1967 until 1984, he has not used the documents pertaining to Brunei-British relations from the Public Record Office in London (between 1966 and 1975); neither has he analysed the issues raised in this study, i.e., the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate concerning its security and survival. However, it should be borne in mind that it was the Sultan's father who was the real power behind the throne, especially between 1967 and 1979.

1.3. Sources: analysis

In pursuing the study, various documents drawn primarily from the Colonial Office (CO), the Dominion Office (DO), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the War Office (WO), the Foreign Office (FO), HM Treasury (T) and the Prime Minister's Office pertaining to Brunei that are available at the Public Record Office (PRO) in London will be used. These documents cover the period from 1966 until 1975. Documents of subsequent years, however, had not been released at the time this study was carried out. The previous mentioned authors have not used these documents, especially those between 1967 and 1975. The aim of this study is to make full use of the documents to uncover the political challenges and problems concerning Brunei's security and survival between 1966 and 1975, to fill the gap and to give further details on the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate concerning Brunei's security between 1966 and 1975 which previous authors have not discussed or have not explained in detail.

In addition, other primary and secondary resources such as Hansard, Parliamentary debates, newspapers, periodicals and books, which are available at the Brotherton Library and the Edward Boyle Library at the University of Leeds, Brynmor Jones Library at the University of Hull, the British Library in London, the University of Brunei Darussalam Library, Brunei National Archive and the Brunei Historical Centre were also used in the study for the years between 1966 and 1975 as well as between 1976 and 1984. Aside from these resources, interviews with the 1962 ex-rebels and the ex-political detainees were used to clarify some issues in the study. Its approach is

chronological, so that the development of events between 1967 and 1984 can be analysed adequately.

However, before Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei in 1966 is delineated, a brief background to Brunei's political development between 1950 and 1966 will be given. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the challenges and problems that Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien was facing between those years. This study will show that the challenges and problems faced by the Sultanate with regard to its security and survival had existed prior to 1966.

The study will initially describe the challenges faced by the Sultanate as a result of the British plan to associate Brunei closely with the two Northern Borneo territories. It will show that from the beginning of his rule, the Sultan was not attracted by the British scheme mainly because he was apprehensive that the plan would affect the security of the monarch and the monarchy; because of his lack of interest, the British plan collapsed.

In 1960, the Malaysian Plan proposed by the Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman once again posed a challenge to Brunei's security and survival. The Sultan, although cautious towards the plan, was prepared to study the pros and cons of joining Malaysia before a decision was finally made in July 1963. The PRB was against the plan from its inception; the rebellion they launched in Brunei in 1962 was however successfully crushed by the British forces. Although the 1962 Rebellion showed the vulnerability of the Sultanate without British protection, the Sultan did not accept the Malaysian plan right away. The Sultan however finally refused to join Malaysia as he wanted to safeguard the status of the monarch and the monarchy.

Although the Sultan had reiterated that Brunei would not join Malaysia, the study will show that Britain continued its efforts to bring Brunei within the federation at least by 1965. Nevertheless, Britain's attempt was unsuccessful as the Sultan refused to employ Malaysians, a ploy which the British government had hoped would bring Brunei closer to Malaysia and eventually lead to its joining the latter.

Chapter Three will concentrate on the difficulties faced by the Sultanate in relation to its security and survival as a result of Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei in November 1970. To start with, this study will examine why the British

government wanted to end the agreement with Brunei and the challenges and problems this created over Brunei's security and survival. This study will show that as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei the position of the monarch and the monarchy was in danger. This was because by this decision, the British put increased pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. As explained before, the Sultan did not want to implement the system as it could reduce the power of the monarch and would bring Brunei closer to the Federation of Malaysia.

This study will also show that the Sultan did not want Britain to end its agreement with Brunei as he thought that Brunei would not be able to defend itself against any internal and external threats or attacks. In this respect it will show that the Sultan did not want to establish independence mainly because of the hostile attitudes of Malaysia and Indonesia towards Brunei. The study will also argue that when the British proposed a new treaty for Brunei, the Sultan and Sir Omar rejected it as it did not include the British defence of Brunei. The study will show that the Sultan and Sir Omar made unrelenting efforts to maintain British military protection over the Sultanate. It will demonstrate that Sir Omar was not interested in associating Brunei with the Five-Power nations namely Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia (over the defence of the region) as he did not trust Malaysia.

Chapter Four will concentrate on the challenges faced by the Sultanate following the reversal of policy of east Suez by the Conservative Party when it came to power in Britain in June 1970. Initially, it will examine why the Conservative government reversed the Labour government's policy to end the 1959 Agreement with Brunei in November 1970. Under the 1971 Agreement between Brunei and Britain, Brunei's external affairs came under full British control and Brunei's defence became the consultative responsibility of both Brunei and Britain.

Although the Agreement satisfied the Sultan and Sir Omar, the BAKER party was not pleased with it. As a result, it called upon the UN to sponsor Brunei's full independence. As mentioned previously, the BAKER party's calls to the UN posed a problem for Sir Omar and the Sultan, as they feared that the BAKER party's call could put pressure on Britain to relinquish its remaining responsibilities towards the Sultanate.

This study will show that since the Sultan and Sir Omar were apprehensive about the BAKER party's political activities, they put an end to them by suspending the District and Legislative Council elections and extending the state of emergency in Brunei. The study will also show that the failure of the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei was a result of Britain's inability to persuade the Sultan to implement the system, the people's lack of interest in democracy and the lack of party leaders' credibility in organising their parties.

Chapter Five will examine the problems faced by the Sultan and Sir Omar in connection with Sir Omar's claim over Limbang from Malaysia in 1970. To begin with, it will study the reasons for Sir Omar's public resurrection over the territory in September 1970. This study will show that one of the reasons for Sir Omar publicly renewing Brunei's claim over Limbang was the Chief Minister of Sarawak's pronouncement to the descendants of the Brunei's citizens in Limbang to be loyal to the Malaysian government. To Sir Omar, Abdul Rahman's speech was provocative. However, Tun Abdul Razak refused to consider Brunei's claim over Limbang for reasons that will be discussed in this chapter.

Brunei's claim over Limbang however became an urgent matter when Brunei's 1962 ex-rebels escaped from Berakas Detention Camp to Limbang in July 1973. This study will show that when Sir Omar insisted on the return of Limbang from Malaysia, the Malaysian government refused to return the territory to Brunei and closed the Limbang issue in December 1974. Sir Omar, however, maintained that Brunei would not give up its claim over Limbang because of security reasons.

Chapter Six will focus on the problems and challenges faced by the Sultan and Sir Omar as a result of the activities of the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels in Malaysia and internationally. This study will argue that the Malaysian government was involved in the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels. As pointed out before, the Malaysian authorities were using Azahari to achieve their aims to push the British to grant Brunei independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Azahari on the other hand insisted that the Malaysian authorities release the Bruneian 1962 ex-rebels who were detained in the Berakas detention camp in Brunei. This study will also show that the Malaysian government's use of Azahari to achieve its aims gave Azahari the

opportunity to revive his struggle (which was inhibited by the Indonesian government when Suharto came to power in 1966).

The study will look into the reactivation of the PRB in Kuala Lumpur and its political aims. It will show that since the Malaysian government did not control the activities of the ex-rebels in west Malaysia, the Brunei government had to call the Bruneian students who were studying in west Malaysia to return to Brunei for fear that they would incite the students to work against the Brunei government. Apart from that, this study will explore the PRB's political activities in Limbang where it will show that the PRB received support from the Chief Minister of Sarawak (who was scheming to push Britain to grant Brunei full independence and to destabilise Brunei). It will then look into Britain's efforts to end the Federal Government of Malaysia and Sarawak's support of the PRB members in Malaysia, which caused the Sultan and Sir Omar to refuse to accept independence.

The study will show that the PRB gained support not only from the Malaysian government but also from other countries and organizations. It was their support which led to the presentation of Brunei's case at the UN in November 1975. Finally, it will also look into the protective measures carried out by the Sultan and Sir Omar to safeguard the security of the Sultanate following the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Malaysia in 1973.

Chapter Seven will focus on the problems faced by the Sultan and Sir Omar as a result of the Labour government's decision to revive its 1966 policy to end its agreement with Brunei and to withdraw its Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate. Initially, it will look into the revival of policy by the Labour government as well as the Sultan and Sir Omar's efforts to reverse the British government's decision to withdraw the Gurkha battalion from Brunei.

The Sultan was apprehensive of achieving independence as the Federal Government of Malaysia and Sarawak were still actively supporting the ex-rebels. Although Tun Abdul Razak informed the British High Commissioner that he would restrict the political activities of the PRB, Malaysia continued to show hostilities towards Brunei. This study will show that the Malaysian government's support of Indonesia's intervention in East Timor in December 1975 and its comparison of Brunei's situation

with East Timor caused the Sultan and Sir Omar to be concerned over Brunei's security without British protection.

However, in a dramatic turn of events in 1976, the Malaysian government changed its aggressive policy towards Brunei to a friendly one and the Indonesian government spelled out its own friendly policy towards the Sultanate. Tun Abdul Razak, the new prime minister who came to power in January 1976, clarified that Malaysia's hostile attitude towards Brunei would only postpone Brunei's independence. The Indonesian government did not want a radical regime to take the place of the present one, and this was one of the reasons for Indonesia spelling out its goodwill policy towards the Sultanate. This study will also show that the change of policy of both the Malaysian and Indonesian governments as well as the diminishing popularity of the PRB (as a result of loss of support from Malaysia) decreased Sir Omar and the Sultan's tension over Brunei's security and created a conducive atmosphere for the signing of the 1979 Agreement between Brunei and the British government.

Chapter Eight will examine the preparations made by the Sultanate, especially in relation to its internal and external security, before it became independent in 1984. In this study, it will be shown that Brunei made more contacts with Malaysia and Indonesia in order to re-establish and strengthen its relations with the two countries. Brunei also made efforts to enter ASEAN and the UN in order to safeguard its external security after it became independent in 1984. It will demonstrate that the Brunei government strived to expand its defence organisations namely the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, the Royal Brunei Police, the Gurkha Reserve Unit and the British Gurkha battalion in order to bolster its internal and external security. It will also show that Brunei established the Internal Security Enactment (ISE) and improved the social welfare of the people of Brunei in order to reinforce its security.

Chapter Nine will draw together the main points raised in the preceding chapters which assess Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984 (with regard to the challenges and difficulties over Brunei's security and survival). At this stage, it can be said that as a result of Britain's resolution to end its agreement with Brunei in 1970, challenges and difficulties arose over its security as the Sultans were not confident that Brunei would be able to defend itself against any internal and external threats. Britain's

resolution to urge the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government as a way of ending its agreement with Brunei also posed challenges and difficulties over its security and survival as the implementation of the system would diminish the power of the monarch and would bring Brunei within the Federation of Malaysia. Since Sir Omar and his son were unwilling to bring about independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei, the latter gained independence rather late and the democratic system did not materialise in Brunei. Furthermore, this chapter will point out issues which have either not been covered at all or not been covered in detail by previous authors of Brunei's history, but have been covered and given in further detail in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Brunei and the British Decolonisation Policy:

1950 – 1966

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will briefly delineate Britain's long-term policy to decolonize Brunei between 1950 and 1966. The aim is to give background knowledge of the challenges and problems concerning Brunei's security and survival between those years before the author discusses the challenges and problems over its security and survival (as a result of Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei in November 1970). This study will show that the challenges and problems with regard to Brunei's security and survival had existed prior to 1966.

To begin with, this study will briefly delineate Britain's plan to associate Brunei closely with the two Northern Borneo territories and the problems this posed for Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III. This study will argue that the Sultan (as well as the Malay aristocrats) was apprehensive of the British plan as it would affect Brunei's security and survival. This study will show that one of the reasons why the Sultan promulgated the constitution in 1959 was that he wanted to safeguard the position of the monarch and the monarchy. Since the Sultan was not interested in the British plan to associate Brunei with the two Northern Borneo territories, the plan met with failure.

The study will also briefly delineate the Malayan plan which was introduced by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaya, and which was aimed at forming a federation of Malaysia that would consist of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei; it will discuss the problems this posed for the Sultan. This study will show that when the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, announced his plan to federate Malaya with Brunei, the two Northern Borneo territories and Singapore, the Sultan was cautious towards the plan. In spite of this, he was prepared to study the pros and cons of the Malaysian Plan before a decision was finally made in July 1963. The PRB, however, was against the plan from its inception. This opposition later culminated in the outbreak of the 1962 rebellion in Brunei. Although the 1962

rebellion showed the vulnerability of the Sultanate without British protection, the Sultan did not accept the Malaysian plan straightaway. The Sultan recommenced Brunei's negotiations with Malaya over the Malaysian terms, but eventually gave up the plan. The Sultan abandoned the plan mainly because he wanted to secure the position of the monarch and the monarchy. The Sultan, however, was hoping that Britain would continue its protection over the Sultanate, if possible indefinitely. This study will show that (after Brunei's rejection of Malaysia in 1963) Britain was continuing its effort to bring Brunei within the federation at least by 1965.

2.2. British decolonisation policy

Britain's plan to decolonise Brunei as well as Malaya, Singapore and their Northern Borneo territories Sarawak and Sabah emerged after the end of the Second World War. Although Britain had no intention of decolonizing Brunei (its protectorate), Malaya, Singapore and the two Northern Borneo territories immediately, Britain had a long-term policy towards these colonies and protectorate. Britain's policy was to unite Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah before they were merged with Malaya and then granted independence.¹ The main reason why Britain planned to unite the three Northern Borneo territories with Malaya was that it wanted to protect them from their potentially acquisitive neighbour Indonesia and to help to level the social and economic inequalities in the three Northern Borneo territories.²

Malcolm MacDonald, who was appointed as Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, executed the task to associate the Northern Borneo territories closely before they were merged with Malaya. In the case of Brunei, Anthony Abell, the Governor of Sarawak and High Commissioner for Brunei, was delegated to carry out the plan. In his announcement, Abell wished to see Brunei develop a closer co-operation with its neighbours – Sarawak and North Borneo.³

Initially, the co-operation among the three Borneo territories took the form of governors' conferences which were held every six months. The aim of the conferences

¹CO537/6113 (ITEM 1), Note by Mr J Higham, 1 February 1950. Cited in A.V.M. Horton, *The British Residency in Brunei, 1906 – 1959*, Hull, University of Hull, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 6, 1984, p. 42.

²Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 224.

³*Borneo Bulletin*, 13 July 1957 (cited in Horton, *The British Residency in Brunei*, p. 43).

was to 'plan for greater co-ordination in policy and administration of matters of common interest'.⁴ At the conference on 23 April 1953, an announcement was made that a decision had been taken to form a standing conference of the heads of government of the three Northern Borneo territories with the aim to 'maintain the closest possible harmony of policy among them.'⁵ Following the conference, the *Straits Times* newspaper reported that the meeting was held as a step towards the formation of the federation of the three Northern Borneo territories.⁶ In its editorial of 24 April 1953, the same newspaper commented that the conference was the seed of the federation,⁷ but the Sultan promptly denied that it was a step towards the establishment of the federation.⁸ According to the Brunei government's report, the Sultan had 'never thought about the unification nor did they wish to unite or federate Brunei with other states'.⁹

Indeed from the outset, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien was apprehensive of Britain's plan to associate Brunei closely with Sarawak and North Borneo because he realised that it could affect the security and the survival of the Sultanate. In this regard, he was concerned that the plan would reduce his status from that of an absolute monarch to a constitutional monarch.¹⁰ Besides, the Sultan and the aristocrats were worried that if Brunei were closely associated with Sarawak and North Borneo, Brunei's status would be reduced from a protectorate to a colony.¹¹ This was despite

⁴ *Straits Times*, 23 April 1953 (cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 128).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁷ *Straits Times*, 24 April 1953 (cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 128).

⁸ B. Simadjuntak, *Malayan Federalism 1945 – 1963*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. 122. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 128.

⁹ *Berita Brunei*, 16th March 1956, p. 1, (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 20).

¹⁰ Zaini Haji Ahmad, *Pertumbuhan Nasionalisme di Brunei 1939-1962*, 2R Publication, Kuala Lumpur, 1989, p. 60.

¹¹ R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, pp. 143 – 144. When Brunei was united administratively with Sarawak on 1 May 1948, it caused dissatisfaction to the Sultan and the aristocrats who were apprehensive that their status would eventually be reduced and that they would come under Sarawak's supremacy (whereas before this Sarawak was under the supremacy of Brunei) (R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 127).

Anthony Abell's assurance to the Bruneians that the arrangement would not affect Brunei's status as a protected state with a British High Commissioner.¹²

Furthermore, the Sultan and the aristocrats were apprehensive that if Brunei were closely associated with Sarawak and North Borneo, the Chinese in Sarawak and North Borneo would dominate the Malays in Brunei.¹³ In addition, they were concerned that there would be an influx of immigrants from Sarawak and North Borneo to the Sultanate. Moreover, they were skeptical that the Muslims in Brunei and the Islamic religion would be adversely affected if Brunei were to be closely associated with Sarawak and North Borneo (who were mostly non-Muslims).¹⁴ Besides, the Sultan and the aristocrats were alarmed that Brunei's wealth would be used by the central administration to subsidize the development of Sarawak and North Borneo.¹⁵ This was despite the Governor of North Borneo's assurance to the Sultan that Brunei's wealth would not be shared with Sarawak and North Borneo.¹⁶ The Sultan and the aristocrats were also concerned that the Bruneians would be administratively dominated by the people of Sarawak, as Brunei had insufficient skilled powers to run the administration of the country.¹⁷

Therefore it is obvious that the Sultan and the aristocrats were apprehensive of the British plan as they believed that it would affect Brunei's protectorate status, the status of the monarch, Brunei's economic wealth, its administration, the Malay race and the Islamic religion.

Although the Sultan and the aristocrats doubted Britain's plan to associate their country closely with Sarawak and North Borneo, Malcolm MacDonald and Anthony Abell continued to pursue the plan. In 1954, MacDonald suggested that all British territories in Southeast Asia should be formed into a federation.¹⁸ At this time,

¹² *The Sarawak gazette*, 1 June 1948, pp. 115 -17. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 127.

¹³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 14 March 1959. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 143.

¹⁴ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, '*Brunei's Political Development*', p. 21.

¹⁵ *Straits Times*, 20 October 1958. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 140.

¹⁶ J.R. Angel, 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei; the Development and Decline of the British Borneo Concept', unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1963, p. 139 (cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 127).

¹⁷ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, '*Brunei's Political Development*', p. 18.

¹⁸ J.R. Angel, , 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei', in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 127.

not only the Bruneians doubted the British plan to unite the Borneo territories; the people of Sarawak and North Borneo were also having reservations about such a plan.¹⁹ In order to put a stop to Britain's plan to associate Brunei with the two Northern Borneo territories, the Sultan ignored the Colonial Office's proposal and made his own way to promulgate the constitution which was aimed at safeguarding the positions of the monarch, the monarchy, the Malay race and the Islamic religion which the Sultan and the Bruneians were concerned would be affected if Brunei were to be closely associated with Sarawak and North Borneo.²⁰

When Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin announced his desire to grant Brunei its first written constitution, Anthony Abell welcomed the Sultan's decision because he was hoping that he would be able to influence the Sultan to limit the power of the monarch. He was also hoping to retain the power of the Resident and to increase the authority of the High Commissioner by establishing reserve powers built into the Constitution.²¹ Furthermore, he thought it was time that Brunei reassessed the functions of the State Council and possibly substituted it with new institutions. This was because to him the present State Council had become anachronistic and obsolete.²²

The Sultan, however, did not want to give any real power to the Resident or the High Commissioner but wanted all administrative powers presently vested in the Resident to be transferred to a *Mentri Besar*, or Chief Minister, who would be a Brunei Malay and who would hold office at the Sultan's pleasure.²³ He would also appoint a Brunei Malay State Secretary, who would act as the government's official spokesman,

¹⁹ Simanjuntak, *Malayan Federalism 1945 – 1963*, p. 120. Cited in R. Singh., *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 127.

²⁰ The Sultan also promulgated the Constitution in order to adapt his own traditional system of administration to a modern system of government. This was because he realised that he could not maintain his own traditional system of administration without making changes to adjust to a modern system of government. Moreover, he wanted to put an end to the system of Resident that had existed since 1906 (which to him was already out of date). In addition, the Constitution was also the basis for self-government which would eventually enable Brunei to become an independent and sovereign state (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 17).

²¹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 148.

²² B.A. Hussainmiya, *The Brunei Constitution of 1959: An Inside Story*, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Press Sendirian Berhad, 2000, p. 14.

²³ See the summary of the Constitution Advisory Committee's report in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, pp. 146–8.

and a number of other Malay officials. The British Resident would become the British Advisor who was to offer 'nasihat' (good advice) to the Sultan and his administration, and his appointment was to be approved by the Sultan-in-Council. The powers of the High Commissioner would also be transferred to the Sultan-in-Council, where he would retain the right to advise the Sultan-in-Council.²⁴ Anthony Abell however was not satisfied with the Sultan's arrangement regarding the issues of the Resident and the reserve powers of the High Commissioner. Consequently, these issues became an obstacle between the Sultan and the High Commissioner which subsequently delayed the promulgation of the Constitution.

Anthony Abell's dissatisfaction over the Sultan's arrangement was also shared by the PRB. The PRB led by Azahari sought national leadership to pass through the rapid democratization of governmental institutions. The PRB, formed in 1956, wanted the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei with the Sultan as a constitutional monarch. In its memorandum to the British government in 1957, the PRB requested the British to hold free and democratic elections in Brunei. It wanted at least 75 per cent of the members of the proposed legislature to be elected by adult suffrage and the party, which commanded the majority in the house, to form the government.²⁵ It also sought to form a 'Union or Federation' of the three territories of Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah, with the Sultan of Brunei – Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III – becoming the constitutional head of the state.²⁶

Although the PRB shared the same plan as Britain to form the federation of Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo, the High Commissioner did not support the PRB. This was because the ultimate decision to form the federation should come from the Sultan, not the PRB. It was therefore the duty of Anthony Abell to persuade the Sultan to unite Brunei with Sarawak and North Borneo; he was, however, unable to do so as he could not convince the Sultan that his country's wealth would not be used to develop

²⁴ That was on any matters that he saw fit and believed were necessary for the safety and welfare of the state, except for matters relating to Islamic religion and the customs of the Brunei Malays (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, pp. 146 – 148).

²⁵ Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 12.

Sarawak and North Borneo and that his country's status would not be altered from a protectorate to a colony.

In 1957, in his bid to prevail upon the Sultan to accept the proposal for a closer association, Anthony Abell proposed that the Colonial Office return the Island of Labuan and Limbang to Brunei.²⁷ Anthony Abell also proposed that the Colonial Office cease Brunei's administrative link with Sarawak which had been in operation since 1948²⁸ and make the Sultan the head of the Islamic faith in the three territories.²⁹ In addition, he suggested the establishment of the office of Governor-General who would represent the British government in North Borneo and Sarawak and act as High Commissioner in Brunei.³⁰ The Colonial Office, however, rejected these proposals aimed at winning over the Sultan just for the sake of getting his agreement to the closer association.³¹

With the independence of Malaya in 1957, however, Britain's plan to merge the Borneo territories with Malaya and Singapore into a unit before it was granted independence was shattered. When the Alliance of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association and later the Malayan Indian Congress emerged victorious in the 1955 Malayan elections, they demanded the acceleration of Malaya's independence from the British government. Consequently, the British had to fulfil their demand³² to grant Malaya independence in 1957.

Sir Robert Scott (1955-60) who replaced Malcolm MacDonald as the Commissioner-General, however, had a new plan for the Borneo territories. He proposed to unite the Borneo territories urgently and to speed up the political progress among the territories should independent Malaya adopt the plan to absorb the Borneo

²⁷ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 229. Labuan was ceded to Britain by Brunei in 1847 whereas Limbang was forcibly annexed by Charles Brooke of Sarawak in 1890.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 227.

²⁹ CO1030/164, Secret, No. 1, UK Commissioner-General in Southeast Asia to CO, 4 February 1955. Cited in *ibid*, p. 227.

³⁰ CO1030/164, G.C. Whiteley's Minute to J.B. Johnston, 23 May 1956, in which Anthony Abell's ideas are summarized. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 228.

³¹ Ibid., p. 229.

³² Marc Frey, Ronald Pruessen, & Tan Tai Yong (editors), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia*, p. 118.

territories into its fold.³³ The Sultan was however persistent in rejecting any proposal which aimed to unite Brunei with the two Northern Borneo territories. When the Secretary of State proposed immediate talks with Sarawak and North Borneo, the Sultan rejected the proposal.³⁴

The Sultan's continuous rejection of Britain's plan to associate Brunei closely with the two Northern Borneo territories led Anthony Abell and Sir Roland Turnbull, the Governor of North Borneo, to instigate a plan to establish a loose federation where the three states would continue their existence, retaining autonomy over their own revenue and expenditure.³⁵ The Central government would control their defence, external relations, communications and internal security,³⁶ but the Sultan persistently rejected the proposal. According to the *Borneo Bulletin's* report of 15 February 1958, members of Brunei's State Council opposed Brunei's federation with other territories.³⁷

In 1958, when the Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia was quoted as saying (at the ninth Inter-Territorial Conference held in Brunei) that the conference pointed the way to a closer political association,³⁸ the Sultan unremittingly announced that the Conference did not mean that the three territories would become a federation.³⁹ He also announced that Brunei was not a colony and that it was important to preserve the country's position with patience and determination.⁴⁰

With the promulgation of Brunei's constitution in September 1959, the Sultan was in a much more secure position as the latter successfully strengthened, enhanced and safeguarded the power of the monarch and the monarchy. Although initially Anthony Abell did not welcome the Sultan's constitutional proposal, he eventually accepted it almost unchanged. This was mainly because of the Sultan's intransigence to give in to Britain's wishes.⁴¹

³³ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 231.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁵ Angel, 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei' (Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 139).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁷ *Borneo Bulletin*, 15 February 1958 (cited R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 140).

³⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 April 1958 (cited in *Ibid.*, p. 140).

³⁹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 26 April 1958 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 140).

⁴⁰ Angel, 'The Proposed Federation', p. 258. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 140.

⁴¹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 207.

With the promulgation of the Constitution, the 1905/1906 Agreement was revoked and replaced by the 1959 Agreement; the post of the Resident was abolished and the High Commissioner took the place of the Resident.⁴² The administrations of Brunei and Sarawak were divorced and Brunei achieved internal self-government. The British, however, retained complete control over Brunei's external affairs and defence⁴³ and this was stated in the Article 3 of the 1959 Agreement which says that:

Her Majesty shall have complete control of the defence of the State and agrees at all times to protect the State and the Government thereof and to the utmost of Her power to take whatever measures may be necessary for the defence of the State; and His Highness agrees that for these purposes he will ensure that such legislative and executive action as in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government shall be necessary for the purposes of the defence of the State and the Government thereof (which expression in this Article includes defence against any grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of the State) shall be taken within the State; and His Highness further agrees that for the aforesaid purpose Her Majesty's Forces and persons authorized on behalf of Her Majesty shall be at all times allowed to have free access to the State.⁴⁴

Following the promulgation of Brunei's Constitution, the British began to toy with the idea of merging Sarawak and North Borneo without Brunei. Lord Selkirk announced that he favoured the federation of the two territories as a step towards their self-government.⁴⁵ However, the plan was not pursued as the two territories were not economically able to stand on their own without Brunei.⁴⁶ Moreover, the association of North Borneo and Sarawak would be considered as unworkable to the British if Brunei were not part of the association.⁴⁷ As a result, Britain began to look to independent

⁴² The High Commissioner was appointed by the Queen in consultation with the Sultan.

⁴³ With regard to external affairs, Brunei was not allowed to make any treaty, enter into any engagement, deal in or correspond on political matters with other states, or send envoys to any other states.

⁴⁴ R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, Appendix H, p. 237.

⁴⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 24 September 1960. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 155.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ Marc Frey, Ronald Pruessen, & Tan Tai Yong (editors), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia*, Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2003, p. 148.

Malaya in order to solve its problems over its Northern Borneo territories including Brunei.

2.3. Brunei and the Malaysian Plan

In 1958, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaya, voiced his plan to unite Malaya with the three Northern Borneo territories to the Colonial Office. The idea of the unification of Malaya and the Northern Borneo territories had been under discussion since 1956.⁴⁸ It became significant to the Malayan leaders when they realized that it was necessary to unite Malaya with Singapore. In fact the idea emerged after several discussions with Singapore's leaders including Lee Kuan Yew. The latter and his party, the People's Action Party (PAP), became the main promoter of the merger with the federation.⁴⁹

In the early 1950s, the Malayan leaders refused to federate with Singapore as they were apprehensive that Singapore's predominantly Chinese population would overwhelm the predominantly Malay population of Malaya. In this case, the Chinese would be the largest single community, comprising 43 per cent of the total population compared with 41 per cent Malays.⁵⁰ Moreover, the Malayan leaders were anxious that Singapore's economic interests would conflict with those of Malaya and that Malayan politics would be radicalized through contact with Singapore's left-wing parties.⁵¹

However, since the development of Communist activities in Singapore alarmed the Malayan leaders, they began to reconsider merging Singapore with Malaya. This was because they were concerned that an independent Singapore would come under the control of the Communists, which would affect the position of Malaya. The Malayan leaders therefore wanted to assist the non-Communist leader Lee Kuan Yew of PAP in order to achieve independence within a federation.⁵² Nevertheless, the Malayan leaders judged that if Singapore was to be brought into the federation, they

⁴⁸ B.W. Andaya & L.Y. Andaya (2nd ed.), *A History of Malaysia*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001, p. 283.

⁴⁹ Marc Frey, Ronald Pruessen, & Tan Tai Yong (editors), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia*, p.144.

⁵⁰ C.M. Turnbull (2nd ed), *A History of Singapore, 1819 – 1988*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 272.

⁵¹ Andaya & Andaya (2nd ed.), *A History of Malaysia*, p. 283.

⁵² Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 32.

also needed to bring the Northern Borneo territories within Malaya to balance Singapore's predominantly Chinese population with the Malays of Malaya and the three Northern Borneo territories.

In Brunei's case, apart from its crucial function of balancing the Malay population with the Chinese population in Singapore, Brunei's merger with Malaya, Singapore and the two Borneo territories could also enhance the security of the region against any Communist activities.⁵³ Tunku Abdul Rahman was also interested in bringing Brunei within the federation of Malaysia as it could provide bigger markets and create more job opportunities for the people of Brunei.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the Tunku was confident that if Brunei joined the federation, the latter could safeguard the survival of the Sultanate. In this case, Brunei's dynasty would be protected within the Federal Constitution which 'would contain effective safeguards for the position of the Ruler'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Sultan would only be a constitutional monarch.⁵⁶ Moreover, if Brunei joined the Federation, Brunei could economically assist the development of Sarawak and North Borneo⁵⁷ and Malaysia as a whole.⁵⁸

The Malayan plan to federate Malaya with Singapore and the three Northern Borneo territories was accepted in principle by Britain, as the plan would help to solve Britain's problems with decolonizing the three Northern Borneo territories.⁵⁹ To the Colonial Office, individual independence for these territories was not viable as these countries would be exposed to danger.⁶⁰ The Commonwealth Office was particularly

⁵³ In addition, the Malayan leaders were also interested to integrate Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei into the federation as they wished to protect the position of the Malays of Northern Borneo. According to Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, 'the Malays advocated the federation of Malaysia probably because they aimed at safeguarding the position of the Malays of northern Borneo'. (Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation: Political Unification in the Malaysian Region, 1945 – 1965*, Kuala Lumpur, Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974, p. 133, cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III and Britain*, p. 238.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 39.

⁵⁵ C.O. 1030/1012 'Greater Malaysia - Brunei Aspects,' Mr. Reginald Maudling, Colonial Office to Sultan of Brunei, 9th March 1962 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 39).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁷ Muhammad Abu Bakar, 'Politik Brunei Menjelang Penubuhan Malaysia', *Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah*, Kuala Lumpur, p. 122.

⁵⁸ Marc Frey, Ronald Pruessen, & Tan Tai Yong (editors), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia*, p. 158.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

worried over the Communist threat in the Borneo territories. The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) in Sarawak had been heavily infiltrated by Communist elements and furthermore it had connections with the PRB.⁶¹

Moreover, the Colonial Office was worried that Brunei would be a target for Indonesian conspiracy and internal sedition. In Britain's view, Brunei would not be able to defend itself against any internal and external threats, but if Brunei joined the federation, Brunei would benefit from the central government's forces as well as British forces. If the Federation of Malaysia was formed, the existing defence agreement that Malaya had with Britain (the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement [AMDA] of 1957) would be extended to the Northern Borneo territories.⁶² Therefore, from Britain's perspective, the best solution for Brunei's future security was to join the Federation of Malaysia. The Colonial Office consequently supported the idea and even pressed the Sultan to join Malaysia as it would be dangerous for Brunei to stay alone.⁶³ Moreover, the decolonization of Brunei became an even more pressing matter for the Colonial Office as in December 1960 the United Nations General Assembly had passed a resolution – the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples – where the colonial powers were urged to take immediate measures to transfer all powers to the peoples of their colonies.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 36.

⁶² Ibid., 35.

⁶³ D.O. 169/262, Malaysia: the Position of Brunei - the London Talks June/July 1963, 'Note by the Colonial Office for Discussion with the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner for Brunei', 24th July 1963 (cited in *ibid.*, pp. 129 -130).

⁶⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), 14 December 1960. See also, Resolution 3424 (XXX) of 8 December 1975 & *United Nation Review*, Vol. 8 (1) 1961, p. 7. Before the passing of this resolution, the aspirations of the peoples of the territories to achieve self-determination were on many occasions ignored by the colonialists. Since the international community's perception was that United Nations Charter principles were being too slowly applied, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution whereby it expressed the conviction that all peoples have the inalienable right to complete freedom, to exercise their sovereignty, and to the integrity of their national territory. The resolution further declares that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights and that all peoples have the right to self-determination. In that spirit, the colonial powers were urged to take immediate measures to transfer all powers to the peoples of their colonies. While it is granted that in international law, the resolution of the UN General Assembly is not binding, there is nevertheless a moral obligation attached to them.

The Colonial Office nevertheless warned Tunku Abdul Rahman against any premature announcement of the federation as it would cause political chaos in the Northern Borneo territories.⁶⁵ Lord Selkirk warned the Malaysian Prime Minister not to rush the scheme too quickly, as unrest could occur throughout Northern Borneo.⁶⁶ In early 1960, however, Tunku Abdul Rahman took the initiative by visiting Sarawak and North Borneo and on 27 May 1961 he eventually made his idea for the Federation of Malaysia public (when he made an address to the Foreign Correspondents Association of South-East Asia in Singapore).⁶⁷

The Tunku's speech had immediate and widespread consequences in Sarawak and North Borneo. Although it was widely welcomed in Sarawak, the latter suggested that it should be united first with North Borneo. However, the Sarawak and North Borneo territories' feelings toward the federation hardened as they were not in favour of a proposal for the absorption of Sarawak and North Borneo with the same status as the existing States.⁶⁸ In Brunei, the Sultan received the Tunku's speech with caution. Although Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin had had a favourable attitude towards Malaya prior to Tunku Abdul Rahman's announcement of the plan, the Sultan was nevertheless cautious over the Tunku's proposal.

In the 1950s, the Sultan showed a favourable attitude towards Malaya as he wanted to avoid the issue of the Northern Borneo federation. When Malaya became independent in 1957, Brunei's relation with Malaya improved as the Sultan wanted to demonstrate to Britain that he preferred Brunei to be associated with an independent state than with the British colonies, Sarawak and North Borneo.⁶⁹ After Brunei achieved internal self-government in 1959, the rapport between Brunei and Malaya became formidable as Brunei sought Malayan officials to fill the important posts in the

⁶⁵ In the 1940s, when Sarawak was transferred to the crown colony, it caused political anxiety to the locals which divided the Malay community and led to the murder of the British Governor.

⁶⁶ J.A.C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963 – 1966*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 63; PREM11/ 3737 Selkirk to Macmillan, 27 June 1961. Cited in Matthew, Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961 – 1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 67.

⁶⁷FCO51/154, Origins and Formation of Malaysia, 10 July 1970.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 10 July 1970.

⁶⁹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 233.

administration of the state (which had previously been held by the British).⁷⁰ In 1958, the Brunei State Council approved a \$100 million loan to Malaya following a personal approach by Tunku Abdul Rahman to the Sultan.⁷¹ An exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries also took place. As a result of Brunei's close relationship with Malaya, the British plan to unite Brunei with Sarawak and North Borneo was undermined.⁷²

As mentioned before, when Tunku Abdul Rahman announced the plan for the formation of Malaysia in May 1961, the Sultan was cautious. When the Eighth Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was held in Singapore in July 1961, Brunei did not send any observers.⁷³ At this conference, the principle of merger was approved and a formal agreement in principle was announced.⁷⁴

Although the Sultan's attitude towards Tunku Abdul Rahman's announcement was guarded, he was aware of Brunei's weaknesses if Britain were to end its military protection over Brunei. Since 1906, Brunei had depended on British military protection for its security and survival. The 1906 Agreement that Brunei had with Britain brought Brunei under full British protection. Even though Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin was cautious towards the plan, he was prepared to examine the pros and cons of joining Malaysia. In addition, the Sultan planned to seek favourable terms from Malaya that would bring advantages and benefits to the people of Brunei and the country. If the terms were not favourable to Brunei, it would not enter Malaysia.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the PRB opposed the Malaysian Plan from its inception since it would jeopardise its aim to form the NKKU under the 'Sri Mahkota Negara', as the Sultan of Brunei would be called.⁷⁶ According to Zaini Haji Ahmad, the party's

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 239.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 234.

⁷² There is however a suggestion that the Sultan became closer to Malaya as he felt 'insecure over the PRB which became assertive towards the formation of the NKKU.' (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 24).

⁷³ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 254. Since 1953, the CPA had informally engaged in building consensus about closer association in the region.

⁷⁴ Turnbull (2nd ed.), *A History of Singapore*, p. 272.

⁷⁵ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 53.

⁷⁶ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 17.

organizer, it was the aim of the PRB to restore the sovereignty of the Sultan of Brunei over his former dominions Sarawak and Sabah.⁷⁷ Thus any move to unite the Northern Borneo territories with another country would fail in its attempt to integrate the three territories and to restore Brunei's sovereignty over Sarawak and Sabah.⁷⁸

In order to upstage the Malaysian Plan, the PRB mobilised support from the political leaders of Sarawak and Sabah, where it successfully gained cooperation from the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and the United Kadazan Organisation of North Borneo, which were also anti-Malaysia. On 9 July, the PRB, SUPP and the United Kadazan Organisation of North Borneo formally established the United Borneo Front.⁷⁹

In addition, the PRB gained support from the Indonesian leaders, who gave moral backing to the PRB.⁸⁰ Aside from moral support, members of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), the Indonesian National Army, were also known to have trained TNKU members secretly as early as July 1962.⁸¹ The reason for Sukarno's espousal of the PRB's struggle was the powerful influence of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), the Indonesian Communist Party, within Sukarno's cabinet.⁸² The PKI shored up Azahari's anti-Malaysia cause, which led to the 1962 Rebellion. The PKI supported Azahari not because it wanted to see the creation of the NKKU, but to destroy the Malaysian Federation and set up its own power base in the Borneo territories.⁸³ Sukarno, who wanted the PKI's continuous support, backed the PKI's policy by supporting Azahari.⁸⁴

Within Brunei and the adjacent areas (such as Limbang and Lawas), the PRB had won a large number of followers who had become increasingly anti-Malaysia. Even before the Malaysian Plan was proposed, there were already widespread anti-Malayan

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁹ *Suara Bakti* (Malay Weekly), Budaya Press, Brunei. No. 3. Tahun 1, 3 November 1961, p. 1 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 22; *Malay Mail*, 22 July 1961 & Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 258).

⁸⁰ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 47.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸² Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 204.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 204.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 204.

feelings among the people of Brunei. They resented the presence in Brunei of the Malaysians, who were enlisted by the Brunei government to fill several key positions that had previously been held by British officers following Brunei's achievement of internal self-government in 1959.⁸⁵ These ill feelings towards the Malaysians deteriorated after Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya, announced the Malaysian Plan in May 1961.

The Sultan was well aware that the people of Brunei were anti-Malayan and that they supported the PRB because of its vociferous opposition to the Malaysian Plan. Consequently the Sultan was under pressure. According to B.A. Hussainmiya, 'the Sultan faced the toughest decision of his career'.⁸⁶ On one side there were the British, who urged him to join Malaysia, and on the other side there was the PRB, which had successfully mobilised mass opinion against the Malaysian Plan⁸⁷ and wanted Brunei to form a federation with Sarawak and Sabah, which the Sultan was totally against.

On this issue, the Sultan had to play for time to enable him to consider the advantages and disadvantages of joining Malaysia. According to Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, the Malaysian proposal presented an option to the Sultan to balance pressure posed by the people and the British; by manipulating the issue, the Sultan could tackle and then crush the PRB.⁸⁸

The Malaysian plan was, however, not a straightforward issue, since it had coincided with Brunei's first district council elections. According to the 1959 Constitution, elections to the district councils were to be held two years after its commencement. In September 1960, the Brunei government announced that these elections would be held in August the following year. However, when the time of the elections was approaching, the Sultan postponed them indefinitely.⁸⁹ During this time, the Sultan encouraged the formation of political parties in an attempt to erode the political strength of the PRB⁹⁰ and as a result of this, two political parties emerged – the

⁸⁵ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, pp. 255 – 258.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁸⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 25 -26.

⁸⁹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 261.

⁹⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 65, R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 167 & Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 264.

Brunei National Organisation (BNO) and the Brunei United Party (BUP). Both the BNO and BUP were pro-Malaysian Plan. Nonetheless, neither of these parties was able to attract large numbers of people to challenge the PRB, which had attracted the majority of the people of Brunei.⁹¹

Although the Sultan was losing the support of his people, he did not give in to the PRB's wishes, as the motives of the PRB were contradictory to his stance. Moreover, he still wanted to explore the benefits of Brunei joining Malaysia. On 5 December 1961, the Sultan issued a statement that the idea of the Malaysian plan was 'attractive' because of the social and cultural affirmatives between the two countries.⁹² In February 1962, Brunei delegates joined Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo in the signing of the 'Memorandum on Malaysia', which unanimously approved the Malaysian plan.⁹³ Consequently, the PRB verbally attacked the Brunei delegation for signing the documents, saying that joining Malaysia was contrary to the wishes of the people.⁹⁴

Indeed, during the hearing of the Brunei–Malaysia Commission of January 1962, the majority of the people in Brunei opposed Malaysia and supported the formation of the NKKU. The Brunei government, however, did not publish the report on the Brunei–Malaysia Commission, and only gave the impression that the people of Brunei had accepted Malaysia in principle.⁹⁵ During a session of the Brunei Legislative Council held on 18 July 1962, the Sultan announced that the people had accepted the Malaysian concept 'in principle'.⁹⁶ This was followed by a move made by the Acting Chief Minister, Dato Marsal Maun, to support the royal speech, and the motion was

⁹¹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 265.

⁹² Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 22.

⁹³ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 265.

⁹⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 24 February 1962. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 168.

⁹⁵ Titah (Speech by) Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Brunei, 1971. Cited in Zaini, *Partai Rakyat Brunei*, p. 25. In this case, although the decision to join Malaysia was chiefly in the Sultan's hand, the Sultan nevertheless consulted the public opinion about the proposal. This was done by the Sultan in order to decrease the degree of opposition from the PRB (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 55 – 56).

⁹⁶ See Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 25; A.C. Brackman, *Southeast Asia's Second Front: The Power Struggle in the Malay Archipelago*, F.A. Praeger, New York, 1966, p. 139; Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 168; *Borneo Bulletin*, 21 July 1962 & Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 266.

adopted, which clarified the pro-Malaysian position of the Brunei government.⁹⁷ The Sultan obtained a mandate from the Legislative Council to negotiate with the British and Malaysian governments on the terms of Brunei's entry into Malaysia.⁹⁸

This development disappointed the PRB. Nevertheless, the PRB pinned its hope on the coming of the District Council election to be held in August 1962. To the PRB the election was significant in order to achieve its aim of preventing Brunei from entering Malaysia. If they won the election, the district councillors elected to the Legislative Council could present a motion to block Brunei's entry into Malaysia. When the District Council election was held on 30 and 31 August 1962, the PRB adopted manifestos which among other issues included independence for Brunei by 1963; the rejection of Malaysia and the formation of a Federation of North Borneo; and internal economic, administrative and educational reforms.⁹⁹ The election resulted in a landslide victory for the PRB, which won fifty-four out of a possible fifty-five seats, with the remaining seat going to an independent that later joined the PRB. The PRB victory proved the undisputed popularity of the party and also the endorsement of the people's opposition to the Malaysian plan. In September 1962, when the new Legislative Council was formed, the party sought to table a motion 'blocking' the formation of Malaysia. As the Council feared suffering defeats in the debates, it postponed the Legislative Council meeting to 5 December 1962.¹⁰⁰

Before the Legislative Council meeting was held, the PRB submitted a motion to the Brunei government to be tabled at the forthcoming meeting. The motion demanded that the British government return Sarawak and North Borneo to the sovereignty of the Brunei Sultan; that the British government federate the three Borneo territories; that Brunei be kept out of Malaysia and that Brunei be granted independence by 1963.¹⁰¹ The Sultan, who was against the PRB motion, rejected the motion to be tabled at the forthcoming meeting by giving the excuse that the motion involved the

⁹⁷ *Borneo Bulletin*, 21 July 1962. Cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 169.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ See Chapter I. Document No. 15/PRB/62. Dated 20 August 1962 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 25); *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 August 1962. Also see Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ Simandjuntak, *Malayan Federalism 1945–1963*, p. 151 (cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 171).

¹⁰¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 8 December 1962 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 172).

British government and had nothing to do with the government of Brunei.¹⁰² This disappointed Azahari who commented, ‘when we received that, I knew we could not stop Malaysia by constitutional means, we had no alternative, we decided to strike’.¹⁰³ On 8 December 1962, the rebellion broke out.¹⁰⁴

The 1962 Rebellion was a major challenge to the Sultan as the rebels openly threatened his position and the country’s security. When Azahari, who was in Manila (on his way to New York to seek the UN’s recognition for the government of the NKKU), announced that the Sultan had declared the independence within the Commonwealth of a state that comprised the three Northern Borneo territories,¹⁰⁵ the Sultan denied this promptly in a broadcast.¹⁰⁶ Azahari and Zaini’s mission to the UN however failed to materialise as their visa applications were rejected by the American Embassy in Manila.¹⁰⁷

During the rebellion, the Sultan could not handle the situation efficiently and effectively. The TNKU, the militant wing of the PRB, was everywhere. The oilfields at Seria, much of Brunei Town and the rest of the state and parts of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak, including Limbang, were overrun by the rebels. The country’s police force could not quell such a large-scale rebellion. Moreover, Brunei’s army had just been created and was undergoing training in Malaya, and the British forces were not present in Brunei at that time. Under the 1959 Agreement, although the internal security and defence of the state were under British responsibility, the Sultan did not

¹⁰² R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 172.

¹⁰³ *Straits Times*, 19 January 1963 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 172).

¹⁰⁴ The rebellion was proclaimed at 2.00 a.m. by Secretary General Yasin Affandy, who was also acted as deputy prime minister and commander in chief of the TNKU. However, Azahari did not actually agree with the timing of the rebellion. The insurgents decided to rebel on an assigned date that was 25 December 1962. According to Zaini Haji Ahmad, Azahari himself would have preferred to launch the rebellion in April 1963 (cited in Zaini Haji Ahmad, *Pertumbuhan Nasionalisme*, p. 143) after the PRB presented its proposal to the UN in December 1962. As a result, Azahari did not admit that he actually led the rebellion which broke out on 8 December 1962 (cited in FCO24/2089, Report on the Security Situation in Brunei from the Period 10 August 1975 to 4 September 1975).

¹⁰⁵ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, ‘Brunei’s political development’, p. 186.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁰⁷ In this case, the United States perceived the Federation of Malaysia as the best hope of security for a crucial part of Southeast Asia (cited in *ibid.*, pp. 220 – 221).

allow any British security exercises on Brunei's soil.¹⁰⁸ Despite this, when the rebellion broke out, Britain immediately despatched its army to Brunei to crush the rebellion.

Although the 1962 Rebellion and the indirect involvement of Indonesia in the Rebellion showed the vulnerability of the Sultanate, this did not persuade the Sultan to accept the Malaysian Plan straight away. Similarly, although the people of Brunei were against the Malaysian Plan, this did not make the Sultan directly abandon the plan. The 1962 Rebellion did not stop the Sultan further considering the pros and cons of joining Malaysia, and soon after the end of the 1962 Rebellion, in January 1963, two Brunei officials were despatched to Kuala Lumpur to hold preliminary talks with the Malayan government.

In the meetings, which were held between 5 February and 3 March 1963, issues such as Brunei's finances, the Sultan's position in the council of rulers, the special rights and privileges of the people of Brunei and the representation of Brunei in the federal government were discussed thoroughly by both governments.¹⁰⁹ However, none of the issues discussed in the meetings satisfied the Sultan.

During the discussions, the Malayan side insisted that the control of Brunei's oil revenues should be passed to the federal government ten years after Brunei's entry into Malaysia, whereas the Sultan wanted to retain Brunei's control over any revenue and income relating to oil in perpetuity. The Malayan government also wanted the right to tax immediately any new oil and mineral finds discovered after the Sultanate joined Malaysia, whereas the Sultan maintained that Brunei should retain such revenue. The Malayan government additionally wanted the Sultan's contributions of \$40 million annually to the federal government to be compulsory, while the Sultan wanted it to be voluntary.

There was also the issue of precedence. According to the Malayan government, the Sultan's ranking among the rulers would be the lowest, based upon the

¹⁰⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 August 1962 (cited in R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, p. 170).

¹⁰⁹ The following authors have studied the Malaysian negotiations between the Bruneian and the Malayan Governments: Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 132 – 161, Saunders (2nd edition), *A History of Brunei*, pp. 154 – 7. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, pp. 318 – 323, Hamzah, *The Oil Sultanate*, pp. 175 – 178, Menon, 'Negara Brunei Darussalam from Protectorate to Statehood', pp. 170 – 174 & R. Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983*, pp. 181 – 197.

date of joining the council of rulers and not from the time he ascended the throne. Previously, during the preliminary meeting between Brunei and the Malayan governments (in July 1962), the Malayan government had assured the Sultan that precedence was in accordance with the date of accession to the throne and not dependent upon the date of joining the council of rulers.

Although the terms were further discussed in June 1963, these issues remained unsolved, as Tunku Abdul Rahman refused to give in to Brunei's terms and the Sultan refused to accept the Malayan terms. The failure to reach any consensus became one of the main reasons why the Sultan refused to join Malaysia in 1963. Indeed, the Sultan had already stated in his correspondence to Tunku Abdul Rahman between July 1961 and October 1963 that Brunei should only join the federation if the Malayan government could accept all Brunei's terms.¹¹⁰

However, there was also a suggestion that Brunei refused to join Malaysia as the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company influenced the Sultan not to join the federation. During the Sultan's meeting with the Malayan government in Kuala Lumpur, the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company sent a telegram indicating a large commercial discovery of oil at Southwest Ampa Field. The Company warned the Sultan that if Brunei joined Malaysia, the control and management of Brunei's oil resources would be merged with the federation. According to B.A. Hamzah, the telegram was sent purposely to the Sultan in order to influence him to stay out of Malaysia.¹¹¹

Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was disappointed with Brunei's decision not to enter Malaysia, claimed that discussions broke down after agreement had been reached on all matters only when the Sultan raised the question of his precedence (as it was too late for Tunku to consult the Council of Rulers). In March 1963, the Council of Rulers had already decided that the precedence and the position of the Sultan of Brunei should relate to the date of Brunei's accession to Malaysia, so his name would be the last on

¹¹⁰ *Borneo Bulletin*, 26th January, 1963 (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 137).

¹¹¹ B.A. Hamzah, *The Oil Sultanate: Political History of Oil in Brunei Darussalam*, Kuala Lumpur, Mawaddah Enterprise, 1991, pp. 225 – 226.

the election list to be appointed as a Yang Dipertuan Agong of the new Federation of Malaysia.¹¹²

Tunku Abdul Rahman's allegation, however, was strongly denied by the Sultan, who stated that the main reason for Brunei not joining Malaysia was that Malaya had failed to accept 'Brunei terms'.¹¹³ In this regard, the Sultan probably thought that his status as a ruler of a self-governing state was better than as a member of Malaysia's government with fewer responsibilities.¹¹⁴ Moreover the Sultan would not want to exchange his absolute power for that of a constitutional monarch. This, however, was not mentioned during the meeting between the two governments.¹¹⁵ According to Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Sultan might possibly have thought he could keep his power as an absolute monarch if Brunei joined the Federation.¹¹⁶

In addition, Brunei's wealth had always been a sensitive issue for the Sultanate. The fear that it would have to be shared among the other two British Borneo territories was one of the reasons why the Sultan was not interested in the British plan to associate Brunei with Sarawak and Sabah in the 1950s. When the Malayan government insisted that it would control Brunei's oil revenue after ten years and would tax any new oil discovered after Brunei joined Malaysia, it looked as if the Federal government wanted to control Brunei's oil wealth. Brunei would not surrender its oil wealth to the Federal government because that would leave it with nothing, since Brunei's economy depended on its oil revenues.

Finally, the Sultan would not want to give away Brunei's identity as a separate kingdom, which the previous Sultans had striven to retain since 1800, by becoming part

¹¹² Under a rotating system of monarchy, each Sultan (there were nine in all) in the Malaysian States (except Malacca, Penang, Sarawak and Sabah) was entitled to be elevated to the position of Yang DiPertuan Agong, the supreme ruler of the country, elected to rule every five years. Precedence and seniority were determined by the length of their reigns on their respective State thrones.

¹¹³ FO371/169703, Brunei's reasons for not entering into the Federation of Malaysia, 'Brunei: Tactics', 11 July 1963 (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 129).

¹¹⁴ James W. Gould, *The United States and Malaysia*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 127 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 321).

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 161.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

of Malaysia. As Ranjit Singh notes: 'Bearing in mind the proud historic heritage of having preserved the identity of their kingdom for centuries, the Bruneian authorities did not feel inclined to reduce the status of their country to a mere state in the Federation of Malaysia....All Brunei would be a loser by joining the Federation of Malaysia.'¹¹⁷ According to Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, the Sultan was never interested in joining Malaysia. He suggested that 'the idea of accepting the idea in principle was simply a political maneuver and diplomatic approach on the part of the Sultan to ensure for the survival of the Brunei Sultanate in its then form as a Malay Islamic Monarchy under the British protection'.¹¹⁸ He further added that the differences over the issues of revenue, finance, taxes and precedence were simply explanations for the Sultan to reject the idea of joining Malaysia.¹¹⁹

According to a British report, the Sultan showed no regret at all for not entering Malaysia since he had the support of his people, who were mainly anti-Malaysia.¹²⁰ The Sultan insisted that the question of Brunei's entry into Malaysia was closed and that there would be no point in any subsequent meeting between himself and Tunku Abdul Rahman or representatives of the two governments.¹²¹ He further stated that, should there be any question of reopening the issue of Brunei's entry into Malaysia in the future, negotiations would have to begin from scratch, that is, without regard to any previous negotiations on the subject, adding that, 'no one could tell what the position would be in a decade's time'.¹²² From this, it was clear that the Sultan's mind was more than ever unreceptive to the idea of entering Malaysia.

The Sultan was actually satisfied with the present arrangement with the British government and wanted to maintain British protection if possible indefinitely. While the final meetings on Malaysia were taking place in London in July 1963, the Sultan had already indicated that he wished to discuss the future relationship of his state with Britain and had referred to the possibility of 'strengthening Brunei's defence treaty

¹¹⁷ R. Singh, *Brunei 1839-1983*, p. 197.

¹¹⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 140 -141.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140 - 141.

¹²⁰ DO229/8, Outlook for Brunei (memorandum), 24 August 1963.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 24 August 1963.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 24 August 1963.

with the United Kingdom'.¹²³ He also hoped that the British government would 'continue to honour the existing agreement for the defence of Brunei.'¹²⁴ However, the British government could not keep on protecting Brunei because its partial independence would be increasingly difficult to defend¹²⁵ by the UK representatives at the UN.

In 1962, the United Nations General Assembly established the Special Committee on Decolonization (the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonization) to monitor the implementation of the Declaration (the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960).¹²⁶ The establishment of the Special Committee of Twenty-Four on Decolonization put pressure on Britain to relinquish its remaining responsibilities towards Brunei.

Furthermore, both the British and the Malaysian governments did not want to see Brunei left to stand on its own, as that would pose political and military problems for the British and Malaysian interests over the security of the new federation. Both governments were apprehensive that an independent Brunei without British protection would be a security risk to Sabah and Sarawak and the Federation of Malaysia as a whole.¹²⁷ For example, if an uprising recurred in Brunei, it would probably spread to Sabah and Sarawak; if that happened, Malaysia would almost certainly have to deal with this matter on its own. Moreover, the British government was concerned that Brunei might become the target of Indonesian deception and internal insurrection¹²⁸ whereas if it were part of Malaysia, Brunei would not be a target of Indonesia.

In addition, the wealth of Brunei could be used for the defence and development of Sabah and Sarawak and the rest of the Federation.¹²⁹ As Arthur Bottomley, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations said, 'the Malaysians would in certain circumstances like to have Brunei in Malaysia, or at least in much

¹²³ FCO371/169703, 11 July 1963, Telegram from Mackintosh to Secretary of State, 18 July 1963.

¹²⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 23 June 1963 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 323).

¹²⁵ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 218.

¹²⁶ http://www.un.org/depts/dpi/decolonization/special_committee_main.htm

¹²⁷ FCO15/288, Britain's Medium- and Long-Term Policy towards Brunei, 8 November 1967.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 November 1967.

¹²⁹ OD39/89, Talks with the Sultan of Brunei, November 1969 – Brief No. 9.

closer association than at present. They could certainly find a good use for Brunei's oil revenues'.¹³⁰ Also, if Brunei chose to become independent outside of the federation, the Malaysian government was concerned that Sabah and Sarawak would probably decide to separate from Malaysia and become independent.¹³¹ In both cases, they could destroy the stability of the federation as a whole; if Sabah and Sarawak opted to become independent that would be the end of the federation.

Thus, in order to ensure the security of the Federation, Brunei should be brought into Malaysia. The British, who did not intend to force the Sultan to accept the Malaysian proposal, adopted a new policy whereby Britain would try to influence the Sultan to join Malaysia at least by 1965.¹³² The adoption of the policy also aimed to avoid any allegation that Britain was trying to maintain a re-colonisation policy in Brunei.¹³³

Initially, the British government hoped to see continuous co-operation from Malaysia in seconding Brunei its officers in various fields of administration even after Brunei's rejection of Malaysia in 1963. By giving Brunei this type of co-operation, the British government hoped that Brunei would become closer to and eventually enter Malaysia. Tunku Abdul Rahman, however, demanded that the Brunei government return the Malaysian officers to Malaysia, as he wished to teach Brunei a lesson for not joining the Federation of Malaysia in 1963.¹³⁴ Tunku Abdul Rahman hoped that by recalling the officers, their positions would be substituted by British expatriates. When this happened, he expected that it would stimulate the people of Brunei to rise against the British in Brunei, push the British to grant Brunei independence and drive the Bruneians to seek membership of Malaysia.¹³⁵

Tunku Abdul Rahman's action in recalling Malaysia's seconded officers from Brunei did indeed impel the Sultan to obtain British assistance in providing Brunei with technical and professional services. However, still seeking close co-operation between Malaysia and Brunei, the British government encouraged the Sultan to employ officers

¹³⁰ DO169/547, A. Bottomley to A.H. Reed, 8 July 1966.

¹³¹ FCO15/288, Brunei – Medium and Long Term Policy, 8 November 1967.

¹³² Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 137.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 249 – 250.

¹³⁵ DO169/547, Bottomley to Reed, 25 October 1966.

from Malaysia.¹³⁶ Although the Sultan claimed that he would review the position of the Malaysian officers already in Brunei and intended to retain those who were sufficiently experienced, he still chose to recruit officers from Britain rather than from Malaysia.¹³⁷ Moreover, the Tunku's motive backfired. Although more British officers were needed to replace the Malaysian officers, the people of Brunei had actually become more anti-Malaysia than anti-British.¹³⁸ Britain's efforts to bring Brunei within Malaysia by 1965 were therefore unsuccessful.

In 1966, however, the British government had decided to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei for the reason that will be explained in the next chapter. This presented a problem for the Sultan as he felt that the security of the monarch and the monarchy would be in danger without British protection.

2.4. Conclusion

From this chapter, it has been shown that the challenges and problems faced by the Sultanate (with regard to its security and survival) had existed prior to 1966. The British plan to associate Brunei closely with their Northern Borneo territories, namely Sarawak and North Borneo, was a challenge to the Sultanate as it could have lead to Brunei's status being reduced from a protectorate to a colony and the Sultan's status to be decreased from an absolute monarch to a constitutional monarch. Moreover, the Sultanate's burgeoning oil would probably have to be shared with Sarawak and North Borneo. This chapter has also shown that one of the reasons why the Sultan promulgated the Constitution was to safeguard and strengthen the power of the monarch and the monarchy, as well as the Bruneian Malays and the Islamic religion.

Since the Sultan was not interested to closely associate Brunei with the two Northern Borneo territories, Britain's plan to see the formation of the federation of the three Northern Borneo territories collapsed. Britain, however, hoped that independent Malaya would solve the British problem over its Northern Borneo territories. Britain did not want to grant these territories individual independence as they were

¹³⁶ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 259.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 257.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 251.

underdeveloped and prone to internal and external threats. When the Malayan prime minister proposed the formation of the Federation of Malaysia consisting of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei, Britain supported the proposal as this would assist it in decolonizing its three Northern Borneo territories.

The Sultan, although showing a favourable attitude towards Malaya, was cautious toward such a plan. He was, initially prepared to study the pros and cons of Brunei joining Malaysia before a decision was made in July 1963. However, the PRB vigorously opposed the plan from the start and its opposition subsequently led to the outbreak of the 1962 Rebellion. The rebellion, viewed by the Sultan as a threat to the security of the monarch and the monarchy, was successfully crushed by Britain which was responsible for Brunei's internal security. Although the rebellion showed the weakness of the Sultanate without British protection, the Sultan did not accept the Malaysian Plan straight away. In this regard, the Sultan still wanted to discuss details of the terms with Malayan leaders.

The Sultan however eventually gave up the Malaysian Plan as he did not want Brunei to lose its sovereignty to Malaysia. The Sultan was however hoping that Britain would continue its protection over Brunei if possible indefinitely. This chapter has shown that after Brunei's rejection of Malaysia, the British government continued its efforts to bring Brunei within Malaysia at least by 1965. Britain's efforts were however unsuccessful as the Sultan refused to employ Malaysian officers, whom the British suggested and hoped would bring Brunei closer to Malaysia and eventually persuade Brunei to join the latter.

CHAPTER THREE

Brunei and the British End of 1959 Agreement: 1966 – 1970

3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to examine Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1970 by highlighting the challenges and difficulties faced by Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in relation to Brunei's security and survival. This study will show that as a result of Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei, the status of the monarch and the monarchy was under threat. This was because, following Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, it put increased pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. The pressure to implement such a system in Brunei did not come only from Britain but also from Malaysia and the Parti Barisan Kemerdekaan Rakyat, the BAKER party. This study will argue that the reasons why the Sultan did not want to implement the system were mainly a result of his apprehensiveness that the system would decrease his power and would bring Brunei into Malaysia.

This study will also argue that as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultanate felt that the security of Brunei would be in danger if Britain were no longer protecting Brunei. The study will show that the threats to Brunei's security came from Malaysia, which continued to endeavour to bring Brunei within the federation, and Indonesia, which had not spelled out its policy towards Brunei since the end of Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation in 1966 and which between 1963 and 1965 had been hostile towards the Sultanate. The Sultan did not want the agreement to come to an end as Brunei would not be able to defend itself against any internal and external threats or attacks. In addition, the Sultan wanted the continuation of the agreement as he realized that the people of Brunei could not provide sufficient qualified officers to run the administration of the country.

The study will also show that the Sultan was persistent in rejecting the British proposal for a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation that did not include the defence of

Brunei. It will also demonstrate that Sir Omar was not interested in associating Brunei with the Five-Power nations namely Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia (for the defence of the region) as Sir Omar distrusted Malaysia. Furthermore, the study will indicate that the Sultan and Sir Omar were persistent in retaining the British defence of Brunei and were proposing that Britain be jointly responsible over Brunei's defence (where Brunei was prepared to accept the financial consequences of the proposal).

3.2. Reason for end of the 1959 Agreement, pressure for democracy and pressure for entering Malaysia

Before this chapter looks into the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the reason for the end of the 1959 Agreement will be analysed.

The Labour government's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei was a result of its decision to withdraw all its forces from east of Suez (except Hong Kong which was a British colony). This decision came as a consequence of the sterling crisis that had occurred in the 1960s. This crisis occurred through maintaining the pound sterling at a fixed rate despite relatively high inflation in Britain, which resulted in over-priced exports and a recurrent balance of payments crisis. When the Labour Party came to power in 1964, it inherited a balance of payments deficit of nearly £800 million. The main solution to this problem was obviously to devalue sterling. However, the Labour government refused to devalue as it wanted to maintain the value of the pound.¹ In July 1966 when the sterling crisis hit Britain, the Labour government announced a plan to bring total defence spending well below the original £2,000 million target which the British government had decided to achieve by 1969 – 1970.² Following that, in August 1966, the Defence Secretary Denis Healey stated that about

¹ D. Reynolds (2nd ed.), *Britannia Overrules: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century*, Harlow, Longman, 2000, p. 213.

² M. Chalmers, *Paying for Defence: Military Spending and British Decline*, London, Pluto, 1985, pp. 84-85.

10,000 troops would be withdrawn from Borneo, and that there would be further subsequent withdrawals.³

As a result, a decision was made at a meeting at the Commonwealth Office on 4 November 1966 to end Britain's 1959 Agreement with Brunei.⁴ This was because the British had decided to withdraw its forces from east of Suez, and it was therefore no longer compatible to retain the 1959 Agreement (whereby Britain was responsible for Brunei's defence and internal security). At the meeting, it was agreed that the British government would secure the end of the 1959 Agreement with Brunei and make an orderly withdrawal, leaving behind a stable state, at the latest by the time Britain left its bases in Malaysia and Singapore. On 8 November 1966, Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, declared his policy towards the Sultanate in the House of Commons. In his announcement, he stressed that Brunei would progressively assume full responsibility in all fields of government 'and this will in itself require a review of the Brunei Agreement at the appropriate time'.⁵

Following Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan faced challenges and difficulties over the security and survival of the Sultanate because the Commonwealth Office subsequently put more pressure on the Sultan to introduce a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. The British government urged the Sultan to implement the system not only because it wanted to see a democratic system of government introduced in Brunei, but also because it was a way to end the agreement. The 1959 Agreement between the British and the Brunei governments

³ 733 HC Deb., 3 August, 1966, col. 437. Cited in P. Darby, *British defence policy east of Suez, 1947–1968*, London, OUP, 1973, p. 314.

⁴ FCO15/288, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, 25 July 1967 & W.L. Dale to H.L.M. Oxley, 26 April 1967.

⁵ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, British House of Commons, Vol. 735, 8 November 1966, p. 1150.

contained no provision for termination: it would normally be ended by mutual agreement between the subscribing parties.⁶

Indeed, Britain could use its power to advise the Sultan that the 1959 Agreement would be terminated in the foreseeable future. This was impossible, however, because since 1959 the Sultan had been refusing to accept the advice of the High Commissioner, except when the latter's wishes coincided with his own. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth Office could simply tell the Sultan that, since he refused to accept the advice of the British, he had actually broken his agreement with Britain and had thus caused the treaty to be void. The Commonwealth Office, however, wanted to end the agreement as far as possible on the basis of mutual consent rather than by unilateral abrogation. This was to ensure that the agreement could be ended smoothly without jeopardising the stability of the state and Britain economic interest in Brunei.⁷

In this situation, the Commonwealth Office was apprehensive that the Sultan might retaliate by not giving any new concession to the Shell Petroleum Company in Brunei and by withdrawing its sterling reserve from the Bank of England in London. According to a record of a meeting at the Commonwealth Office on 27 November 1967, it was stated that 'If Brunei wished to retaliate Brunei's sterling reserves and the Shell Company would be the most obvious targets'.⁸ Brunei's oil amounted to five million tons a year and was a valuable asset that had traditionally been managed by the British firm that carried out the original drilling. In 1965, the British government received net profits from the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company of about £4,000,000 (which is approximately £35,000,000 at 2005 prices). Furthermore, in 1966 the Brunei government held reserves in London amounting to £133 million (which is approximately £800 million at 2005 prices).⁹

Since the Commonwealth Office realised that the Sultan would not want to end the agreement mutually, the Law Officers suggested that it should advise and assist the

⁶ FCO15/288, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 25 July 1967 & W.L. Dale to H.L.M. Oxley, 26 April 1967, also in WO32/21069. For the full text of the agreement see Appendix II.

⁷ T3122320, Record of Meeting held in the Conference Room of Commonwealth Office, 27 November 1967.

⁸ Ibid., 27 November 1967.

⁹ Ibid., 27 November 1974.

Sultan as much as possible in making progress towards the establishment of a democratic system of government.¹⁰ That was with a view 'to reaching a state of advance in the territory at which [point] Britain would be justified in calling for the revision of the agreement, or giving a year's notice if such revision was not agreed.'¹¹ The Law Officers' suggestion was based on the provisions of the 1959 Agreement, in which it was clearly stated that 'it looks forward to a time when the people of Brunei will be taking a full share in the government of the State.'¹²

Moreover, from the circumstances surrounding its signing, the 1959 Agreement was not intended to be permanent. The Sultan himself said at the 1959 Conference that 'the time had come when the first step towards independence should be made.'¹³ Furthermore, this option was less likely to incur public criticism than an abrupt notice would, and possibly be more likely to lead to real advance in Brunei.¹⁴ In addition, this last factor was important in light of Britain's obligations under Article 73(e) of the United Nations whereby the British had to submit annually to the Secretary-General of the UN reports about Brunei's economic, social and constitutional development.¹⁵

The Commonwealth Office was however not alone in its desire to urge the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The BAKER party which was formed in 1966 also urged the Sultan to implement the system in order to 'meet the needs and aspirations of the people'.¹⁶ The BAKER party which actually originated from four political parties: Parti Perjuangan Rakyat, Parti Perikatan Rakyat, Parti Kemajuan Rakyat and Parti Barisan Rakyat Brunei aimed to achieve full independence and a democratic system of government in Brunei.

¹⁰FCO15/288, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 25 July 1967, Dale to Oxley, 26 April 1967 and also in WO32/21069.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² FCO15/288, Dale to Oxley, 26 April 1967.

¹³ Ibid., 26 April 1967.

¹⁴ Ibid., 26 April 1967.

¹⁵ Ibid. & FCO15/288, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 25 July 1967.

¹⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 September 1966.

Apart from the BAKER party, the Malaysian government also wanted to see the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei.¹⁷ This was because Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaysia, believed that a bid to join the federation was much more likely to be made by an elected government in Brunei than by the Sultan.¹⁸ On this issue, the British government agreed with the Malaysian government that only an elected government in Brunei could possibly be persuaded to join Malaysia.¹⁹ In this case, it is obvious that Britain still intended to see Brunei within the Federation of Malaysia.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, since Brunei's refusal to join Malaysia in July 1963, Britain was still attempting to bring Brunei within Malaysia, at least by 1965.²⁰ Initially, the British government hoped to see continuous co-operation from Malaysia in sending its officers in various fields of administration to Brunei and for Brunei to seek officers from Malaysia.²¹ However, since co-operation between the governments of Brunei and Malaysia was not forthcoming, the British tried to exploit the BAKER party to achieve its aims of getting Brunei into Malaysia.²² In fact, Awang Hapidz Laksmana, the president of the party who was a political detainee of the 1962 rebellion, was released from prison in order to encourage political activity in the Sultanate.²³

The British attempt to exploit the BAKER party was well received by the Malaysian government. Both the British and Malaysian governments gave indirect support to the BAKER party to call for the implementation of a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. In the past, the Malaysian government had also supported the Brunei National Organization (BNO) and the Brunei United Party (BUP) which in January 1963 formed an alliance known as the Brunei Alliance Party.²⁴ Both parties were pro-Malaysian plan. When Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III refused to join Malaysia, the leaders of both parties – Awang Manan Mohamad (BNO) and Haji

¹⁷ DO229/8, Brunei and Malaysia, 8 November 1967.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8 November 1967.

¹⁹ Ibid., 8 November 1967.

²⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 137.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 249 – 250.

²² D.O. 169/51 Internal Political Situation 1960-63, A report by Commissioner General in SEA on 'Brunei' (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 217).

²³ Ibid., p. 217.

²⁴ R. Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983*, p. 206.

Hasbollah bin Daud (BUP) – criticised the Sultan’s decision.²⁵ In 1965, Haji Hasbollah stressed his party’s belief that the future of Brunei lay within Malaysia, had not changed.²⁶

Following Harold Wilson’s declaration in the House of Commons of his policy towards Brunei in November 1966, the BAKER party prepared a memorandum pressing the Sultan to achieve independence for Brunei as soon as possible.²⁷ It argued that Brunei was still colonised by Britain through the appointment of the British High Commissioner, as the members of the Executive Council had to accept his advice.²⁸ It called on the Sultan to implement the principal terms of the constitutional proposal contained in the White Paper 4/65, which contemplated the introduction of a ministerial system of government after the elections for the Legislative Council on 25 March 1965.²⁹

One of the principal terms of the constitutional proposal of the White Paper was that a ministerial system of government be introduced immediately after the elections, and elected members of the Assembly appointed to the Executive Council would be associated with the implementation of the executive and administrative responsibilities of the government.³⁰ Another principal term of the constitutional proposal was that Brunei would proceed progressively towards full parliamentary democracy. Thus, in order to achieve this aim, Brunei would reconstitute the Legislative Council by increasing its elected membership from ten to twenty members, reducing the ex-officio membership to the minimum and eliminating nominated membership.³¹ From the elected members of the Legislative Council, ministers would be appointed in whose hands the functions of the state would be placed. These ministers would be answerable to the electorate in carrying out policies to secure the future well-being of the State of

²⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 April 1964.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14th August 1965 and R. Singh, *Brunei 1839-1983*, p. 207.

²⁷ *Daily Star*, 3rd October 1967.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3rd October 1967.

²⁹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 26 November 1966.

³⁰ For details of the discussion on the White Paper by the People’s representatives see FCO24/1376, United Nations General Assembly Petition from Awang Zainal Abidin Puteh, President, and Awang Abdul Latif bin Hamid, Secretary-General, People’s Independent Front, concerning Brunei, 27 March 1970.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Brunei and its people. One other term of the constitutional proposal was that the British would hold constitutional talks in Brunei to be attended by representatives of all sections of the community, including elected members in order to make recommendations to the British government for the speedy independence of Brunei.³²

The Sultan and Arthur Bottomley, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations agreed that there should be further consultations between them after the March 1965 elections (in order to consider the next steps towards constitutional advance). After the elections, however, none of the principal terms of the constitutional proposal of the White Paper was ever carried out. The newly reconvened Legislative Council had only twelve elected members out of thirty-three. No elected member was ever appointed to be a full minister, and the promise of Ministerial Government was never put into action.³³

The BAKER party's memorandum was sent to the Brunei government and also to the High Commissioner, who forwarded it on their behalf to the Secretary General for Commonwealth Relations for comment.³⁴ The latter's reply to the BAKER party's memorandum came early in February 1967, expressing sympathy for the people of Brunei's aspirations for independence.³⁵ F.D. Webber, British High Commissioner, assured the party's leaders that 'the British Government was [...] as eager as the people of Brunei to see that productive constitutional developments take place in the country'.³⁶

The Sultan, who did not want to implement the constitutional proposals contained in the White Paper, chose to remain silent and since no answer was forthcoming, the BAKER party organised a delegation to see the Sultan. However, the Sultan rebuffed the delegation and it was only during his absence from Brunei in late April 1967 that

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ The Brunei State Secretary received the memorandum from the BAKER party on 21 November 1966, and the British High Commissioner received it on 26 November 1966.

³⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 25 February 1966.

³⁶ *Daily Star*, 23 February 1967.

the *Daily Star* reported the Brunei government's stance towards the White Paper 4/65³⁷ which stated that:

[The] White Paper represented only a statement of intention and desire on the part of the Sultan's Government and [...] its implementation would be realised at a pace, which the Government thought fit for the benefit of the people.³⁸

The statement was a big blow to the BAKER party and the Commonwealth Office, which hoped to see the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei.

At talks in London in June 1967, Herbert Bowden, who had succeeded Arthur Bottomley as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs³⁹ urged the Sultan to agree to a further extension of the ministerial system of government.⁴⁰ He too pressed the Sultan to hold a constitutional conference in Brunei before the end of 1968.⁴¹ The Sultan, however, declined to make any specific comments or to enter into any commitments. Subsequently, Bowden warned the Sultan that the British Gurkha battalion would be withdrawn from Brunei and that Britain would cease its protection over the Sultanate once this withdrawal took place.⁴²

At this stage the Sultan was under pressure as he did not want to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei as he was apprehensive that the system would reduce his power from absolute to that of constitutional monarch. However, he continuously gave excuses that he did not want to implement the system as his subjects were not prepared to accept it and were more content under guided monarchy⁴³ which had brought peace and harmony to the Sultanate.⁴⁴ Moreover, the Sultan was aware that the closer Brunei came to a democratic system of government, the more likely it would

³⁷ At this time, the Sultan was on a world tour to Australia, the United States and Europe; that was before his visit to the UK in June for talks with the Commonwealth Relations Office.

³⁸ *Daily Star*, 15 May 1967.

³⁹ A position which was created on 1 August 1967 by the merger of the old positions of Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and Secretary of State for the Colonies.

⁴⁰ *Sunday Times*, 11 June 1967.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1967.

⁴² PREM13/3181, B. Trend to Prime Minister's Office, 27 July 1967.

⁴³ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 209.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

be to join Malaysia. In this regard, the Sultan was conscious that some of the members of the BAKER party were attracted to the Malaysian political system. The President of the BAKER party, Hapidz Laksmana, once openly showed his desire for Brunei to merge with Malaysia.⁴⁵ When asked about the possibility of Brunei joining Malaysia by a reporter of the Malaysian newspaper *Utusan Melayu*, Hafidz said, 'we want independence first, after that it will be up to the people. If they want to come into Malaysia, we have no objection'.⁴⁶

The Sultan knew that (as in the past) some of the local politicians were offered important positions if they could bring Brunei into Malaysia. When the Malaysian Plan was actively pursued by the Malayan government, the latter attempted to find ways to persuade some of the PRB leaders to support the Malaysian Plan. The Malayan government offered them important positions in the administration of the Federation of Malaysia. Azahari, for example, was offered the position of Second Deputy Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaysia, but he did not accept the offer as he felt that this would be contrary to the interests of the people of Brunei.⁴⁷

When the PRB successfully presented its motion at the Legislative Council meeting in November 1962, the Malayan government offered Azahari and other PRB leaders high positions in the Federation of Malaysia.⁴⁸ Tunku Abdul Rahman once told R.M. Hunt, High Commissioner to Brunei, that if the Gurkha battalion withdrew from Brunei, Tunku Abdul Rahman or Tun Abdul Razak would deal with Hapidz Laksmana and offer him a better position if he could bring Brunei into Malaysia.⁴⁹ Therefore, the Sultan concluded that the closer Brunei came to a democratic system of government, the greater its possibility of joining Malaysia.⁵⁰

At this stage, the Sultan was also under pressure as he did not want Britain to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei. If Britain ended its agreement with Brunei, British protection would come to an end and the British Gurkha battalion would be withdrawn

⁴⁵ *Utusan Melayu*, 20 October 1967.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1967.

⁴⁷ Zariani, *Escape From Berakas*, p. 104.

⁴⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, *Brunei's Political Development*, p. 70.

⁴⁹ See F.C.O 24/212 Internal Security Situation, Letter from R.M., Hunt, High Commissioner, Brunei to R.A., Hibbert, Office of the Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief, Far East, Singapore, 2nd November 1967.

⁵⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 206.

from Brunei. The Sultan wanted the Gurkha battalion to remain in Brunei and British protection to continue indefinitely to safeguard his country and his position from any internal and external threats. In this regard, the Sultan did not view Malaysia alone as a threat to Brunei's security and survival, but also Indonesia.

Since the end of the Malaysia – Indonesia Confrontation in 1966, Indonesia had not spelled out its policy towards Brunei.⁵¹ This caused the Sultan to be concerned about Indonesia's intention towards the Sultanate. Between 1962 and 1966, Indonesia was not only hostile towards Malaysia but also Brunei. Indonesia was hostile towards Malaysia following Tunku Abdul Rahman's plan to form the Federation of Malaysia. Azahari, who was against the Malaysian plan and who was aiming to form the NKKU, was supported by Indonesia. Sukarno maintained publicly that he supported Azahari and his struggle to form the NKKU because Malaysia was implementing neo-colonialism over the three Borneo territories and was threatening the security of Indonesia. In Sukarno's statement he claimed that Indonesia opposed Malaya because 'Malaysia is a manifestation of new-colonialism in our vicinity. We consider Malaysia as encirclement of the Indonesian Republic'.⁵² When the 1962 rebellion broke out in Brunei, the event became a pretext for Indonesia to confront Malaysia and destroy the federation.⁵³

When Azahari was in Jakarta, Sukarno allowed the PRB to set up its headquarters and to open a Representative Office for the NKKU. The Indonesian government sponsored the First Conference of the North Kalimantan People's Revolutionary

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 200.

⁵² George Modelski, *The New Emerging Forces*, Canberra, Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific Studies, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, pp. 74 – 5. Cited in M. Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, London, Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs by Allen & Unwin, 1983, p. 79.

⁵³ Among the plethora of publications on the conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia are Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963 – 1966*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1974; Douglas Hyde, *Confrontation in the East: A Background Book*, London, Bodley Head, 1965; Jan M. Pluvier, *Confrontations: A Study in Indonesia Politics*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1965; Bernard K. Gordon, *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1966; and Gregory John Poulgrain, *The genesis of konfrontasi : Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, 1945-1965* / foreword by Pramodya Ananta Toer Bathurst, N.S.W : Crawford House, 1998.

Consultative Committee from 16 to 25 March 1965 held in Bogor.⁵⁴ At this conference, an organisation called the United National Revolutionary Front of North Kalimantan was established. One of the aims of the organisation was to ‘firmly oppose the aggression of British and U.S. imperialists and fight to crush the British project “Malaysia” and, with full confidence, defend the national independence of the Unitary State of North Kalimantan as proclaimed on December 8, 1962, under the leadership of Prime Minister Azahari’.⁵⁵ Another aim of the organisation was to ‘firmly fight for the realisation of complete independence based on genuine democracy in conformity with the aspirations of North Kalimantan revolutionary people’.⁵⁶

At the conference, the delegates discussed every aspect of the revolution including military organisation and guerrilla activities. During the confrontation the TNKU, the militant wing of the NKKU, with the espousal of the Indonesian government made a series of cross-border raids into the First, Third and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak.⁵⁷ Between 1963 and 1964, Azahari was in Western Front, Sintang, Putu Sibu where his forces were posted.⁵⁸

However, when the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia ended in 1966, Indonesia did not spell out its policy towards Brunei. This caused the Sultan to be concerned over Indonesia although Indonesia had no intention of expanding its territory.⁵⁹ At this time Indonesia was facing more domestic problems and was trying to obtain substantial economic assistance from the Western powers. Moreover, after the end of the Confrontation, the Indonesian government under Suharto no longer supported Azahari. However, since Indonesia had not clarified its policy towards Brunei, the Sultan felt apprehensive towards Indonesia. The Sultan distrusted Indonesia

⁵⁴ Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 202.

⁵⁵ Minutes of the First Conference of the North Kalimantan People’s Revolutionary Consultative Committee, 16 to 29 March 1965, Document No. 25/PRB/65. Cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People’s Party of Brunei*, pp. 253 – 262.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 253 – 262.

⁵⁷ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, ‘Brunei’s Political Development’, p. 196.

⁵⁸ Zariani, *Escaped From Berakas!*, p. 209.

⁵⁹ FCO. 15/289, Assessment of the likely political and security situation in Brunei up till the end of 1971, ‘Outside Influence’ (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdulah, ‘Brunei’s Political Development’, p. 200).

because of its aggressive foreign policy though Indonesia never made any territorial clam on the Northern Borneo States.⁶⁰

According to Major General Lewis Pugh, the Sultan's objective for retaining British military protection was undoubtedly the result of security concerns, that is to 'secure the safety, economic stability and progress of Brunei in the face of a political threat should Brunei became independent, in the short term from Malaysia and in the longer term from Indonesia'.⁶¹ With the population standing at only 114,145 in 1967 and an army of only 692⁶², Brunei would clearly not be able to defend itself against any internal or external attacks. As the Sultan once stated, 'even if half of the male population of Brunei were to join the armed forces, the little kingdom could not defend itself'.⁶³ Moreover, the regiment had only been in existence for a few years and the officers had been fully occupied in undergoing courses and training abroad.⁶⁴ That is why the Sultan valued British military protection over Brunei and was willing to pay for the stationing of the British Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate.⁶⁵ To the Sultan, the question of cost was not a problem for his government because it would be equally costly for Brunei to raise its own forces.⁶⁶ Since the end of the Indonesia–Malaysia Confrontation in 1966, the Brunei government had paid about half of the cost of maintaining the Gurkha Battalion in Brunei, which was approximately £500,000 per year. In April 1968, the Sultan declared his willingness to pay the entire sum of about £1,000,000 a year for the British battalion until the time of its withdrawal in November 1970.⁶⁷

Moreover, the Sultan wanted the continuity of the British presence in Brunei because the people of Brunei could not provide enough capable officers to run the state

⁶⁰ Zariani, *Escape From Berakas!*, p. 182.

⁶¹ FCO24/739, Major General Lewis Pugh to H.C. Byatt, 4 September 1970. He had an audience with Sir Omar in September 1970.

⁶² Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1967.

⁶³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 24 May 1969.

⁶⁴ FCO24/739, Major General Lewis Pugh to H.C. Byatt, 4 September 1970.

⁶⁵ WO32/21069, Henn's Minutes to the War Office, April 1968. Also see Webber to Commonwealth Office, 19 March 1968.

⁶⁶ WO32/21069, Webber to Commonwealth Office, 19 March 1968.

⁶⁷ FCO15/288, Record of Meeting between the Commonwealth Secretary, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Sir Omar, 7 April 1968.

administration. As mentioned before, when Brunei rejected the proposal to join Malaysia in 1963, the Malaysian government took its seconded officers in Brunei back to Malaysia. The Malaysian government withdrew the Malaysian Police Field Force unit, Malaysian officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) serving with the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment (RBMR).⁶⁸ When this happened, Brunei faced serious administrative difficulties.⁶⁹ Consequently, the Sultan requested the Commonwealth Secretary to assist Brunei in filling the key posts and other posts in the administration of the state. This was despite Britain's advice to the Sultan that he should first recruit officers from Malaysia.⁷⁰ To the Sultan, if Britain terminated its 1959 Agreement with Brunei, there would be a shortage of competent administrators to run the affairs of the state and if this happened, the administration of the state would be in deep trouble.⁷¹

When the Commonwealth Office broke the news that F.D. Webber, the High Commissioner, would be transferred to Australia in October 1967, the Sultan was concerned. The Sultan wanted Webber to stay, as he was anxious that any change in the High Commissioner would assume a much tougher line by the Commonwealth Office over the issue of constitutional development in Brunei.⁷² In the Sultan's view, the new High Commissioner would not understand his situation, especially regarding constitutional development in Brunei. The Sultan moreover felt that, if Webber were permanently positioned in Brunei, there would be a chance that he would eventually empathize with the Sultan's situation.⁷³ In a letter to the Commonwealth Office, Webber claimed that, 'He [the Sultan] is prepared to hear me ranting about our future relations and about the need for constitutional development but he would not do

⁶⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 210.

⁶⁹ The lack of capable officers to run the administration of the country was also a result of the 1962 Rebellion. Many government servants had been implicated in the rebellion and were either in hiding or under detention. Cited in Zariani, *Escape From Berakas*, p. 278.

⁷⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 215 – 216.

⁷¹ Among the positions held by the British were the State Financial Officer, the Attorney General (who was British until 1978), the Commander Officer of the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment; the Commanding Officers of the Regiments' Air and Naval Wings; the Director of the Security and Intelligence Unit and Director of Education. Many senior posts in the Civil Service, the Police, Army, Customs, Education, Agricultural and Land & Mine Departments were held by British Nationals. Cited in Zariani, *Escape From Berakas!*, p. 278.

⁷² WO32/21069, Webber to Commonwealth Office, 7 October 1967.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 7 October 1967.

business with anyone else'.⁷⁴ The Sultan tried to revoke his transfer but was unsuccessful.

In his letter to the Secretary of State, the Sultan urged the Secretary to reconsider his proposal to transfer Webber from Brunei, 'as I earnestly feel that a change of High Commissioner at the present stage of Brunei's development will not be in the best interests of the State'.⁷⁵ Since the Secretary of State refused to accept the Sultan's proposal, the latter rejected Webber's successor, A.R. Adair.⁷⁶ Consequently, the Sultan was warned by the Commonwealth Office that he would be in clear breach of the agreement, which he wished to preserve and the British did not.⁷⁷ Although the 1959 Agreement stipulated that the Sultan should be consulted before any appointment of High Commissioner was made, he did not have a veto and in the last resort the appointment and withdrawal of the High Commissioner was in Her Majesty's hands.⁷⁸ Subsequently, on 4 October 1967, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III abdicated the throne.

Here it appeared that the Sultan abdicated because the British government ignored his wish to retain Webber. According to a theory of the Economist Intelligence Unit, headquartered in London, the Sultan was resigning in 'protest against the transfer from Brunei of the British High Commissioner, Mr. F.D. Webber'.⁷⁹ However, according to J.O. Moreton of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 'the dispute over the appointment of the High Commissioner was probably only a symptom of Sir Omar's deeper dissatisfaction with the British policies. Indeed, he had been disturbed by the pressure put on him in July in London and by the decision shortly afterwards to withdraw British forces from the Far East'.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Ibid., 7 October 1967.

⁷⁵ FCO24/208, Sultan to Commonwealth Office, 12 August 1967. See also in FCO24/206.

⁷⁶ FCO24/206, Secretary of State to Sultan, 2 August 1967. See also F.C.O 24/212 Internal Security Situation, Letter from R.M., Hunt, High Commissioner, Brunei to R.A., Hibbert, Office of the Political Adviser to the C-in-C, Far East, Singapore, 2nd November 1967.

⁷⁷ FCO24/206, N. Pritchard to Bowden, 31 August 1967. See also FCO24/206, Commonwealth Office to Brunei, 18 September 1967.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 18 September 1967.

⁷⁹ FCO24/206, Webber to Commonwealth Office, 12 February 1968. See also in D. Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast Asian Islamic Sultanate*, Kuala Lumpur, Forum, 1990, p. 56.

⁸⁰ T312/2320, Record of Meeting held in the Conference Room Commonwealth Office, Brunei: Future British Policy, 27 November 1967. In this month, in a further defence review, Healey

Following the abdication of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, his son Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah succeeded him to the throne. He was proclaimed as the twenty-ninth Sultan of Brunei on 5 October 1967. When Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah became ruler, the British High Commissioner continued to press him and his father who then became known as Sir Omar (the power behind the throne) to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Tunku Abdul Rahman also persuaded the High Commissioner to encourage the new Sultan to work for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei and was optimistic that the accession of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah would pave the way for closer association between Brunei and Malaysia.⁸¹ Tunku Abdul Rahman informed Michael Walker, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, that his country would be ready to enter into discussions with Brunei at any time. To the Tunku it seemed clear that only through an association with Malaysia could Brunei have any stable long-term future.⁸²

Apart from the British and Malaysian governments, the BAKER party too insisted that the new Sultan introduce a democratic system of government in Brunei. The BAKER party urged the Sultan to hold a general election in 1968, two years earlier than originally scheduled.⁸³ In October 1967, Abdul Latif, the Secretary General of the BAKER party, claimed that a general election to form a representative system of government might be held in Brunei in early 1968. This was because 'the people of Brunei want an early election so that a representative government can be elected immediately'.⁸⁴

Sir Omar immediately retaliated against the BAKER party's claim regarding the general election. In an interview with the reporter of the *Utusan Melayu* newspaper, he

announced that the British forces in Singapore and Malaysia would be halved by 1970–71 and withdrawn fully between 1975 and 1977. Aden was to be evacuated immediately, although a British naval force was to remain in the Persian Gulf. These reductions enabled the British government to reduce defence costs by £300 million and to cut service manpower by 75,000 over the same period. Cited in A. Sked & C. Cook (4th ed.) *Post-War Britain: A Political History 1945 – 1992*, London, Penguin, 1993, pp. 233- 234.

⁸¹ DO229/8, M. Walker to Webber, 9 October 1967.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 9 October 1967. The Commonwealth Office, on the other hand, thought that the accession of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah would not mark any special turning point in the affairs of Brunei as the young Sultan would come under the influence of his father (cited in *ibid.*, 7 November 1967).

⁸³ *Utusan Melayu*, 20 October 1967.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1967.

stressed that Brunei would not hold a general election within ten years.⁸⁵ In addition, he warned Malaysia that the British forces would remain in Brunei even though Britain had made arrangements to withdraw its forces from Singapore and Malaysia. He further stated that the British government (as in the past) would be ready to assist Brunei in the event of attack by other countries or if there was an outbreak of incidents such as instigation from outside.⁸⁶ He also asserted that the Emergency Regulations in the state were to continue.⁸⁷

Sir Omar's statement that an election would not be held before Britain ended its agreement with Brunei made the Commonwealth Office decide not to continue pressing the Sultan and Sir Omar to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Moreover, Britain's plan to end its agreement with Brunei was approaching. The Commonwealth Office also felt that it had done enough in encouraging Sir Omar to introduce a democratic system of government and had acted in accordance with the advice of the Law Officers. Furthermore, the situation in Brunei had been relatively stable, and Britain did not expect an internal security problem in the short term.⁸⁸ As a result, the Commonwealth Office decided to leave the constitutional set-up in Brunei as it was, since it offered Britain the best chance of withdrawing within the following two years, leaving behind a stable state.⁸⁹ However, having decided to abandon its policy of constitutional pressure on the Sultan, the British government had to reconsider Brunei's future position within Malaysia.

At this time, the Commonwealth Office realised that to press Brunei to join the federation would be a risky plan unless such an association represented the wishes of the people of Brunei as a whole. So far, however, there was no evidence that the people of Brunei wanted to join Malaysia.⁹⁰ R.M. Hunt, the High Commissioner, stated in his letter to Reed that although perhaps in the absence of Sir Omar, Hapidz Laksmana (the

⁸⁵ Ibid, 25 October 1967.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 25 October 1967.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 25 October 1967. Under the Brunei Constitution of 1959, the Sultan could proclaim a state of emergency for not more than two years on an occasion of public danger existing whereby the security or economic life of the state of Brunei was threatened.

⁸⁸ DO229/8, Commonwealth Office to Webber, 24 October 1967.

⁸⁹ DO229/8, Walker to J.O. Moreton, 8 November 1967.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 8 November 1967. Also in FCO24/236, Commonwealth Office to Webber, 28 April 1967.

President of the BAKER party), or some other politicians could lead them into Malaysia, he was convinced that this would be against the wishes and the interests of the majority of the people of Brunei.⁹¹

Hunt realised that the people of Brunei did not want to join Malaysia because they were better off materially than their counterparts in Sabah and Sarawak.⁹² Bruneians also had a strong sense of national pride, and this feeling was stronger than in the Malay states of West Malaysia. That was why Azahari, the leader of the PRB, enjoyed overwhelming support from the people of Brunei in his campaign to upstage the Malaysian Plan proposed by Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1960.⁹³

Moreover, the Federal Government's stance towards Sabah and Sarawak since their entry to Malaysia in 1963 had been autocratic. In early 1967, the federal government had thrown the first Chief Minister of Sabah, Donald Stephens, out of office, as it had seen him exercising a degree of state autonomy in a manner that bordered on separatism.⁹⁴ Earlier in 1966, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, suffered a similar fate to that of Donald Stephens, and was replaced by Tawi Sili, who was more amenable to the directives of the federal government.⁹⁵ Stephen Kalong Ningkan was removed from office partly because of his objection to the pace and methods of implementing the national language policy in Sarawak by the federal government⁹⁶ and because he was reluctant to 'borneonize' the Sarawak Civil Service as most of the top posts were still in the hands of European expatriates.⁹⁷ Stephen

⁹¹ DO229/8, R.M. Hunt to Reed, 14 November 1967.

⁹² Ibid., 14 November 1967. Moreover, the people of Brunei received higher salaries for comparable jobs, paid less tax, received free pensions and had free education.

⁹³ Ibid. 14 November 1967.

⁹⁴ Andaya & Andaya (2nd), *A History of Malaysia*, p. 289. Donald Stephens had strong relations with Singapore; especially after the latter separated from the federation in 1965. This worried the federal government as the latter thought that Sarawak would follow Singapore (Cited in Bruce Ross-Larson, *The politics of federalism: Syed Kechik in East Malaysia*, Singapore: Bruce Ross-Larson, 1976, pp. 16 – 17).

⁹⁵ Andaya & Andaya (2nd), *A History of Malaysia*, p. 289.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 90 – 91.

⁹⁷ Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak 1946 - 1966; The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, OUP, Oxford, p. 116.

Kalong Ningkan was also sympathetic towards Singapore, especially after its separation from Malaysia where the issue of states' rights again came to the surface.⁹⁸

According to I. Ellison of the Commonwealth Office, what happened in Sarawak and Sabah had served to convince the people of Brunei even more firmly that Sir Omar was right in keeping Brunei out of Malaysia, and they certainly had no wish to be treated in a similar fashion by the government in Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, if the Sultan and his people were forced to enter the federation, Ellison feared that it would create instability, as had occurred in South Arabia and Nigeria.⁹⁹ Although in those countries the political situations were different to Brunei, the Commonwealth Office was however cautious on the success of the federation if Brunei were to enter it. So far the federations of Nigeria and South Arabia had experienced difficulties.¹⁰⁰

The Federation of Malaysia itself experienced the secession of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965. Since Singapore's admission into Malaysia, the federal government had encountered difficulties with Singapore which was predominantly Chinese. The union of Malaya, which was predominantly Malay, with Singapore had been marred by increasing conflict over whether the new federation should be a truly multiracial society or one dominated by Malays. The disagreements between the Chinese and the Malays

⁹⁸ Ross-Larson, *The Politics of Federalism*, p. 36 – 7.

⁹⁹ FCO24/222, I. Ellison to Reed, 21 November 1967.

¹⁰⁰ In Nigeria, the situation became out of control because from the beginning, it had problems over ethnic, regional and religious differences. Moreover, there were disparities in economic and educational development between North and South. The National Elections which were held in 1965 projected a major realignment of politics and a disputed result that led the country into a civil war. The eastern region, which increasingly felt itself to be a troubled state, clamoured for secession from the federation. When Lt. Col. Emeka Ojukwa, the military commander of the eastern region, declared the independence of Biafra on 30 May 1967, the war between the east and the rest of the federation occurred (See Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, London, Longman 1983 & John Hatch, *Nigeria: A History*, London, Heinemann Educational, 1971). In South Arabia, the Federation of South Arabia was facing a difficult situation after the British announced that they would leave Aden not later than 1968. As a result of Britain's decision to leave Aden, nationalist bodies began to compete for power and each was hoping that they would be the rulers of the country when the British withdrew. The two major rival organizations which emerged in the aftermath of the federation, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), caused mayhem in the federation. By late 1967, the NLF had become the dominant group and forced the collapse of the federal government. British forces were withdrawn in November, 1967, and Aden and South Arabia became the independent state of South Yemen. South Yemen and (northern) Yemen united as a single nation in 1990 (See Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen*, Cambridge, CUP, 2000 & Z.H. Kour, *The History of Aden*, London: Casa; Totowa, N.J: Biblio Distribution Centre, 1981).

led to riots where many Chinese and Malays were killed. Although the riots were eventually put down, tension between the two communities continued. Since the situation between Malaya and Singapore was deteriorating rather than improving, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, soon doubted about the merger. To prevent more bloodshed and rioting, he decided that Singapore should leave Malaysia. On 9 August 1965, Singapore was separated from Malaysia.¹⁰¹

To the Commonwealth Office, as far as Brunei was concerned, the Sultan and his people were generally suspicious of Malaysia. The Commonwealth Office felt that if the Malaysians were interested in attracting the Sultanate into some sort of association with them, they would have to adopt a far more forthcoming and flexible policy towards Brunei. Firstly, according to Ellison, if they could be less autocratic in governing Sarawak and Sabah and consider the interests of the peoples of those states, they would convince the people of Brunei of the advantages of joining the federation.¹⁰²

Secondly, giving Brunei some form of special status in the federation would probably persuade the Sultan to join Malaysia. For example, Malaysia could allow Brunei to keep its oil revenues and exempt it from most federal taxation. Tunku Abdul Rahman, however, would not agree to this, insisting that Brunei must be ready to accept 'normal obligations'¹⁰³ like other states in the federation. According to Tunku, the basic principles within the Federation of Malaysia allowed for no special exception; all member states had equal duties, rights and responsibilities to the Central Government as units of the federation. Tunku could not see how 'normal obligations' could be achieved successfully without dangerous repercussions for some of the other states in Malaysia, which had to shoulder their 'normal obligations' as normal members.¹⁰⁴

Since this flexible policy was not forthcoming, the Commonwealth Office decided to grant Brunei full independence and to allow Brunei to make up its own mind as to

¹⁰¹ See Lee Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, Singapore, Prentice Hall, 1998 & Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First; The Singapore Story, 1965 – 2000; Singapore and the Asian economic boom*, New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 2000 for the event of Singapore's secession from Malaysia.

¹⁰² FCO24/222, I. Ellison to Reed, 21 November 1967.

¹⁰³ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 151.

¹⁰⁴ DO229/8, Walker to Commonwealth Office, 17 October 1967.

whether it wished to enter into some sort of association with Malaysia.¹⁰⁵ The Commonwealth Office, however, had no desire to discourage Malaysia's long-term interest in the future of Brunei.¹⁰⁶ If the people of Brunei wished there to be some form of association with Malaysia, the British would consider it as entirely suitable but would not force the pace.¹⁰⁷ In 1967, a British Minister had declared that 'decolonization cannot consist in the transfer of one population, however small, to the rule of another country, without regard to their own opinions and interests'.¹⁰⁸

The Commonwealth Office also thought that when giving notice of termination it was not the elected politicians that the British had to deal with but the ex-Sultan (Sir Omar). The Commonwealth Office also thought that it had no authority to insist on constitutional advance in the Sultanate before or after the British gave notice¹⁰⁹ (as Brunei was not a British colony) and that Sir Omar was the right horse to back, not Hapidz Laksmana (whom the Malaysians were also backing).¹¹⁰

However, the Commonwealth Office never revealed to the Malaysian government that it had abandoned its efforts in urging the Sultan to implement the system and to bring Brunei within Malaysia as such an admission could have upset Malaysia.¹¹¹ This was because Tunku Abdul Rahman believed that Britain had the means to exert real pressure for constitutional development in Brunei.¹¹² Moreover, Michael Walker, the British High Commissioner, believed that if Tunku found out that Britain had abandoned its policy, he would suspect Britain was working against the inclusion of Brunei into Malaysia and this would damage the relations between Britain and Malaysia.¹¹³ In Walker's meeting with the Tunku, he however gave a hint to the Tunku that Britain's long-term policy towards Brunei was 'to give Brunei its independence

¹⁰⁵ DO229/8, Commonwealth Office to Webber, 24 October 1967.

¹⁰⁶ DO229/8, Commonwealth Office to British High Commissioner to Brunei, 24 October 1967.

¹⁰⁷ DO229/8, British High Commissioner to Malaysia to British High Commissioner to Brunei, 7 November 1967.

¹⁰⁸ John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat From Empire in the Post War-World*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p. 309.

¹⁰⁹ FCO15/288, Brunei – Medium and Long Term Policy, 8 November 1967.

¹¹⁰ DO229/8, R.M. Hunt to A.H. Reed, 14 November 1967.

¹¹¹ DO229/8, Commonwealth Office to Webber, 24 October 1967.

¹¹² DO229/8, British High Commissioner to Malaysia to J.O. Moreton, 8 November 1967.

¹¹³ DO229/8, Walker to Moreton, 8 November 1967.

and if at that time the wish of the people of Brunei was that there should be one form of association with Malaysia, we should regard that as entirely suitable', but Britain would not force the pace.¹¹⁴

On 7 April 1968, George Thomson, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, clarified to the Sultan and Sir Omar the British stance regarding constitutional progress in Brunei. He made it clear to them that, 'the British Government did not think it right to offer formal advice recommending changes which the Sultan judged to be against Brunei's best interest'.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, he hoped that the Sultan and Sir Omar would feel it right to encourage some changes.¹¹⁶

Sir Omar was content with Britain's decision not to press him and his son any longer to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei, as it freed them from constitutional pressure and thus enabled them to preserve the power of the monarch and prevent Brunei from entering Malaysia. Nevertheless, the Sultan and Sir Omar continued to face demands from the BAKER party to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. This was despite the fact that the BAKER party (the only solid political party in Brunei) failed to win many votes in the 1968 District Council elections. In the elections, the BAKER party won only 24 seats out of 55 seats¹¹⁷ where it had polled only 30 per cent of the votes, with 70 per cent going to independent candidates.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Tunku agreed that it was wise to proceed cautiously and that it would be a mistake to force the pace. He was confident that once Britain had withdrawn from Brunei, Sir Omar and the Sultan would look increasingly towards Malaysia for defence assistance. Tunku further added that they would not be able to maintain their position by relying on mercenaries, since this would show that they were unwilling to trust their own people (cited in DO229/8, British High Commissioner to Malaysia to British High Commissioner to Brunei, 7 November 1967).

¹¹⁵ FCO15/288, Record of Meeting between the Commonwealth Secretary, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Sir Omar, 7 April 1968.

¹¹⁶ According to M. Leigh, the slogan 'no independence before majority rule' which was of cardinal importance to Britain in former days, seemed to have been overlooked as the UK sought to free itself of its colonial remnants (cited in Michael B. Leigh, 'Independence For Brunei', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, (60), 1, 1983, p. 19).

¹¹⁷ BA/0561/1983 (SUK Series 3, Box 42), 'Election and Organization', Tambahan (Appendix) A to C, in Matnor McAfee, *Penyelia Pilihan Raya* (The Commissioner of Elections) to Pengarah (Director), *Penyiaran dan Penerangan* (Broadcasting and Information), 3 June 1968, item 27 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 378).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

During the Legislative Council Meeting in May 1968, Zainal Abidin Puteh, the BAKER party's Secretary-General II, had put forward a proposal demanding the implementation of a democratic system of government in and independence for Brunei. In the meeting, he demanded that the government carry out a survey to find out the people's aspirations for constitutional development and independence.¹¹⁹ In May 1968, a representative of the Information Section of the BAKER party Pengiran Mohammad Samli bin Pengiran Lahab also demanded that the Brunei government implement a democratic system of government in Brunei.¹²⁰ The BAKER party's continuous calls for the implementation of a democratic system of government worried the Sultan and Sir Omar and their concern grew when the British informed them about the end of the agreement and the withdrawal of the British Gurkha battalion from Brunei.

3.3. Brunei's efforts to seek continuous defence safeguards

On 30 September 1968, in the meeting between George Thomson, the Sultan and Sir Omar, Thomson formally notified the Sultan and Sir Omar about the end of the agreement and the withdrawal of the British Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate.¹²¹ Indeed, after Healey's announcement in July 1967 (that the British forces in Singapore would be halved by 1970-71 and withdrawn completely between 1975 and 1977), the British government continued its review of overseas spending and services manpower to see whether further economies could be made.¹²² On 18 November 1967, however, the British government had to bow to economic pressure resulting from devaluation.¹²³

¹¹⁹ *Pelita Brunei*, 29 May, 1968.

¹²⁰ *Bintang Harian* (Daily Star), 25 May, 1968.

¹²¹ PREM13/3181, George Thomson to Prime Minister, 27 September 1968. Thomson also wrote a letter to Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah reminding him about the end of Britain's agreement with Brunei. In his letter he stated that British responsibilities under the 1959 Anglo-Brunei Agreement and the other treaties and agreements referred to in the Article 9(2) of the Agreement would be relinquished on 30 November 1970. Cited in PREM13/3181, Thomson to Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, 18 October 1968. For the full text of the letter see Appendix VI.

¹²² M. Dockrill, *British Defence Since 1945*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 95.

¹²³ The decision to devalue was seen by many as inevitable: according to C.J. Bartlett, 'it is difficult to see how devaluation could have been avoided if not in November 1967, then a little later' (cited in C.J. Bartlett, *A History of Post War Britain, 1945 – 1974*, London, Longman, p. 230).

In December 1967, another significant decision was taken when Harold Wilson made a statement in the House of Commons announcing a review of public expenditure in which 'no area of expenditure [could] be regarded as sacrosanct.'¹²⁴ This implied that defence cuts would be made along with cuts in other areas of government spending. In January 1968, Healey stated that the defence capability would be directed primarily towards Europe. Moreover, after its withdrawal from the Far East was completed, Britain should not be expected to 'do more to contribute towards the security of independent states outside Europe than any other European power'.¹²⁵ This was indeed a major shift from the previous plan whereby Britain had intended to maintain its defence capability outside Europe even after withdrawing from east of Suez in the mid-1970s.

On 16 January 1968, another major shift from the previous plan was made whereby the Wilson government decided to accelerate the final date for withdrawal from Singapore, Malaysia and the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971 instead of by the mid-1970s. In the case of Brunei, Britain decided to withdraw from the Sultanate earlier than from Singapore, Malaysia and the Persian Gulf, and that was in November 1970.¹²⁶

Sir Omar, however, argued persistently that Brunei was not yet ready for independence. He stressed that the British government should continue its protection

¹²⁴ *Times*, 19 December 1967.

¹²⁵ Cmnd. 3515, *Public Expenditure in 1968–69 and 1969–70*, London: H.M.S.O., 1968. Cited in McDougall, 'The Wilson Government', p. 238.

¹²⁶ Prior to this, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had planned to give two years' notice in March 1968 of the termination of the 1959 Agreement that is in March 1970, earlier than the scheduled withdrawal from east of Suez by 1971. Malcolm MacDonald, the former UK Commissioner General in Southeast Asia in the 1950s, however, suggested that two years' notice of the termination of the agreement should be postponed at least until towards the end of 1968 and if possible until about the end of 1969, so that termination came nearer the time when British troops withdrew from Southeast Asia at the end of 1971. MacDonald suggested this to avoid doubts among the Southeast Asian countries about Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from east of Suez by 1971. If Britain withdrew from Brunei in March 1970, other countries in Southeast Asia might suspect that the British were withdrawing from Southeast Asia earlier than the date of withdrawal by 1971 (cited in FCO24/236, MacDonald to Thomson, 14 March 1968).

over Brunei, and if that were not possible, he urged Britain to find an alternative arrangement for the protection of Brunei.¹²⁷

Indeed the British withdrawal from the Far East was persistently protested against not only by Sir Omar but also by leaders of the countries of Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand who had defence agreements with Britain. Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore, argued that Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from the Far East would affect not only the security of a small island state but also the economy of Singapore as 46,000 local people were directly and indirectly employed by the forces.¹²⁸ Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaysia, further argued that the British withdrawal would leave the new federation weakly defended.¹²⁹ A Malaysian minister had also reportedly commented that Malaysia would never have taken Sabah and Sarawak if Malaya had known in 1963 that the British would withdraw from the region.¹³⁰

The Australian Prime Minister John Grey Gorton too argued that the continued presence of British forces in Malaysia and Singapore could provide a greater contribution to peace and security than the deployment of forces in the European region. He also stressed that if economic considerations led the British government to its present proposals, 'it might be preferable to make savings in some other areas than those of Malaysia and Singapore.'¹³¹

Although the British withdrawal from the Far East was persistently argued against by the leaders of these countries, the British government planned for a conference in June 1969 where Britain would discuss future defence arrangements with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia. The conference was planned to find another

¹²⁷ PREM13/3181, George Thomson to Prime Minister, 27 September 1968. In October 1968, the Sultan replied to the letter of George Thomson dated 18 October 1968 where the Sultan stated his disagreement to Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei in November 1970. For the full text of the letter see Appendix VII.

¹²⁸ *Times*, 17 April 1967.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 July 1967.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8 January 1967.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 12 January 1968.

way of protecting Malaysia and Singapore when Britain pulled out its forces from the Far East.¹³²

Britain also offered to provide help in running the air-defence radar environment which was shared by Singapore and Malaysia. Further aid programmes for Singapore and Malaysia would be discussed to ease the economic impact of the accelerated withdrawal from the area.¹³³ In the case of Brunei, Thomson offered the Sultan the possibility of opening negotiations for a new Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Brunei and Britain, which set out ways in which Britain would continue to assist Brunei in the military field when it became independent.¹³⁴

Under the new treaty, Britain would second its military personnel to the armed forces of Brunei and advise them on organisation and methods for increasing their effectiveness. The British would help with the selection of civil military personnel to serve under contract with the Brunei government. It would also train Brunei officers, second them to British units and train police officers. In addition, Britain would occasionally send a unit for training in the same way that it did in a number of countries, and would help Brunei in the supply of military equipment.¹³⁵

Furthermore, the British government would assist Brunei in its external relations by advising Brunei on the establishment and organization of a diplomatic mission in London and offering a selection of accommodation. The mission in London would give Brunei diplomatic access to almost every other country in the world. In addition, it would train Brunei's personnel in the workings of a diplomatic mission, and would act as a channel of communication with foreign or Commonwealth governments other than Brunei's immediate neighbours.¹³⁶ However, since the agreement did not involve any continuous defence commitments to Brunei, Sir Omar deferred any decision because his main concern was the defence of Brunei after Britain ended its military protection over the Sultanate.¹³⁷

¹³² See Chin Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The Transformation of a Security System 1957-1971*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

¹³³ *Times*, 17 January 1968.

¹³⁴ PREM13/3181, George Thomson to Prime Minister, 27 September 1968.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 September 1968.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 27 September 1968.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27 September 1968.

Sir Omar again enquired as to the possibility of continuing defence safeguards made available to Brunei; Thomson persistently said that this was impossible. The Commonwealth Office, however, tried to associate Brunei with regional military co-operation, which would be discussed at a conference in June 1969 with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia – which then became known as the Five-Power Conference.¹³⁸ Britain was trying not to establish a formal defence commitment to Brunei but to bring Brunei by the time it became fully independent into some form of association with Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia (so that the defence problems of the area could be viewed as a whole).¹³⁹

It should be borne in mind that, in 1967, the issue of the defence of Brunei within the Anglo-Malaysian defence agreement created a problem for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. If Brunei joined Malaysia, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office thought that it would not be difficult to extend the Anglo-Malaysian defence agreement to Brunei. The British at first thought that the Anglo-Malaysian defence agreement should exclude east Malaysia to ensure that the British would not fall into the Borneo hook.¹⁴⁰ In 1968, however, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office felt that if Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia were considering the defence of Malaysia and Singapore, it was necessary to take into account what was happening in the North Borneo area if the general picture were to be complete.¹⁴¹

The British initially consulted Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia before the conference was held to hear their views on this matter. British consultations regarding Brunei's associations with these countries began in December 1968. When Britain consulted Australia, the latter was not in favour of including Brunei in the forthcoming conference. Australia's decision stemmed from its profound reluctance to become involved in any way in the defence of east Malaysia, and it felt strongly that Brunei's future lay logically in some form of association with Malaysia.¹⁴² Although Britain informed Australia that this was not possible because Brunei did not trust

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 September 1968.

¹³⁹ WO32/21069, F. Cooper to Moreton, 20 November 1967.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 November 1967.

¹⁴¹ FCO24/429/1, Moreton to D.P. Aires, 8 January 1968.

¹⁴² FCO24/429/1, Adair to Aires, 4 January 1969.

Malaysia, Australia stressed that Brunei had to be convinced that its future defence rested on co-operation with Malaysia. In other words, Malaysia and Brunei should co-operate with regard to the defence of Borneo, and the other countries in the region should not get involved.¹⁴³

New Zealand, on the other hand, considered that it would be premature to bring Brunei under the Five-Power Defence Arrangements until it had developed politically and had achieved independence, and raised the question of constitutional development and the type of government in Brunei.¹⁴⁴ Britain maintained that these issues had nothing to do with the problem of the defence of the region after it withdrew from South-East Asia. Britain felt that New Zealand was trying to evade discussions to bring Brunei under the Five-Power Defence Arrangement by raising the question of constitutional advance in Brunei.¹⁴⁵

When Britain consulted Malaysia, the latter did not favour raising the subject in the Five Power Forum. According to Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, had confirmed that the issue of Brunei would not be mentioned in the Five-Power Conference by Malaysia.¹⁴⁶ The Malaysian government did not think that that the issue of Brunei should be discussed¹⁴⁷ as Brunei was certain to enter Malaysia. According to Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, there was no need for the five powers to take a major initiative because Brunei was almost 'bound to fall into their hands.'¹⁴⁸

Singapore, which had economic interests in Brunei, asked Britain if it was necessary for the latter to withdraw from Brunei completely. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, wanted as far as possible for Britain to continue its protection over Brunei.¹⁴⁹ Lee Kuan Yew was also not enthusiastic about Brunei being associated

¹⁴³ Ibid., 4 January 1969.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 4 January 1969.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 4 January 1969.

¹⁴⁶ FCO24/429/1, Record of Conversation between the High Commissioner and Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, 21 February 1969 at the Wisma Putera.

¹⁴⁷ FCO24/429/1, Future of Brunei, London Discussions September/October 1968.

¹⁴⁸ FCO24/429/1, Breton to Ward, 10 April 1969.

¹⁴⁹ In this case, Lee Kuan Yew suggested Britain should continue its agreement with Brunei for the next decade, saying that Britain did not have to maintain a permanent military presence there. He believed that the Sultan would be content if Britain showed its flag there once in a while, but

with Malaysia, as he was apprehensive that Singapore's economic interests in Brunei would be affected.¹⁵⁰

During this period, Singapore began to form closer relationships with Brunei in economic and diplomatic matters,¹⁵¹ as Brunei increasingly turned towards Singapore for friendly co-operation.¹⁵² In October 1968, De La Mare, the British High Commissioner to Singapore, mentioned that it seemed as if Lee would welcome the Sultan's rejection of any possibility of association with Malaysia. In December, S. Rajaratnam, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs, asked De La Mare again whether Britain was going to advise the Sultan to establish an association with Malaysia. De La Mare replied that Britain did not intend to press him, but rather to make him ponder the reality of Britain's departure, which Rajaratnam agreed, was the wisest course.¹⁵³

It was obvious that none of these countries was willing to discuss the future of Brunei's defence in the coming conference.¹⁵⁴ J.O. Moreton of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office thought that it could be possible to have a joint declaration by Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia that they respected one another's territorial integrity, and that of Brunei. However, since the soundings of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia indicated a clear desire not to bring Brunei into the conference, the Commonwealth Office did not pursue the idea any further.¹⁵⁵

Accordingly the Sultan was informed by Thomson after the conference in June 1969 in Canberra, Australia of the outcome of the meeting of the Five-Power nations (where none of them brought up the issue of Brunei in their defence of the region in the

this should happen for a long time (cited in FCO24/429/1, A. De La Mare to Commonwealth Office, 1 October 1968).

¹⁵⁰ Cited in FCO24/429/1, A. De La Mare to Commonwealth Office, 1 October 1968.

¹⁵¹ *Straits Echo*, 13 August 1965 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 337).

¹⁵² The first Singapore team to visit Brunei consisted of three technical education experts who were invited by the Bruneian Government, in August 1966, to provide consultation in the planning and setting up of three technical schools – a building construction school in Brunei Town, an engineering technical training school in Kuala Belait and a vocational secondary school in Tutong. *Malay Mail*, 13 August 1966.

¹⁵³ FCO24/222, A. De La Mare to Commonwealth Office, 1 October 1968.

¹⁵⁴ FCO24/429/1, Moreton to Walker, 7 February 1969.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1969.

meeting).¹⁵⁶ Sir Omar, however, had never been interested in participating in the deliberation. He was not interested in associating Brunei with the Five-Power nations in the field of defence, as he distrusted Malaysia. Colin Bickler, a *Reuters* correspondent, who had an audience with Sir Omar on 7 April 1969, told A.R. Adair, the British High Commissioner, that Sir Omar had made it clear to him that 'Brunei would have nothing whatsoever to do with any form of closer association with Malaysia'. He stressed that Brunei was 'not interested in being associated with the Five Power Talks' and 'would seek continuous British military protection'.¹⁵⁷ Sir Omar in an interview said that 'it would be most unwise of the Brunei Government to accept the withdrawal without making strenuous representations.'¹⁵⁸

Sir Omar, who felt that the British had not satisfied their wishes for reassurances on defence, put forward arguments about Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei to Michael Stewart, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs¹⁵⁹ in December 1969. Sir Omar argued for the first time that the notice given by Britain to terminate the 1959 Agreement was invalid, as there was no provision for termination in the agreement itself. In response, Michael Stewart declared firmly that the British view remained unchanged. He stressed that Britain was entitled to relinquish its powers and responsibilities in this way. Sir Omar, although obviously disappointed, did not contest this point.¹⁶⁰

For the first time, Sir Omar also reminded Britain that Brunei had remained loyal to the sterling, despite the devaluation.¹⁶¹ This reminder was intended as a hint to the British that such loyalty would not be repeated if independence were forced upon Brunei in November 1970. It is worth noting here that, during the devaluation of the sterling in November 1967, the value in Brunei dollars of the sterling investments and

¹⁵⁶ FCO24/429/1, Adair to Aires, 8 April, 1969.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 April, 1969.

¹⁵⁸ *The Guardian*, 8 April 1969.

¹⁵⁹ A position which came into existence with the merger of the positions of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, and their associated departments, into a single Department of State in October 1968.

¹⁶⁰ T312/3128, J.A. Marshall to Barratt, 18 December 1969.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18 December 1969.

other sterling balances was reduced by \$121,289,327.95.¹⁶² Despite this, Brunei did not withdraw or end its sterling investments in London. The British delegation, however, did not make any response on this matter.¹⁶³

As mentioned before, Britain wanted to end the agreement as far as possible on the basis of mutual consent rather than by unilateral abrogation. This was to ensure that the agreement could be ended smoothly without jeopardizing the stability of the state and British economic interests in Brunei. Britain was concerned that the Sultan and Sir Omar might retaliate by withdrawing Brunei's sterling reserve from the Bank of England in London.¹⁶⁴

In the 1960s, many former colonies gradually decreased their London balances as a sign of independence and in reaction to local demands.¹⁶⁵ During the colonial period, the British territories insisted on keeping their foreign earnings in London and on having their local currencies regulated so as to conform to British practice. The habit of keeping substantial sterling balances in London facilitated commercial and investment links with Britain.¹⁶⁶ However, in the 1960s many former British colonies increasingly reduced their London balances. In Brunei's case, the British were apprehensive that the Sultanate would withdraw its sterling balances from London.¹⁶⁷

At a meeting on 22 December 1969 at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, Sir Omar asked Michael Stewart whether Britain could agree to the proposal for joint responsibility for Brunei's defence and repeated his plea that Britain should continue its protection over Brunei.¹⁶⁸ Stewart, however, made it clear that Britain could not agree to the proposal for joint responsibility for defence, as this was not compatible with the relinquishment of British responsibilities under the 1959

¹⁶² Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report, 1967*.

¹⁶³ See DO169/553, Cabinet, Defence and Overseas Committee, 'Brunei – Future Policy', 1 November 1966. Also see PREM13/3181, Brunei – Future Policy, G. Thomson to Prime Minister, 21 September 1967.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization*, p. 305.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁶⁷ As stated before, in 1966, the Brunei government held reserves in London, which amounted to £133 million (which is approximately £800 million at 2005 prices).

¹⁶⁸ OD39/89, Record of Meeting between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 22 December 1969.

Agreement. Stewart proposed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation under which, if Brunei agreed, Britain would be willing to continue its defence protection over Brunei until 1971.¹⁶⁹ The British government also offered Lee Kuan Yew the same period of extension for the presence of the British military in Singapore.¹⁷⁰ Sir Omar, however, rejected Stewart's proposal, as it did not cover the defence of Brunei adequately.¹⁷¹

Since the meeting did not produce any acceptable solutions, the Sultan and Sir Omar worked out a formula to resolve the problems of Brunei's future defence, which the Sultan sent to Stewart in January 1970.¹⁷² In the proposal, the Sultan stated that, since Britain was not prepared to go beyond the proposed Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation by having a new agreement for the defence and protection of Brunei, the Sultan suggested that Brunei would be content to 'accept a commitment that Her Majesty's Government would use its best endeavours to protect Brunei'.¹⁷³ Additionally, in the context of 'shared responsibility' for Brunei's defence, the Sultan suggested that the decision on possible British assistance could be a matter for consultation between the two governments.¹⁷⁴ Since Britain could not prolong its commitment for economic reasons, the Sultan declared that Brunei was prepared to accept the financial consequences of his proposal.¹⁷⁵ Stewart, however, could not accept the Sultan's proposal. This was because the concept of 'shared responsibility' for the defence of Brunei was not compatible with the relinquishment of British responsibilities over Brunei.¹⁷⁶

In the meeting on 7 April 1970 between Lord Shepherd Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Sultan and his delegation in Brunei, the Sultan's delegation tabled another proposal to Lord Shepherd, where they suggested that British protection over Brunei should be extended for a fixed period of years. They

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 December 1969.

¹⁷⁰ *Times*, 17 January 1968.

¹⁷¹ OD39/89, Record of Meeting between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 22 December 1969.

¹⁷² FCO24/730, Sultan of Brunei to M. Stewart, 29 January 1970.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 29 January 1970.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 29 January 1970.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 January 1970. For the full text of the correspondence see Appendix VIII.

¹⁷⁶ FCO24/725, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 19 March 1970.

recommended that the length of this period was a matter to be discussed when an agreement had been reached. During the period of extension, Britain would have complete control over Brunei's external affairs, and the defence of Brunei would be a responsibility to be shared between Britain and Brunei. In the event or threat of an armed attack on Brunei, the two governments would 'consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately to deal with such an attack or threat'.¹⁷⁷ Britain would also be entitled to 'render immediate assistance in the suppression of any organised threat or attempt to overthrow the Government of Brunei'.¹⁷⁸ In addition, Brunei would not object to Britain requiring a right, on reasonable notice, 'to terminate the extended period of protection short of its original fixed length.'¹⁷⁹ However, none of these suggestions was agreeable to Lord Shepherd. For example, in the case of 'shared responsibility' in the defence of Brunei, the British government's views were clear and unequivocal, namely that the responsibility for the defence of Brunei must, and should, lie with the Brunei government.¹⁸⁰

In the same month, the Sultan asked the Nepalese Government whether it could provide a Gurkha battalion at the Sultanate's expense,¹⁸¹ A.R.H. Kellas, the British High Commissioner in Kathmandu, however, informed I.J.M. Sutherland at the South Asian Department that there was no chance of sending Gurkhas to Brunei.¹⁸² In June 1967, when Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien tried to recruit a Gurkha army from Nepal, the Nepalese government turned him down despite being informed by the Commonwealth Office that it was in favour of the idea. Among the reasons given by the Nepalese government for rejecting the Sultan's request was its embarrassment at providing a mercenary force, even though it recognised the special position of Britain in recruiting the Gurkhas. Another reason was its shortage of manpower in relation to Nepal's

¹⁷⁷ FCO24/730, Record of Meeting between Lord Shepherd, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and the Sultan of Brunei at the Istana Darul Hana – Annex I, Brunei Proposals, 7 April 1970.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1970.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1970.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1970.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1970.

¹⁸² FCO24/739, A.R.H. Kellas to I.J.M. Sutherland, 19 January 1970.

economic development plans, although this reason was considered not altogether valid by the British ambassador in Kathmandu.¹⁸³

The reasons for King Mahendra not allowing the Sultan to recruit the Gurkhas from Nepal were that he did not want to appear to be committed to supporting the Sultan's regime and that he was against the use of the Gurkhas to suppress domestic upheavals. The fact that there was a similarity between the Sultan and King Mahendra's system of incomplete democracy made him more sensitive on this matter. King Mahendra did not want his African and Asian counterparts to accuse him of providing mercenaries to support the Sultan's archaic regime. It was for these reasons that King Mahendra declined to allow the Sultan to recruit Gurkhas in Nepal, even though he realised the financial advantages of his proposal.¹⁸⁴

In May 1970, when the Ministry of Defence drew up a schedule for the withdrawal of the battalion from Brunei, Michael Stewart decided to inform the Sultan of the time of the withdrawal of the Gurkha battalion from Brunei. This was to convince the Sultan and Sir Omar that there was no wavering in Britain's policy to withdraw its Gurkha battalion from Brunei and to end its military protection over the Sultanate.¹⁸⁵ The battalion was to leave Brunei in stages, on 17 and 27 November, and on 2 and 7 December 1970. The battalion would not be in operation for about four weeks before the final withdrawal, but operational commitments up until 30 November could be met from Singapore.¹⁸⁶ Britain would also not open talks with Brunei in advance of the UK's general election on 18 June 1970.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, up until April 1970, no agreement was reached between Brunei and the British government. All Sir Omar and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's efforts to retain continuous British protection and to seek a new

¹⁸³ FCO24/435, W.A. Ward to O'Leary, 28 August 1969.

¹⁸⁴ *New Statesman*, 21 May 1971 (Cited in FCO37/826). The Gurkhas played an important role in the Nepalese economy. The cash flow derived from annual pensions, remittances to families, or monies taken home in a lump sum by discharged veterans or by service personnel on leave represented a major source of the country's foreign exchange (Cited in www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9181.html).

¹⁸⁵ FCO24/739, Commander in Chief for the Far East (CICFE) to the Ministry of Defence, May 1970.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, May 1970.

¹⁸⁷ FCO24/739, M. Stewart to Adair, 26 May 1970.

defence arrangement with Britain had thus failed, as the Labour government was committed to end its agreement with Brunei.

3.4. Conclusion

As a result of Britain's decision to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei, the Sultan came under more pressure from the British to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The study has argued that the reason for the Sultan's refusal to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei was that it would reduce the power of the monarch and bring Brunei into Malaysia. Because of Britain's continuous pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei and Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan abdicated the throne in October 1967.

In 1968, however, the British government abandoned its efforts to urge the Sultan and Sir Omar to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei since they refused to implement the system and since Britain's withdrawal from Brunei was imminent. Following Britain's cessation of its efforts to press the Sultan and Sir Omar to implement a democratic system of government, Britain also abandoned its aim to bring Brunei within the federation. Nevertheless, Britain upheld its decision to end its agreement with Brunei. This study has shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar did not want Britain to end its agreement with Brunei as they were apprehensive that Brunei would not be able to protect itself from any internal and external threats or attacks (because of its small population and small army). In this situation, the Sultan and Sir Omar were particularly concerned over Malaysia, which still wanted to bring Brunei within the federation, and Indonesia, which had not clarified its policy towards the Sultanate after the end of Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation in 1966. The Sultan and Sir Omar also did not want Britain to end its agreement with Brunei as the people of Brunei could not provide enough skilled officers to run the administration of the state.

Consequently, the Sultan and Sir Omar proposed that Britain extend its military protection over the Sultanate. This study has shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar were unrelenting in their desire to retain British protection over the Sultanate, proposing that Britain be jointly responsible with Brunei over the latter's defence. However, their

proposal was rejected as Britain was committed to ending its agreement with Brunei in November 1970. When the Sultan proposed to hire a Gurkha battalion from the King of Nepal, the King rejected the Sultan's proposal as the King did not want to be accused by international communities of supporting an autocratic regime. This study has also shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar were persistent in rejecting the British offer of a new treaty between Brunei and Britain as it did not include the defence of Brunei. When Britain consulted Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore as to the possibility of including Brunei in the Five-Power Conference in June 1969, they were not interested in doing so. This study has shown that Sir Omar was never interested in associating Brunei with the Five-Power nations over the defence of the region because of his distrust of Malaysia.

The Conservative Party which came to power in June 1970, however, reversed the Labour government's decision as it was willing to have consultative responsibility over Brunei's defence. This, however, caused the BAKER party to appeal to the UN to sponsor the independence of Brunei. Their appeal in turn posed further challenges and problems for the Sultan and Sir Omar as they were not ready to proclaim independence for Brunei. The next chapter will look into the coming of the Conservative Party to power, the reversal of policy of the Labour government, the BAKER party's call to the UN for Brunei's independence and the Sultan and Sir Omar's response.

CHAPTER FOUR

Brunei and the British Reversal of Policy:

1970 – 1972

4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate following the reversal of policy east of Suez by the Conservative Party when it came to power in Britain in June 1970. This study will first look into the reversal of policy by the Conservative government towards Brunei, the signing of the 1971 Agreement between Brunei and Britain, and its terms and significance to the Sultanate. By the signing of this agreement, Brunei's defence became the consultative responsibility of both Britain and Brunei and Brunei's external affairs came under Britain's full control. By this agreement, the British government terminated its responsibility for advising the Sultan on the internal affairs of the state. Indeed this term reduced the possibility of continued pressure for constitutional reform in Brunei which was welcomed by the Sultan and Sir Omar.

The BAKER party, however, upon hearing that Brunei would not gain its independence in November 1970, sent a memorandum to the UN calling upon the world organization to assist Brunei in achieving independence. The BAKER party also continued to urge the British and the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. This was indeed a challenge to the Sultan and Sir Omar as they did not want to achieve either matter. As the repeated calls of the BAKER party to the UN could have put pressure on the British to relinquish their remaining responsibilities towards Brunei, the Sultan and Sir Omar implemented tough measures to put an end to the BAKER party's political activities.

This study will show that the Sultan and Sir Omar ended the BAKER party's political activities and the prospect of democracy in Brunei by cancelling the District and Legislative Council elections and by continuing the state of emergency in Brunei. This study will also show that Britain's inability to persuade the Sultan to implement the system, the people's lack of interest in democracy and the lack of credibility of the

parties' leaders in organising their parties were further reasons for the failure of the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei.

4. 2. British reversal of policy and the 1971 Agreement

In November 1970, discussions between Brunei and Britain resumed after inconclusive talks with the Labour government in 1968. Since taking office in June 1969, the Conservative government had given no definite indications of its future relations with Brunei. However, it had stated that it would maintain a 'modest presence' in Southeast Asia.¹

In September 1970, Air Marshal Sir Brian Burnett, the Commander-in-Chief for the Far East, stated that the Tory government planned to leave modest forces where they were welcome and where they would be of strategic value. Although Britain could see no internal and external threats to the region, it felt that a British presence combined with that of other Commonwealth countries would help to ensure that no such threat arose.² Burnett also stated that the British government would retain the Gurkha battalion in Brunei temporarily until a new agreement had been worked out between Brunei and Britain. He assured Brunei that while the 1959 Agreement between the two countries remained in force, Britain was committed to aiding Brunei in the event of external or internal threats.³

The Conservative party that came to power in June 1970 did not envisage a complete withdrawal from east of Suez as it claimed that such action would be perilous to countries like Singapore and Malaysia. In 1971, the Conservative government proposed the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) (between Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Britain) to succeed the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA). The FPDA had the proviso that Britain would be a participant and not the leader of the new defence force. Since Britain, as part of the FPDA, was to continue its presence in Malaysia and Singapore, the Conservative Government decided that the 1959 Agreement, under the terms of which Britain had responsibility for the defence of Brunei, should continue without substantial

¹*Borneo Bulletin*, 26 September 1970.

²*Ibid.*, 26 September 1970.

³*Ibid.*, 26 September 1970.

modification.⁴ Via the FPDA, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia agreed to discuss what steps were to be taken in the event of an external threat to either Malaysia or Singapore. There was, however, no obligation to act as there had been under the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement they replaced. The Brunei arrangements, though similar to those of the FPDA, were not linked directly with the latter.⁵

The talks held between the Sultan and his delegation and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Anthony Royle, in November 1970 produced a draft agreement. Following further discussions in early 1971, a new Anglo-Brunei Agreement amending the 1959 Agreement was signed in Bandar Seri Begawan on 23 November 1971 by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and by Anthony Royle on behalf of the British government.

Under the 1971 Agreement, a Joint Standing Consultative Council for Brunei Defence, known as the Brunei Defence Council, was formed to replace the Standing Advisory Council, which had been set up under the 1959 Agreement. The new Council included the High Commissioner as well as 'his adviser, a British officer who will normally be the senior officer of Her Majesty's forces as are stationed in the State'.⁶ The Sultan's representatives would be appointed at his discretion. Both the British and the Sultan's representatives would make recommendations as to the defence and security of the State to their respective governments. The two governments would consult each other to determine what measures should separately or jointly be taken in relation to an external attack, or the threat of such an attack, on the State.⁷

Apart from that, there was a provision for Britain to continue to provide staff and training facilities for the Royal Brunei-Malay Regiment, which was formed in 1961.

⁴ *Glasgow Herald*, 20 April 1971.

⁵ PREM15/384, UK Responsibility for Brunei: Prime Minister's Meeting with the Sultan, 30 April 1971.

⁶ *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23 November 1971, Cmnd. 4932, London, HMSO, 1972. Also in FCO58/6814, *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

According to Article III (2b) of the Agreement, the British government would continue to assist the Sultanate within the capability of the United Kingdom, by the loaning of personnel to assist in the staffing, administration and training of the Armed Forces of the Sultanate.⁸ It would also provide expert advice on the organisation of the Forces and assistance in connection with the maintenance of the equipment of the Forces. Additionally, it would assist in training the Forces and in recruitment of persons for service in police and military posts. It would also provide expert advice and training for the Police Force of the State.⁹

Since the defence of Brunei was based on consultation rather than commitment, the Conservative government terminated its responsibility over Brunei's internal affairs. According to Article III (5a) of the 1971 Agreement: 'Situations which are essentially of an internal public-order nature are a matter of concern only to the public security forces of His Highness'.¹⁰ By this agreement it became the responsibility of the Brunei government 'to raise, equip and maintain forces sufficient for the preservation of internal public order and to be the first line of external defence'.¹¹ The Brunei government would provide facilities necessary for any British forces stationed in Brunei or training or exercising in Brunei with the agreement of the Brunei government.¹²

Moreover, the British government also relinquished its responsibility for advising on internal affairs of the state. It was indeed Britain's objective to avoid retaining formal responsibility for advising on Brunei's internal affairs. The British government's move on this matter released Sir Omar and his son from pressure to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. Under the 1959 Agreement, the British government was given a measure of indirect responsibility for internal affairs through the 'advice clause'. However, since Sir Omar rarely accepted or sought Britain's advice, the British government decided to relinquish its responsibility for advising the Sultan

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The British Government on the other hand shall continue to assist Brunei to the extent of their capability by among other things loan of personnel to assist in the training of the armed forces of Brunei and expert advice on organization of the armed forces of Brunei.

on the internal affairs of the state.¹³ Moreover, by giving up its advisory role in the internal affairs of Brunei, the British government no longer had to transmit Article 73(e) of the United Nations Charter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations¹⁴ on economic, social and educational conditions including constitutional development in Brunei.¹⁵ This was because by this agreement, Brunei had achieved full internal self-government. Before the agreement was signed, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had informed the United Kingdom's mission in New York that when the new agreement with the Sultan was signed, Britain should cease these transmissions.¹⁶

The British government was hoping that, by surrendering its advisory role in the internal affairs of Brunei, it would reduce internal and external criticisms of the British government concerning Brunei's international status and constitutional development as Brunei had achieved full internal self-government. If local parties or international communities criticised the lack of constitutional development in Brunei or criticised the British government for not securing constitutional advance in Brunei (before it had relinquished its internal responsibilities), the British government would state that these were entirely Brunei's internal affairs – not those of the British. This was because Brunei was not a colony, nor had Britain any direct responsibility for the internal affairs of the State under the 1959 Agreement.¹⁷

Under the terms of the 1971 Agreement, the Conservative government, however, retained its responsibility for Brunei's external affairs as stipulated in Article II of the Agreement: 'Her Majesty shall continue to enjoy jurisdiction to make the State Laws relating to external affairs'.¹⁸ Additionally, the High Commissioner would no longer be 'Her Majesty's High Commissioner' but the 'British High Commissioner', as he no longer held advisory powers or any role in the governance of the State. He ceased to be a member of the Council of Ministers and other official government bodies, although

¹³FCO24/739, Brunei Talks, 2 December 1970.

¹⁴FCO24/1378, Note of a meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 20 June 1972. Also in FCO58/6814, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, 7 July 1972.

¹⁵ *United Nations Chronicles*, New York, United Nations, 10 (1), January 1973 and 10(4), April 1973.

¹⁶FCO58/625, D.P. Aires to Wilford, 23 March 1971.

¹⁷FCO24/1086, Background Notes/Reference.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

he could be nominated as an ordinary member of the Privy Council.¹⁹ Brunei no longer paid for the maintenance of the British High Commissioner's establishment, which became the British government's responsibility. His status was more like that of a diplomat-cum-spokesman on behalf of his government, though he made recommendations on Brunei's defence and external affairs.²⁰

In order to avoid difficulties in terminating the agreement in the future, the Conservative Government ensured that the Agreement would be open to review by either party by giving one year's notice to terminate the agreement. This was stipulated in Article VIII of the Agreement, which states that: 'At the request of either High Contracting Party, and after the expiry of one year from the making of the request, the High Contracting Parties shall review this Agreement'.²¹ In November 1974, the return of the Labour Party to power led to Britain giving this notice, while almost simultaneously announcing that it intended to withdraw the Gurkha battalion from Brunei.

The Conservative government offered to retain its Gurkha battalion in Brunei, but at the Sultan's expense. Although the 1971 Agreement did not include the retention of the battalion, there was a provision in Article III (a) whereby Brunei should provide facilities for any of British forces stationed in the Sultanate for either training or exercising with the agreement of the Sultan.²² Britain's decision to retain the Gurkha battalion in Brunei was announced in the White Paper on Defence published on 28 October 1970. Under the Conservative government, five Gurkha battalions were retained – one battalion in the United Kingdom, three in Hong Kong and one in

¹⁹The 1959 Constitution provides for the Sultan as the Head of the State with full executive authority. The Sultan was assisted and advised by five councils – the Religious Council, the Privy Council, the Council of Ministers (the Cabinet), the Legislative Council and the Council of Succession.

²⁰ *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23 November 1971, Cmnd. 4932, London, HMSO, 1972. Also in FCO58/6814, *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.* For the full text of the agreement see Appendix III.

Brunei.²³ The Gurkha battalion would remain in Brunei as part of British forces in the area. They could, however, be withdrawn temporarily at very short notice to deal with contingencies elsewhere in the region.²⁴ Although the Sultan would pay for the maintenance of the Gurkhas in Brunei (which amounted to about £1,000,000 a year), they would remain under British control and command.²⁵ As mentioned before, King Mahendra, the King of Nepal, was not prepared to allow them to act on the orders of the Sultan, because he did not want to be accused by his African and Asian colleagues of supporting the autocratic monarch.²⁶ The King did not object to the Sultan for paying for their maintenance as long as they remained under the command of the British.

The Conservative government's willingness to be consultatively responsible for Brunei's defence with the Sultanate reduced the Sultan and Sir Omar's concerns over Brunei's security. Although Britain would not automatically be responsible for Brunei's defence, the agreement had an important deterrent value against any internal and external threats. Britain's decision to retain the Gurkha battalion in Brunei but not under the Sultan's command also had an important deterrent value against any internal and external threats. Its decision to cease advising the Sultan in the internal affairs of the state furthermore reduced the possibility of continued pressure for constitutional reform in Brunei. In its comment on the Agreement, the *Straits Times* of Singapore's editorial on 23 November 1971 stated that:

The Bruneian Government is fully satisfied.... Full internal self-government reduces the possibility of continued pressure (for constitutional reform). Whatever the explanation of the somewhat protracted length of the negotiations, the new treaty effectively meets changing conditions, a rational contribution to the security and the stability of prosperous Brunei and its 135,000 people.²⁷

²³ FCO24/739, K.C. MacDonald to W.A. Ward, 20 November 1970.

²⁴ PREM15/384, UK responsibility for Brunei: Prime Minister's meeting with the Sultan of Brunei, 30 April 1971.

²⁵ Ibid., 30 April 1971.

²⁶ FCO24/435, W.A. Ward to O'Leary, 28 August 1969.

²⁷ *Straits Times*, 23 November 1971.

4.3. Continuous calls for democracy and independence

However, not everybody was content with the coming of the Conservative Party to power in June 1970. The BAKER party, which pressed the Sultan to attain independence and establish a democratic system of government in Brunei, was not satisfied when it realised that Brunei would not attain its independence in November 1970. Consequently, Abdul Latif, the Secretary-General of the BAKER party, reacted by sending a memorandum to U Thant, the Secretary-General of the UN, seeking UN sponsorship for Brunei's independence and blaming the British government for its 'interference in the affairs of Brunei and for their vicious attempt to prolong colonialism in the state'.²⁸ Abdul Latif also appealed to U Thant for Brunei's case to be brought up for discussion. He stated that: 'the people of Brunei no longer wish to be subjected [to these interferences]. We welcome a UN mission to hold a free referendum to decide the future of Brunei'.²⁹

The BAKER party based its call to the Secretary-General of the UN for independence of Brunei on the policy of the UN General Assembly, which adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960.³⁰ It also based its call on the Resolution of 2621 of 12 October 1970, which called upon member states 'to promote effective measures for full implementation of Resolution 1514 of 1960', in other words expediting the granting of full independence to non-self-governing and other territories.³¹ In this regard, as mentioned before, the Special Committee on Decolonisation, or the Special Committee of Twenty-Four, was directed to find ways and means of liquidating colonialism. The Administering Power was required to supply information relating to the territories under its jurisdiction in compliance with the resolution on decolonisation;³² and in Brunei's case (to the BAKER party) this was the British government's responsibility.³³

²⁸ Ibid., 17 October 1970.

²⁹ Ibid., 17 October 1970.

³⁰ United Nations Chronicles, Vol. 7(10), November 1970; Vol. 10(1), January 1973; Vol. 10(4), April 1973; Vol. 10(8), August/September 1973. United Nations Review, Vol. 8(1), 1961.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ *Bintang Harian (Daily Star)*, 22 October 1970.

Sir Omar, who was wary of the BAKER party's call to the UN for Brunei's independence, warned the BAKER party that Brunei was not a colony and that Brunei only sought British protection in terms of military and external affairs.³⁴ He rejected any demands from the political party to strive for independence.³⁵ Following this, on 22 October 1970, the Brunei government stated in the *Daily Star* newspaper that Brunei was not under the Trusteeship of the UN which controlled territories that were not self-governing.³⁶ Since Brunei was not under the Trusteeship of the UN, the petition made by the politicians asking the UN to intervene was not acceptable as it was already a self-governing state under the 1959 Agreement.³⁷

Although Brunei was not under the Trusteeship of the UN and was not a British colony, the BAKER party's repeated calls for independence presented a challenge to the Sultan and Sir Omar as they could lead Britain to surrender its remaining responsibilities towards Brunei and force Brunei to become fully independent. It should be borne in mind that, when the BAKER party called upon the UN to assist Brunei in achieving independence, the Brunei government had not started to negotiate Brunei's future with the Conservative government which came to power in June 1960. In order to save Brunei from full independence, the BAKER party's political activities had to be halted.

The fact that the Labour government had in 1968 abandoned its policy of pressing the Sultan and Sir Omar to carry out a democratic system of government in Brunei (thus leaving the matter entirely to them) had made it easier for the Sultan and Sir Omar

³⁴ Ibid., 20 October 1970.

³⁵ Ibid., 20 October 1970.

³⁶ Trusteeship of the UN is actually a system of UN control for territories that were not self-governing. It replaced the mandates of the League of Nations. Provided for under chapters 12 and 13 of the Charter of the UN, the trusteeship system was intended to promote the welfare of native inhabitants and to advance self-government. In the early years of the UN, 11 Territories were placed under the Trusteeship System for example, Togoland, Somaliland, Tanganyika and New Guinea. In 1994, the Security Council terminated the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement for the last of the original 11 Territories on its agenda – the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau), administered by the United Nations (cited in <http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/history/A0848547.html>).

³⁷ It further stated that the local politicians had given a wrong and contradictory picture about the true condition of Brunei from the aspect of international politics. This was because, through the 1959 Constitution, the Sultan had full authority to rule the country (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 October 1970).

to end the activities of the BAKER party. In April 1970, Sir Omar had suspended the Legislative Elections and set up a new Legislative Council composed entirely of his nominees.³⁸ Earlier in September 1969, three prominent leaders of the BAKER party, Hapidz Laksmana, the President of the party, Pengiran Metusin bin Pengiran Lampoh, the Vice-President, and Pengiran Mohammed Yusof bin Pengiran Abu Bakar, the Assistant Secretary-General, resigned. All cited personal (business) reasons for their resignations³⁹ although it was known that they resigned because they had given up their aim to strive for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei.⁴⁰

Further to this, in December 1970, the Sultan extended the state of emergency for another two years. Under the Brunei Constitution of 1959, the Sultan could proclaim a state of emergency 'for not more than two years of an occasion of public danger existing whereby the security or economic life of the state of Brunei was threatened'.⁴¹

C.A. Munro, of the UK mission to the United Nations, in his letter to Mr Ward of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, thought that neither external aggression nor internal disturbance threatened the security and economic life of Brunei and therefore there was no justification for the Sultan to continue with a state of emergency.⁴² However, for the Sultan and Sir Omar, the BAKER party was obviously posing a threat to Brunei's security. If they did not stop the BAKER party's political activities, the British would probably give up their remaining responsibilities towards Brunei and force Brunei to accept full independence.

Moreover, the Sultan and Sir Omar were apprehensive that the closer Brunei came to a democratic system of government, the greater the possibility of its joining Malaysia. Under Tun Abdul Razak (the new prime minister of Malaysia), he continued the policy of Tunku Abdul Rahman to bring Brunei into the federation. In addition, the

³⁸ The Emergency (Council of Ministers and Legislative Council) Order, *Laws of Brunei*, s. 58, 1970 (Cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 378. See also *Borneo Bulletin*, 26 December 1970).

³⁹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 27 June 1969.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 June 1969.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6 February 1971.

⁴² FCO24/1078, C.A. Munro to Ward, 16 June 1971.

Sultan and Sir Omar realised that the implementation of full democracy in Brunei could destroy the position of the Sultan as an absolute monarch.⁴³

Following the Sultan's extension of the emergency powers, on 30 March 1971, Abdul Latif wrote a letter to Michael Stewart, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, concerning Arthur Bottomley's White Paper of 1965, which recommended the implementation of a full representative system of government in Brunei.⁴⁴ Further to this, in April 1971 Abdul Latif met H.J. Bowe, the Acting British High Commissioner, and pressed the latter about Bottomley's White Paper of 1965 and the outcome of the talks between the British and the Brunei governments. In 1969, when the BAKER party sought to join the Sultan's delegation for talks in London held in the middle of that year, the Brunei government snubbed the party.⁴⁵

When Zainal Abidin Puteh and Pengiran Yusof Abu Bakar of the BAKER party sought political representation at the negotiations between the British and the Brunei governments, they were rejected by Brunei's palace officials. According to Pengiran Dato Haji Mokhtar Puteh and Pehin Dato Dr Haji Mohammad Jamil, the BAKER party's political representation was 'too absurd for consideration'.⁴⁶ They added that the Sultan had no intention of including any political leaders in talks with the British government whether the leader was a member of the State Legislative Council or a member of a District Council or not.⁴⁷ This was because the talks were between the Sultan and the British government and not between the British and the Brunei party's leaders.⁴⁸

When Abdul Latif questioned him as to the outcome of the talks between the British and the Brunei governments, Bowe's only reply was that, since they were still in progress, he could not comment on the outcome.⁴⁹ Regarding the BAKER party's question about Bottomley's White Paper of 1965, no official reply was sent to the

⁴³ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 209.

⁴⁴ FCO24/1075, Abdul Latif to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 30 March 1971.

⁴⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 27 June 1969.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 30 August 1969.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12 April 1969.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12 April 1969. Nevertheless, the Sultan always had with him personal advisors appointed from government officers at every meeting the Sultan had with the British government.

⁴⁹ FCO24/1075, H.J. Bowe to W.A. Ward, 25 April, 1971.

BAKER party,⁵⁰ but the *Borneo Bulletin* of 10 April 1971 gladly reported that 'it was probably dumped into a Whitehall wastepaper basket'. The newspaper also warned the BAKER party that it was on 'dangerous ground in asking Britain to give independence the Sultan did not want'.⁵¹

In the Sultan and Sir Omar's efforts to halt the progress of democracy in Brunei, in May 1971 the Brunei government made a further drastic move by announcing that Brunei would not hold any more public elections for some time.⁵² It stated that:

In exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (3) of section 83 of the Constitution of the state of Brunei 1959, HH the Sultan hereby makes the following order: this order may be cited as the Emergency (District Councils) Order, 1971, and shall come into force on [the] 24th day of May, 1971. So long as the proclamation of Emergency is in force the laws mentioned in the Schedule hereto are hereby suspended.⁵³

The Brunei government stated that the reason for the termination of the District Council elections was that, since the District Councils no longer acted as electoral colleges for the election of members to the Legislative Council, they served no useful purpose.⁵⁴ This was because their advisory functions and the facility they offered for liaison between the District Authorities and the people could be equally well provided by the Penghulus (village headmen) 'who were in constant and close contact with the villagers and knew all their needs.'⁵⁵

By suspending the election to the District Council, the Brunei government completed the dismantling of the elective machinery for the implementation of a democratic system of government. Bowe in his letter to Ward on 20 May 1971 regretted Sir Omar and the Sultan's action in this matter. According to Bowe, although the District Authorities could meet the channel of communication between the government and the people (where it was done through the medium of the Penghulus),

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25 April, 1971.

⁵¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 April 1970.

⁵² Ibid., 29 May 1971.

⁵³ FCO24/1078, The Constitution of the State of Brunei, 1959 (Order under section 83(3)) The Emergency (District Councils) Order 1971.

⁵⁴ FCO24/1078, Bowe to Ward, 20 May 1971.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 20 May 1971.

they completely failed to take into account the other useful aspect of the council that 'it provided a safety valve for the airing of political grievances and aspirations'.⁵⁶ Although to Bawe the District Council made little practical difference, 'its demise was a retrograde step as the council constituted the last vestige of any pretence of democracy in Brunei.'⁵⁷

The suspension of the election of the District Council virtually ended the party's desire to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei.⁵⁸ Subsequently, in October 1971, the BAKER party sent a memorandum to the UN asking for the world body's help in achieving independence for the state.⁵⁹ In the memorandum the BAKER party stated that:

The Peoples' Independent Front of Brunei, a legally registered political organisation with branches throughout the State of Brunei sincerely believe that the continued presence of the British colonialism in this country will cause more harm than good to the State, sovereign and the people of Brunei. To end to this state of affairs, the Peoples' Independent Front of Brunei have, in the past, made requests and proposals in the most fair and peaceful means to the British Government to allow the people and their representatives elected by them to share the responsibilities in deciding the constitutional future of the State of Brunei. These requests and proposals have been completely ignored by the British Government. Under this circumstance, the only alternative left now is for the Peoples Independent Front of Brunei to bring this state of affairs to the notice of the United Nations in order that justice is done to the people of the State of Brunei. This memorandum herewith attached is forwarded for your understanding of the state of affairs in this country and we request that appropriate steps be taken by the world body in line with the aims and purposes of the existence of the United Nations. The peoples Independent Front of Brunei

⁵⁶ Ibid., 20 May 1971.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 20 May 1971.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 20 May 1971.

⁵⁹ FCO24/1376, Zainal Abidin bin Puteh (President) and Awang Abdul Latif bin Hamid, Secretary General, People's Independent Front, to Secretary-General of the United Nations, 12 October 1971.

will render every co-operation possible to facilitate the speedy implementation of a referendum to meet the wishes and aspirations of the people of Brunei.⁶⁰

The BAKER party's memorandum was circulated to the members of the Committee of Twenty-Four and was to be considered by the sub-committee on petitions in 1972.⁶¹ In a letter dated 12 April 1972, F.D. Popov, Chief of Petitions Section, Department of Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories stated that the BAKER party's memorandum had been circulated as a petition in document A/AC.109/PET.1197.⁶² According to Popov, on the recommendation of the sub-committee, the special committee had decided that the above-mentioned petition be taken into account by the Special Committee and Sub-Committee II in their consideration of the territory.⁶³

In a press statement, the BAKER party further stated that 'the legitimate aspirations of the people and the party have long been ignored here and it is now time something is done about it'.⁶⁴ The BAKER party stated that it wanted full elections to be restored, and the state of emergency to be lifted. The party also wanted the British government to keep its promise in implementing the White Paper of 1965.⁶⁵

In response to the call made by the BAKER party's leaders, the British Permanent Representative of the UN, Sir Colin Crowe, presented a note to the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, in September 1972, conveying the views of both the British and the Brunei governments. The note stated that, 'as a result of the 1971 Agreement, both governments felt it was no longer appropriate for Britain to transmit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations information relating to the requirements of Article 73(e) of the United Nations Charter.'⁶⁶

⁶⁰ FCO24/1376, Zainal Abidin bin Puteh (President) and Awang Abdul Latif bin Hamid, Secretary General, People's Independent Front, to Secretary-General of the United Nations, 12 October 1971. See also in FCO24/1079, Awang Zainal Abidin bin Puteh (president) Awang Abdul Latif bin Hamid to Honorable Secretary-General the United Nations, New York.

⁶¹ FCO58/625, Crowe (UK mission to New York) to FCO, 29 November 1971.

⁶² Lakar Bongsu, 'Perjuangan Parti Barisan Kemerdekaan Brunei (Baker) di Negara Brunei Darussalam', BA (Hons.) dissertation, University Brunei Darussalam, 1992/3, p. 66.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 66.

⁶⁴ FCO24/1075, Thorne to FCO, 27 September 1971 & *Straits Times*, 24 September 1971.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ United Nations Chronicles, Vol. 7(10), November 1970; Vol. 10(1), January 1973; Vol. 10(4), April 1973; Vol. 10(8), August/September 1973. Also see in FCO24/6814, Implementation of the declaration of the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples – information from

Earlier, on 14 June 1972 (during the meeting between Royle and Sir Omar in London), Sir Omar had made it clear to Royle that the Government of Brunei did not wish to have relations with any country other than the UK. Moreover, Brunei was not a member of the UN, nor did it wish to have any direct relations with the UN.⁶⁷ Sir Omar made this statement following Royle's assertion to him that Brunei should send reports to the UN as Britain had informed the UN Secretariat in September that it would no longer supply the reports following Brunei's achievement of full internal self-government⁶⁸ Further to this, in Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's letter to Michael Stewart, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Sultan had stated that:

Brunei is not a member of the United Nations, and consequently neither I nor My Government would wish to express any view about the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. However, it is a fact that by virtue of the Agreement signed on 23 November 1971 the Government of Brunei now bears full responsibility for the internal affairs of Brunei, and all responsibility of Her Majesty's Government for those internal affairs has come to an end. That Agreement did not, on the other hand, affect the external affairs of Brunei in any way. The conduct of the external affairs of Brunei remains the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government.⁶⁹

By this time, however, the BAKER party had lost credibility and existed in little more than name. Its only active member was Abdul Latif, the Secretary-General, who attempted to keep the party to the fore by airing their independence aims on occasions such as the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Singapore, the London Talk in April and the United Nations General Assembly session.⁷⁰ On 12 March 1972, after about seven years in the BAKER party, Abdul Latif resigned from his post.⁷¹

non-self-governing territories transmitted under Article 73(e) of the Charter of the United Nations, 27 September 1972.

⁶⁷ FCO24/1380, Record of Meeting between Mr Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and HH the Sultan of Brunei, at the FCO, 14 June 1972.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1972.

⁶⁹ FCO58/6814, Sultan of Brunei to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 7 July 1972.

⁷⁰ *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 January 1972.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 5 January 1972.

Following his resignation, the party's political leanings declined to practically nil.⁷² On 7 April 1972, Haji Yaakub bin Zainal, the Treasurer, also resigned. According to the *Straits Times*, the entire leadership of the BAKER party had collapsed, leaving only its president in Seria the sole leader: Zainal Abidin.⁷³ The party – the sole political organisation in the state – had no leaders in the capital, which left no one to lead it in Bandar Seri Begawan. In retrospect the Sultan and Sir Omar were successful in bringing to an end the political activities of the BAKER party. Having done so, the BAKER party's calls for independence and implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei effectively came to an end.

4.4. End of plan for democracy

However, the end of plan for democracy in Brunei in 1972 had been anticipated. From the beginning of Sir Omar's rule in 1950, the latter had indeed been committed to strengthening the power of the monarch. This commitment was manifested in the promulgation of the 1959 Constitution which reinforced the power of the monarch and did not pave the way for the introduction of a full democratic system of government in Brunei. Under the 1959 Constitution, there was no elective majority on the Legislative Council and no direct elections to that Council. This was done in order to safeguard the power of the monarch.

Prior to the coronation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the monarch revived the traditional aspect of the monarchy, namely the traditional offices. The monarch had bestowed on selected hereditary pengirans (nobles) and commoners the titles wazir, chateria and pehin: high offices in the traditional form of government in Brunei.⁷⁴ In 1967, for the first time since 1906, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's brother Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah had been bestowed with the title Pengiran Temenggong Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah. When the 1906 Agreement was signed only two traditional

⁷² FCO24/1376, J. Thorne to P.J. Streams, 30 March 1970.

⁷³ *Straits Times*, 7 April 1972.

⁷⁴ Eusoff Agaki Haji Ismail, 'Brunei Darussalam: Its Re-emergence as a Sovereign and Independent Malay-Muslim Sultanate (1959 – 1983)', MA thesis, University of Hull, 1991, p. 162.

offices were retained, the Pengiran Bendahara and Pengiran Pemancha.⁷⁵ Under the 1959 Constitution both of them were nominated by the Sultan as members in the Legislative as well as the Executive Councils.⁷⁶ In 1963, when the Constitution was amended, they were excluded from the councils by the Sultan possibly as a result of Britain's insistence to the Sultan that their positions in both councils were rather anachronistic. However, they were allowed to continue in the ceremonial Privy Council.⁷⁷

Following the coronation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, all the traditional ministerial ranks were filled, and in February 1970, Pengiran Temenggong Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah was elevated to Pengiran Perdana Wazir.⁷⁸ According to Brunei's tradition, there were four wazirs or ministers of state to whom the Sultan delegated his executive and administrative powers.⁷⁹ Below the wazirs were the chaterias or lesser ministers of state, who were ranked on the basis of eight, sixteen and thirty-two members per rank.⁸⁰

The revival of traditional aspects of the governmental structure according to Eusoff Agaki could be interpreted in some ways as 'a determined effort on the part of the Sultan to counteract the British government's pressure for further constitutional progress. On the other hand, the trend could also be viewed as a process towards strengthening national consciousness in terms of Brunei's own political culture.'⁸¹ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, on the other hand, suggests that by reviving and strengthening its monarchical system of government, Brunei confirmed its refusal to join the Federation of Malaysia, which had a democratic system of government.⁸² There was no way that Brunei would join Malaysia because Brunei and Malaysia had different systems of government. According to Ghazali Shafie, if Brunei, which was ruled by an absolute monarchy, became part of Malaysia, Malaysia would be doomed.

⁷⁵ D.E. Brown, *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean-Malay Sultanate*, BMJ, Monograph No. 2, 1970, pp. 92 – 3.

⁷⁶ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 344.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁷⁸ Brown, *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean-Malay Sultanate*, pp. 92 – 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92 – 93.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 92 – 93.

⁸¹ Eusoff Agaki Haji Ismail, 'Brunei Darussalam: Its Re-emergence as a Sovereign', p. 164.

⁸² See Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', pp. 243 – 273.

He stated that 'Malaysia would be doomed if a part of its territory was not subject to democratic elections and a government of one of its states was a feudalistic autocracy'.⁸³ Then again, the closer Brunei came to a democratic system of government, the greater its possibility of joining Malaysia. As mentioned earlier, the Malaysian government perceived that a democratic Brunei might be more susceptible to the attractions of the Federation. That is why the Sultan and Sir Omar did not want to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei as they feared that Brunei would eventually enter Malaysia.

Furthermore, since the British government had informed Sir Omar in April 1968 that it would no longer press the Sultan and Sir Omar to work for constitutional advance but would leave the matter entirely to them, the Sultan and Sir Omar generally had a free hand in this matter whereby they used the emergency powers approved by the 1959 Constitution to postpone the Legislative Elections and continue the state of emergency in Brunei. As mentioned before, in 1968, the British Labour government had to abandon its efforts to persuade the Sultan and Sir Omar to implement a democratic system of government after Sir Omar stated that an election would not be held in Brunei before the British ended its 1959 Agreement with Brunei (in November 1970). Moreover, Britain's plan to end its agreement with Brunei was approaching. Consequently, Britain had no choice but to abandon its efforts to persuade the Sultan to implement the system.

The coming of the Conservative Party to power in June 1970, which did not insist on constitutional progress as a precondition to amend the agreement, and which ceased its responsibility for advising on the internal affairs of Brunei, had made Sir Omar even more intransigent than before on the ending of calls for democracy in Brunei.⁸⁴ According to A.R. Adair, the British High Commissioner, since Sir Omar had secured the 1971 Agreement, the latter had become uncompromising because he felt he was in a stronger position than he had been before.⁸⁵ In May 1971, the Sultan and Sir Omar

⁸³ Ghazali Shafie's *Memoir on the Formation of Malaysia*, University Kebangsaan Malaysia Bangi, 1998, p. 275 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 163).

⁸⁴ FCO24/1085, A.R. Adair to K.M. Wilford, 22 July 1971.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1971.

virtually closed the door on democracy when elections to the District Councils were suspended.⁸⁶

The lack of educated locals in the administration of the state also hindered the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei. Unlike Malaya, where the British authorities had introduced English education in the early twentieth century, English education in Brunei was only introduced in 1951. The British government's policy in Brunei had been to leave the initiative of developing education to the people.⁸⁷ Although Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II (r.1906 – 24) encouraged the development of education in Brunei, he could not do a great deal to improve matters, since the British Resident controlled Brunei's finances.⁸⁸

There was a similar situation during the rule of his successor, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin. Although the latter called upon the British Resident to set up an English school in Brunei,⁸⁹ he was ignored. The implementation of the Five-Year National Development Plan in 1953 by Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III came nonetheless too late: when Brunei entered the 1960s, it lacked educated, qualified and experienced people to run the administration of the state.

Sir Omar on the other hand cleverly used the issue of lack of educated manpower to delay the implementation of a democratic system of government for his own benefit, which was to retain his power as an absolute monarch. In 1965, when Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien was pressed by Arthur Bottomley, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, to fulfil the manifestos announced in August 1964 – which aimed to move towards a fully representative system of government – the Sultan stated that he wished to achieve it step by step.⁹⁰ Therefore, the British government's attitude towards the development of education in Brunei between 1906 and 1950 had to a large extent contributed to the lack of educated and qualified people to run the administration of the state in the 1960s, which consequently hampered the progress of the implementation of

⁸⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 29 May 1971.

⁸⁷ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 33. If, after two years, the people could prove their need and desire for education, the British Government would step in to pay for the overall running of the school and build a permanent schoolhouse.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁹ CO943/1(59706), Speech by HH Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, 1 May 1948 (cited in *ibid*, p. 34).

⁹⁰ *Sunday Times*, 30 May 1965.

a representative system of government in Brunei. Sir Omar had thus skilfully used this issue to safeguard his power.

The end of plans for the implementation of full democracy in Brunei came also because of the lack of people's interest in the development of democracy in the Sultanate. This lack of interest had been growing since the unsuccessful rebellion in 1962. The 1962 Rebellion had cost lives among the people of Brunei and was considered by many as the blackest event in Brunei's history. During the rebellion, about 100 rebels were killed and about 2,000 were caught and detained.⁹¹ Because of the scale of the rebellion and Brunei's small population, almost every family in Brunei was affected by the event. Moreover, the swift operation of the British forces in crushing the rebellion and the huge presence of a foreign army and war artillery in the country were also an unforgettable experience to many people in Brunei. The continued presence of the British army in the Sultanate, the Sultan's rule by emergency decree and the continuous detention without trial of 59 ex-rebels at the Berakas Detention Camp became a constant reminder to the people of Brunei of the dangers of involving themselves in the internal politics of the country, and this eventually extinguished their spirits towards the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei. The general population of Brunei believed that if they took an active part in politics it would lead them to the Berakas Detention Camp under the enforcement of Emergency Regulations, 1962.⁹² As a result of the lack of people's interests towards democracy, there was a poor turnout by voters during the 1965⁹³ and 1968 District Council Elections. In the 1965 District Council Elections for example, of the 19,144 registered voters, eighty per cent turned out at the polls, a nine per cent drop from the election of 1962.⁹⁴

In addition to this, the end of plans for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei was because of the weaknesses of the political parties that had emerged in Brunei after the 1962 Rebellion. These political parties did not have

⁹¹ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 311.

⁹² FCO24/212 Internal security Situation, Letter from Hunt to R.A. Hibbert, 2 November 1967 (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 206).

⁹³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 August 1967.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 March 1965.

dynamic leadership, as the PRB did, which was significant in order to draw people's interest towards Brunei's internal politics. They had vague manifestoes,⁹⁵ lacked captivating slogans to inspire the people and lacked the organizational skills of the PRB. During the second general election in 1965, the leaders of all three contesting parties – the Brunei Party Alliance (BPA), the Brunei National Organization (BNO) and the Brunei People's Freedom Struggle (BPFSP), which had formed the Brunei Alliance Party (BAP) before the elections failed to get elected.⁹⁶ Similarly, during the 1968 District Council elections, the BAKER party (the only solid political party) won only 30 per cent of the votes, with 70 per cent going to independent candidates.⁹⁷ Their failure in the elections was indeed a blow to the possibility of running a plausible representative system of government in Brunei.⁹⁸

Therefore, it is evident that the end of plans for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei was the result of several factors. The Sultan and Sir Omar's refusal to implement a democratic system of government (because of their fear that the Sultan's absolute power would be reduced), was one of these. Their apprehension that the closer Brunei came towards democracy the more likely it would be to join Malaysia was another factor for the Sultan and Sir Omar's refusal to implement the system. Moreover, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin was committed to retaining the power of the monarch and this was apparent in the resumption of the monarchical system of government in Brunei in the 1950s and the promulgation of the 1959 Constitution.

Britain's inability to persuade the Sultan to implement the system was another reason why the system was not implemented and why the British government under the Labour party abandoned its efforts to persuade the Sultan to implement the system. The fact that Brunei was not a colony and that since 1959 Brunei had been an internally

⁹⁵ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 349.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 343. These were the parties that had been routed by the PRB during the 1962 District Council elections.

⁹⁷ BA/056/1983 (SUK Series 3, Box 42), 'Election and Organisation', Tambahan (Appendix) A to C, in Matnor McAfee, Penyelia Pilehan Raya (The Commissioner of Elections) to Pengarah (Director), Penyiaran dan Penerangan (Broadcasting and Information), 3 June 1968, item 27 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 378).

⁹⁸ Out of 13,309 voters only 3,060 voters voted for BAKER party (cited in *Pelita Brunei*, 29 May 1968).

self-governing state made it difficult for the British to urge the Sultan to implement the system. This was also one of the reasons for the Conservative government that came to power in June 1970 relinquishing its responsibility in advising the Sultan in the internal affairs of the state under the 1971 Agreement. People's lack of interest in the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei and the lack of credibility of the parties' leaders in organizing their parties was an additional factor in the failure of the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei.

Although by 1972 the BAKER party's calls for the implementation of a democratic system of government and independence for Brunei ceased, these calls recommenced in 1974 when the disbanded PRB was revived in Kuala Lumpur by Azahari and the escaped 1962 Bruneian ex-rebels. Their calls for Brunei's independence at the UN in November 1975 created challenges and difficulties for the Sultan and Sir Omar as they were not ready to achieve independence. This however will be covered in Chapter Six. The following chapter will examine Brunei's claim over Limbang from Malaysia starting in 1970.

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the coming of the Conservative Party to power in June 1970 saved Brunei from full independence. Under the 1971 Agreement, the Conservative government was willing to continue its responsibility over Brunei's external affairs and to be consultatively responsible for Brunei's defence. The Conservative government also allowed the provisional retention of the Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate. It additionally relinquished its responsibilities for advising the Sultan in the internal affairs of the state. This was indeed significant as it liberated Sir Omar and his son from the pressure to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei.

The Conservative government's resolution, however, disappointed the BAKER party, as it did not grant Brunei full independence according to the Labour Government's plans. As a result, the BAKER party sought the UN's sponsorship for Brunei's independence and called upon the Sultan to introduce a democratic system of government in Brunei. The BAKER party based its calls for Brunei's independence on the UN General Assembly 'Resolution of the Declaration on the Granting of

Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960' and 'Resolution of 1970' which called upon member states to encourage efficient measures for the full functioning of Resolution 1514 of 1960.

This study has shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar, who refused to bring either a democratic system of government or independence into effect, halted the BAKER party's political activities by ending the District and Legislative Council elections and by continuing the state of emergency in Brunei. By 1972, the BAKER party's calls for the introduction of a democratic system of government and Brunei's independence effectively came to an end. This study has also shown that the end of plans for the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei was also a result of Britain's inability to persuade the Sultan to implement the system, the people's lack of interest towards democracy following the unsuccessful end of the 1962 Rebellion and the lack of credibility of the party leaders in organising their parties. The end of plans for democracy in Brunei did not only successfully safeguard the power of the monarch, but more importantly safeguarded Brunei from entering Malaysia.

CHAPTER FIVE

Brunei's claim on Limbang: 1970 – 1974

5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to study the challenges and problems faced by the Sultanate in connection with its claim over Limbang to Malaysia between 1970 and 1973. Limbang (an area of 1,535.96 square miles) was taken over by Charles Brooke, the second Rajah of Sarawak, on 17 March 1890. From then until 1963, Brunei had never surrendered its claim over Limbang from Britain. To the Bruneians, Brunei had rights over Limbang. This was because Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam (r. 1885 – 1906) had never given his consent to the acquisition of Limbang by Rajah Brooke. Sultan Hashim also never accepted the payment of compensation for the acquisition of Limbang by Sarawak right up until his death.¹ In August 1895, when the Foreign Office declared the matter closed,² the Sultan refused to accept this decision as final and protested repeatedly to the British government until his death in 1906.³ After his death, however, his successors Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam (r. 1906 – 1924) and later Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin (r. 1924 – 1950) were not able to make an effective claim over Limbang for reasons that will be briefly explained in this chapter.

When Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III ruled, he brought up the issue of Limbang to the British government in the late 1950s and in November 1962, but on both occasions the British turned his demands down. When Limbang came under the Malaysian state of Sarawak in 1963, Brunei continued its claim over the territory from the British and the Federal government of Malaysia. However, neither Britain nor Malaysia accepted Brunei's claim on Limbang for several reasons that will be discussed in this section. Although Brunei repeatedly wrote letters to the Malaysian government about its claim

¹ DO169/54/42219, Brunei Claim to Limbang District of Sarawak, 'Annexation of the Limbang District'.

² Brooke to FCO 12 January 1893, CO to FO 25 January 1893, Mitchell to FO 22 October 1894 FO 572/29, Mitchell to FO 23 March 1894 FO 572/30, memo by Anderson 11 February 1895, FO to Mitchell 13 July 1895 FO 12/95 (cited in Criswell, 'The Origin of the Limbang Claim', p. 228).

³ Ibid, p. 228.

over Limbang, no reply had been received from Malaysia. In September 1970, Sir Omar unexpectedly resurrected Brunei's claim over Limbang publicly when he opened an exhibition in Brunei Town. He revived the Limbang issue publicly because he considered the Chief Minister of Sarawak's speech to the Bruneians' descendants living in Limbang (whom he urged to be loyal to the Malaysian government) as provocative.

However, Brunei's claim over Limbang proved to be problematic as the Malaysian government disregarded its claim no matter what the basis of it, since Limbang had been part of Malaysia through the 1963 Agreement it had with Britain. Moreover, Britain did not support Brunei's claim over Limbang from Malaysia for several reasons that will be discussed in this chapter. This study will show that Brunei's claim on Limbang became a pressing matter when the Bruneian ex-rebels escaped to Limbang in 1973. Here it should be noted that the Bruneian ex-rebels escaped with the connivance of the Malaysian government. One of the reasons for Malaysia's involvement in the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels was because Malaysia wanted to divert the Sultan and Sir Omar's attention away from the Limbang issue and to turn their attention to the issues of Brunei's independence and constitutional development. When Sir Omar asserted Malaysia to return Limbang to Brunei, the Malaysian government refused to return Limbang and closed the Limbang issue to Brunei in December 1973. Sir Omar was however adamant that Brunei would not quit its claim over Limbang for reasons of security.

5.2. Brunei's claim on Limbang: 1970 – 1973

Sir Omar unexpectedly made a public resurrection of the Limbang issue in September 1970 when opening a book exhibition at the Language and Literature Bureau in Bandar Seri Begawan. In his speech Sir Omar said that the map-makers should not draw boundaries between Brunei and Limbang as the two were in one and the same territory.⁴ Following that, he informed A.R. Adair, the British High Commissioner, that he had made the claim over Limbang openly because Abdul Rahman Yakub, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, had made a public announcement that

⁴ For extract of speech from Sir Omar see FCO24/734. For the full text of Sir Omar's statement, see *Pelita Brunei*, 30 September 1970, p. 5, *Straits Times*, 10 October 1970 & *Daily Star*, 1 October 1970.

the descendants of Bruneian citizens in Limbang should give their undivided loyalty to Malaysia.⁵ To Sir Omar, Abdul Rahman's speech was confrontational as the latter should be well aware that Brunei had been claiming the return of Limbang from the British since 1890 and the Malaysian government since 1963.⁶

Indeed, the Sultans of Brunei had been claiming Limbang from Britain since 1890 when Limbang was annexed by Charles Brooke of Sarawak in that year. However, Britain rejected Brunei's claim and instead urged Sultan Hashim to give his consent to the annexation of Limbang by Sarawak. It should be borne in mind that the annexation of Limbang by Sarawak has been delineated by N. Tarling,⁷ Donald E. Brown,⁸ G. Saunders,⁹ D.S. Ranjit Singh¹⁰ and C.N. Crisswell.¹¹ Recently Muhammad Hadi Abdullah in Chapter Five of his thesis 'Brunei's Political Development and the Formation of Malaysia: 1961–1967' made a preliminary examination of the Limbang issue from 1890 until the formation of Malaysia in 1963.¹²

After the death of Sultan Hashim, his successor Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam was not able to make any claim on Limbang as his rule was under the strict control of the British Residents.¹³ In 1949, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin tried to reclaim the area from the British government, but his untimely death in 1950 virtually closed his claim over Limbang.¹⁴ However, when Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III ruled, he resumed Brunei's claim on Limbang. In the late 1950s, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III brought up the issue of Limbang when the British government proposed the Borneo Federation to him. The British officials in Sarawak, however, disagreed that Limbang should be restored

⁵ FCO24/734, Adair to D.P. Aires, 3 October 1970.

⁶ FCO24/734, Adair to FCO, 12 October 1970.

⁷ N. Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, London, OUP, 1971.

⁸ Donald E. Brown, *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate*, Brunei Museum Journal Monograph, vol. 2, No. 2 (1970).

⁹ G. Saunders (2nd edition), *A History of Brunei*, (London, Routledge Curzon, 2002).

¹⁰ D.S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei 1839–1983: Problems of Political Survival*, (Singapore, 1984).

¹¹ C.N. Crisswell, 'The Origin of the Limbang Claim', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1971.

¹² Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development'.

¹³ See Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III and Britain*, pp. 18 – 19, D.S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei 1839 – 1983: Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore, 1984, p. 112 & Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 146.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7.

to Brunei, and gave the excuse that Brunei should at first implement its constitution.¹⁵ In December 1960 (after the promulgation of Brunei's constitution in 1959), the Brunei Legislative Council passed a resolution requesting the Brunei government to negotiate with the Government of Sarawak for the return of Limbang to Brunei.¹⁶ In November 1962, the Sultan wrote a letter to Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, asking for the return of Limbang.¹⁷

At this time, the return of Limbang to Brunei was considered to be a pressing matter for the Sultan as he aimed to forestall the formation of the NKKU planned by the PRB.¹⁸ He also wanted Limbang to be restored to Brunei in order to win the hearts and minds of the Bruneians who had been awaiting the return of Limbang. He considered his claim over Limbang as significant in order to regain his popularity, which he had lost following the landslide victory of the PRB in the August 1962 District Council Elections. If the Sultan successfully regained Limbang from the Sarawak government, support for the formation of the NKKU would weaken, as the strongest supporters for the formation of the NKKU were the people of Limbang.¹⁹ The people of Limbang supported the formation of the NKKU because it was the only way they could be once again reunited with Brunei. If Limbang became part of Brunei, the people of Limbang would probably no longer support the PRB and its aim for the establishment of the NKKU. However, the governors of Sarawak and North Borneo were reluctant to return Limbang to Brunei,²⁰ as they feared that if the question of Limbang became known to the people of Sarawak and North Borneo, especially to the inhabitants of Limbang, it could create problems in establishing the Federation of Malaysia. Thus, the British

¹⁵Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁷ CO1030/1296, HH the Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin to Duncan Sandys, 22 November 1962, item 90. Cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 278. See also FCO24/734, Brief No. 15, Talks with the Sultan of Brunei, November 1970.

¹⁸Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 278.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 279.

²⁰ DO169/54, Letter from Sir William Goode to Secretary of State, 28 December 1962 or Letter from Sir A. Waddell to Secretary of State for Colonies, 31 December 1962 (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 153).

government advised the Brunei government that the Limbang problem should be dealt with only after the establishment of Malaysia.²¹

After the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the Brunei government continued its claim over Limbang. In this year, the Brunei government wrote a letter to the British government about Limbang, which had become part of Malaysia. However, in the meeting between Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien and Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, on 29 July 1963, Sandys stated that the British government was unable to consider Brunei's request, as Limbang had become part of the State of Sarawak within Malaysia. Brunei's claim over Limbang therefore should be addressed to the Malaysian government and not to the British government.²² The British government's action on this matter was indeed contrary to the 1959 Agreement, which stated that anything relating to foreign matters was Britain's responsibility. Subsequently, the Brunei government sent a letter to the Malaysian government, but neither the Sultan nor the Brunei government received any reply. Nevertheless, the Brunei government did not pursue the issue any further, as it realised that the federal government was at that time occupied with problems concerning the establishment of Malaysia.

Two years after the establishment of Malaysia, that was on 17 April 1965, Marsal Maun, Brunei's Chief Minister, sent a letter to the Minister of External Affairs of the Federation of Malaysia reminding the latter about the Sultan's letters on the subject of Limbang, which had been passed to the Secretary of State.²³ In this letter, Marsal Maun explained that Brunei had put forward its claim over Limbang because it had rights over Limbang and had never accepted the annexation of Limbang by Rajah Brooke of Sarawak.²⁴ Furthermore, since both countries professed the religion of Islam and were followers of Islamic principles, Brunei felt obligated to put forward a claim to Limbang which should properly be within Brunei's own boundaries.²⁵ Marsal Maun also

²¹ Ibid., p. 153.

²² C.O. 1030/1671 Record of a meeting between the Secretary of State and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, at Commonwealth Relations Office, 29th July 1963 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 172).

²³ These letters were dated 27 July and 13 August 1963.

²⁴ FCO24/734, Marsal bin Maun to the Minister for External Affairs, Federation of Malaysia, 17 April 1965.

²⁵ Ibid., 17 April 1965.

mentioned that the British government had no objection to the question of Limbang being directly raised by the Brunei government to the Malaysian government.²⁶ Tunku Abdul Rahman, however, rejected Brunei's letter, explaining that he could not negotiate with the Brunei government directly on the issue of Limbang, as Brunei's foreign affairs were still dealt with by the British under the 1959 Agreement.²⁷ He stressed that the Malaysian government could only discuss the matter with the British government. In October 1965, PSN Yusof, the new Chief Minister of Brunei, sent a letter through the British government to remind the Malaysian government that it owed Brunei a reply to its letter dated 17 April 1965.²⁸

A year later on 25 April 1966 the Brunei government sent another letter to the British government about a reminder to an earlier letter with regard to Brunei's claim on Limbang to the Malaysian government.²⁹ A reply was received from the British government dated 11 May 1966 which stated that the letter was communicated to the secretary for Commonwealth Relations in London. A month later, the British government informed PSN Yusof that the claim would be submitted to the Malaysian government. Following that, the British government informed PSN Yusof that the Malaysian authorities were actively considering the content of the letter sent by the Brunei government concerning its claim over Limbang. However, since then the Brunei government had heard nothing from the Malaysian government.³⁰ This was despite the Brunei government's further letter to the Malaysian government on 6 February 1969.³¹

Abdul Rahman Yakub's public pronouncement that the descendants of Bruneian citizens should give their undivided loyalty to Malaysia provoked Sir Omar to renew his claim over Limbang publicly.³² Here, however, it is worth noting that Abdul Rahman Yaakub made this statement following the migration of the people of Limbang, particularly those of Bruneian descent to Brunei. Following the incorporation of Limbang into Malaysia, about one thousand inhabitants of a village in Limbang had

²⁶ Ibid., 17 April 1965. For the full text of the letter see Appendix V.

²⁷ FCO24/1380, Tunku Abdul Rahman to HH Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien, 22 April 1965.

²⁸ FCO24/734, PSN Yusof to FCO, 12 October 1970.

²⁹ Ibid., 12 October 1970.

³⁰ Ibid., 12 October 1970.

³¹ Ibid., 12 October 1970.

³² FCO24/734, Adair to D.P. Aires, 3 October 1970.

moved down river to Brunei where the government of Brunei allowed them to set up their own community in Kampong Ayer ('Water Village').³³ The Sultan had given them the status of Brunei citizens, and some sections of the community there had expressed their wish to have the area returned to Brunei.³⁴ This originated from the difficulties faced by the residents who lived in the villages situated on the border, whose nationalities could not be easily determined.³⁵ If Limbang had been part of Brunei, this would not have been the case. As a result, Abdul Rahman Yaakub made his speech urging the people to be loyal to Malaysia. In retaliation, Sir Omar revived Brunei's claim over Limbang openly.

In his meeting with Adair, Sir Omar also informed the High Commissioner that Limbang was one of the issues he intended to raise and that it was a matter on which he continued to attach much importance.³⁶ Adair thought that Sir Omar also raised the issue of Limbang publicly because he wanted to remind the Conservative government which had come to power in June 1970 that the Limbang issue would be one of the matters he intended to bring up in the meeting between Brunei and the British government. By raising the issue before the talks between Brunei and the British government, Sir Omar had actually made it difficult for the British government to avoid the Limbang issue.³⁷ Indeed, during the meetings between Brunei and the British government between November 1970 and November 1971, Limbang was one of the main issues dominating the discussions apart from the terms of the amended agreement of 1971.

P. Gautrey on the other hand, who replaced Adair as the British High Commissioner to Brunei in 1972, thought that the reason for Sir Omar making a public claim over Limbang was that of the oil factor. The possibility that Limbang might be sitting on a vast oil reserve had made Sir Omar renew Brunei's claim on Limbang from Malaysia. Since the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company had struck its first oil on its 1,470 sq. mile

³³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 3 October 1970.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 October 1970.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3 October 1970.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12 October 1970.

³⁷ FCO24/734, Adair to D.P. Aires, 3 October 1970. See also FCO24/734, J.E.Thorne to W.A. Ward, 11 November 1970.

concession (that was twenty-two miles off the coast of Brunei in 1970), it had stimulated oil explorations in the Temburong District, which was located in the eastern part of Brunei separated by Limbang.³⁸

The Brunei Shell Petroleum Company, which had been in operation in the state since 1918, was the major producer of oil in Brunei.³⁹ In 1963 and 1969, it discovered two offshore oilfields, namely the South-West Ampa and the Fairly Field.⁴⁰ The South-West Ampa Field was situated 13 and 18 km in front of the coast of Kuala Belait (close to the sea-border of Sarawak). Parts of the Ampa Field lay in the territorial waters of Sarawak and were exploited by the Malaysian national oil company.⁴¹ Both fields had a content of natural gas and some of the gas deposits were found separate from the oil.⁴² In 1970, an offshore field called Champion was discovered by the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company. Another oil company, the Ashland Oil Company, began preliminary work in connection with a proposed exploratory programme in the state in an area of 1,454 sq. mile concession in Belait, Tutong and the Brunei/Muara Districts as well as Temburong in 1969.⁴³

According to G.E. Wilford in his 'Geology and Mineral Resources of Brunei and Adjacent Parts of Sarawak' which is the standard geological work for the area, produced with the cooperation of Shell and published by Brunei Press in 1961 'the best prospects for finding further oil fields appear to be west of the Limbang valley'.⁴⁴ Gautrey in his letter to J.K. Hickman⁴⁵ dated 22 March 1973, stated that Brunei had not come across any recent indication that there was an active exploration going on in the Malaysian part of the Limbang Valley. He added that 'sooner or later oil may be found in this area.'⁴⁶ Because of this, it was possible that Sir Omar wanted Limbang to be

³⁸ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report, 1970*.

³⁹ In 1929, it discovered the first oil well at Seria.

⁴⁰ Franz, Johannes C., *The Sultanate of Brunei: Oil Wealth and Problems of Development*, p. 77.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴³ FCO24/1692, Gautrey to Hickman, 22 March 1973. Also see Johannes C. Franz, *The Sultanate of Brunei*, pp. 281 – 283 for details of the Bruneian Government concession areas to Brunei Shell Petroleum Company, Ashland Oil Company and other companies from 1963 until 1968.

⁴⁴ FCO24/1692, P. Gautrey to J.K. Hickman, 22 March 1973.

⁴⁵ J.K. Hickman was the British High Commissioner to Malaysia.

⁴⁶ FCO24/1692, Gautrey to Hickman, 22 March 1973.

returned to Brunei before the discovery of oil in those areas. If oil were found before Limbang was returned, it would then be impossible for Brunei to reclaim Limbang.⁴⁷

5.3. The Limbang conflict: 1970 – 1973

However, Brunei's claim on Limbang from Malaysia (whatever the reasons behind it) proved to be difficult for Brunei, as the Malaysian government ignored Brunei's claim over Limbang. After the establishment of Malaysia in 1963, the latter ignored Brunei's claim on Limbang because the Malaysian government wanted to punish Sir Omar for his stubbornness in not joining Malaysia.⁴⁸ To the Malaysian government, the Limbang territory would only be returned to Brunei on condition that Brunei joined the Federation of Malaysia.⁴⁹ Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya, had already indicated to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that, if Brunei did not join Malaysia, there was no prospect of Limbang being returned to Brunei before or after the creation of Malaysia. Only if Brunei joined Malaysia would there be a possibility of the return of Limbang to Brunei.⁵⁰ Moreover, the Malaysian government considered Brunei's claim on Limbang as totally unacceptable. To the Malaysian government, since the Brooke dynasty,⁵¹ the British⁵² and then the Malaysian government had exercised continued jurisdiction over the area since 1890, and this was enough to make the annexation legal.⁵³ Moreover, when surveys were conducted to determine the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 22 March 1973. According to Gautrey, the Brunei aristocracy felt a certain amount of frustration at having lost their lands over the last century and a half when in fact they were sitting on the immense wealth of the oil fields.

⁴⁸ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 235.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 235.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 153. When Malaya proposed the Malaysian Plan to Brunei, the Malayan government suggested to the British that not only Limbang but also Sarawak be returned to Brunei, at least the Northern part of Sarawak where the population consisted mostly of Malays and Dayaks (CO947/2, Proposed Federation of Malaysia, Commission of Enquiry, Papers for British Members, item 6(b) (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 279). The main reason for the Malaysian government proposing this to the British was that it wanted to persuade the Sultan to join the Federation (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 154). The Colonial Office supported the idea and used Limbang to bait Brunei to join the Malaysian Federation (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 155). Brunei however did not join Malaysia.

⁵¹ The Brooke dynasty ruled Limbang from 1890 until 1946.

⁵² Limbang was under British colonial rule from 1946 until 1963 when Sarawak joined Malaysia.

⁵³ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 170.

wishes of the people of Sarawak as to whether they would like to join Malaysia or not, most of them stated that they would.

According to the Cobbold Commission Report of January 1963 and the United Nations Mission Report of September 1963 (which was set up to determine the views of the people of Sarawak and Sabah towards Malaysia), the majority of the people of Sarawak including Limbang were in favour of joining Malaysia. These reports showed that the people of Limbang had used their right of self-determination and had made clear their desire to join Malaysia. This principle of self-determination is contained in the United Nations Charter, General Assembly Resolution 1541(XV) Principle IX.⁵⁴ In other words, the process of establishing the wishes of the people of Sarawak as well as those of Limbang met the conditions for the legality of the treaty of cession, in accordance with the principle of self-determination within the requirement of the General Assembly Resolution 1541(XV).⁵⁵ Moreover, the 1963 Malaysia Agreement concluded that the cession of Limbang within the Federation of Malaysia was tantamount to a treaty of cession in international law.⁵⁶ Under this agreement, the sovereignty of Limbang was transferred from the British government to the Malaysian Federation.⁵⁷

Brunei's claim on Limbang also proved to be difficult as the British government did not support Brunei's claim on Limbang. This was because like Malaysia, Britain also

⁵⁴See United Nations Malaysia Mission Report, Department of Information, Malaysia, September 1963 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 170).

⁵⁵ However, the findings of the Cobbold Commission regarding the views of the Limbang population were debatable. The Cobbold Commission had simplified its findings by concluding that one third of the population of Sarawak and North Borneo would like to join Malaysia, one third would accept the Federation subject to conditions and a further third had differing attitudes towards the Federation of Malaysia (CO1030/1027, Greater Malaysia: – Consideration of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, Summary of Cobbold Report, 'Assessment of Evidence', Paragraph 143). According to Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'the findings suggest that the substantial majority of the people of Brunei did not favour Malaysia and that the Cobbold Report and the UN Commission's findings were not a valid basis for determining the future of Limbang. This was because about 40 % or 6,500 of the people of Limbang especially the Malays and the Kedayans favoured reunification with Brunei and opposed the unification with Malaysia. This number does not include the Chinese, Bisaya, Muruts and Ibans, most of whom also supported the return of Limbang to Brunei' (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 170).

⁵⁶ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 171.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

considered Limbang as part of the Malaysian State of Sarawak. To the British government the 1963 Agreement it had made with Malaysia had effectively transferred Limbang to the federal government.

When Sir Omar requested the British government to suggest to the Malaysian government a tripartite discussion on Limbang between the governments of Britain, Malaysia and Brunei, Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs warned Sir Omar that Britain did not support Brunei's claim on Limbang because it considered Limbang to be part of the Malaysian State of Sarawak.⁵⁸ Sir Omar, however, told Anthony Royle that Brunei had not ceded Limbang to Sarawak and it was a fact that Brunei had rights over Limbang. Sir Omar added that unlike Sabah and Sarawak, Limbang had never been the subject of concession and that there was no document recording an agreement on Limbang by the late Sultan and he had certainly seen no proof of such a transaction.⁵⁹ According to Sir Omar, under Islamic principles it would be wrong for Brunei to drop the claim and it was a great wrong for a Muslim state to retain the property of another Muslim State.⁶⁰

Anthony Royle also warned the Sultan not to make any more public announcements regarding the matter and notified Sir Omar that if he did not heed Britain's advice, the British government would announce its stance on the issue publicly, that it did not support Brunei's claim on Limbang.⁶¹ His reason for warning Sir Omar not to make any more public pronouncements regarding Limbang was that Sir Omar's action could cause embarrassment to the British government, as the annexation of Limbang occurred when Brunei had a protectorate agreement with Britain.⁶²

Indeed when Sarawak annexed Limbang Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam, whose rule was influenced by the Amanat, sought British protection. It should be borne in mind that by the Protectorate Agreement signed between Brunei and Britain in 1888, Brunei gained British protection while retaining its internal independence. However, the British government, which was committed to the absorption of Brunei either by

⁵⁸ FCO24/1082, Record of a Meeting between Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Sultan of Brunei at the FCO, 22 April 1971.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 April 1971.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 22 April 1971.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 22 April 1971.

⁶² FCO24/734, Adair to Aires, 3 October 1970.

Sarawak or North Borneo, did not rescue Brunei. Instead, it urged Sultan Hashim to give his consent to the annexation of Limbang by Sarawak. Sultan Hashim, however, made it clear that his consent would not be forthcoming. His objections maintained the policy of the late Sultan (Sultan Abdul Momin), who did not want any more of Brunei's territories to be divided among other powers.⁶³ In his despatch dated 11 February 1891, Sultan Hashim stated that 'in accordance with the wishes of the late Sultan we have always refused to cede to any other nation the River Limbang and other rivers and territory'.⁶⁴

In order to validate the acquisition of Limbang by Sarawak, a survey was carried out by the British government to determine the independence of Limbang. This was because the annexation of Limbang by Rajah Brooke was based on his contention that the Limbang people had been independent of Brunei for years and the inhabitants of Limbang preferred Sarawak's rule to Brunei's.⁶⁵ In Rajah Brooke's despatch to Sir C. Smith, the High Commissioner for Brunei, Rajah Brooke stated that 'I base my occupation principally on the will of the inhabitants of Limbang and their right to choose a protecting and ruling power, these people having maintained their independence against the Bruneian Government since 1884'.⁶⁶

Subsequently, the report on Limbang's independence was revealed by Noel P. Trevenen, who was chosen as the British representative to investigate the case. In his report, he stated that Brunei had not been practising its sovereignty over Limbang for seven years, the people of Brunei had been 'hopelessly bad and corrupt' and 'the people of Limbang had been in periodic revolt'.⁶⁷ Consequently, on 12 August 1891 Smith informed Sultan Hashim that the British had recognised and confirmed Rajah Brooke's possession of Limbang with the condition that he would pay compensation to the

⁶³ FO12/87, Sultan Hashim to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Enclosure 2 in No. 3, 11 February 1891. In 1885, Sultan Abdul Momin called upon his principal officers to a meeting whereby from this meeting the *Amanat* or (Sacred Will) was made. The important point in the 'Amanat' was that Limbang and other territories should not be leased or ceded to other nations. For the full text of the 'Amanat' see Appendix IV.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 11 February 1891.

⁶⁵ FO12/87, Lord Salisbury to Sir C. Smith, 29 November 1890.

⁶⁶ FO12/87, Rajah Charles Brooke to Smith, 30 January 1891.

⁶⁷ CO12/87, P. Trevenen to Salisbury, 30 April 1891.

Sultan.⁶⁸ Rajah Brooke offered Sultan Hashim \$6000 per annum for Limbang; by offering compensation, the British hoped that the Limbang issue could be closed.⁶⁹

As a result, Sultan Hashim sent petitions to the Queen and to prominent British officials for the return of Limbang.⁷⁰ In his petitions, he denounced Trevenen's report, which supported Rajah Brooke's action, and did not consider the difficulty of Brunei. He also condemned Britain for interfering in the internal affairs of Brunei.⁷¹ In his despatch to Trevenen, he objected that:

If any of Brunei's subjects rebel against the Bruneian Government, it is not right altogether for other nations or governments to interfere, to go between, or to consult Brunei subjects who are in rebellion so they may be forced in denying the Bruneian Government.⁷²

In order to cover up the controversial action of the British, the latter reminded Sultan Hashim of Article III of the 1888 Agreement: If any difference should arise between the Sultan and the Bruneian government of any other state, the Sultan of Brunei agrees to abide by the decision of Her Majesty's Government, and to take all necessary measures to give effect thereto.⁷³ To Sultan Hashim, however, Britain had violated the 1888 Agreement it had made with Brunei. This was because Brunei's purpose for seeking protection was to preserve the kingdom; this was the spirit behind the negotiations. However, by sanctioning Rajah Brooke's annexation of Limbang, Britain had actually broken its treaty with Brunei. Moreover, if Brunei were to cede Limbang it would violate the 1888 Agreement, especially Article VI of the agreement, which says that 'no cession nor any other alienation of any part of the territory of the State of Brunei shall be made to any foreign state'.⁷⁴

This was why Adair warned Sir Omar not to make any more public announcements regarding Limbang as his action could have caused embarrassment to the British. Adair in his letter to D.P. Aires of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 3 October 1970

⁶⁸ Sarawak Document, Smith to Sultan Hashim, 12 August 1891.

⁶⁹ FCO12/88 also in CO144/69, Smith to Salisbury, 11 December 1891, No. 4 (Cited in Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, p. 413).

⁷⁰ FO12/95, Sultan Hashim to Governor Sir C. Mitchell, Enclosure 1 in No. 1, 16 February 1894.

⁷¹ FO12/87, Sultan Hashim to Trevenen, 29 April 1891.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 29 April 1891.

⁷³ See Appendix I.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

mentioned that 'the embarrassing question of Brunei's claim to Limbang has again, and in a quite unexpected context, raised its ugly head'.⁷⁵

Following Sir Omar's public claim on Limbang, the issue of Limbang had been publicized from time to time, and had been a bone of contention and source of friction between Brunei and Malaysia and this discomfited the British. Following the Sultan's claim on Limbang, on 13 October 1970, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia stated in *Berita Harian* which was then quoted by the *Borneo Bulletin* that Brunei had no rights to Limbang, as it was not an independent state and that its people were 'slaves of the British'.⁷⁶ Consequently, Sir Omar responded by saying that it was actually the states in Malaysia which were the slaves of the Malaysian Central Government as 'their constitution can be changed by the Central Government as has happened in Sarawak'.⁷⁷

Another issue which embarrassed the British was that of the boundary, raised by Sir Omar. According to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Limbang boundary was already fixed by the British and the Governor of Sarawak.⁷⁸ Brunei's palace official however disputed Tunku Abdul Rahman's claim because to Brunei the issue had not been discussed let alone approved by Brunei.⁷⁹ This embarrassed the British as in 1920, 1925, 1931 and 1933 the British Resident in Brunei had made agreements with the Sarawak government relating to the border problem without the Sultan's consent. By these agreements, Limbang was effectively recognized as a part of Sarawak's territory.⁸⁰

In June 1971, when Sir Omar requested permission to visit Limbang and to talk in public about the progress of his Limbang claim, Anthony Royle turned him down and reminded him of the advice he had given at the earlier meeting which was not to raise the issue in public. Moreover, a visit by Sir Omar to Limbang in any capacity could

⁷⁵ FCO24/734, Adair to Aires, 3 October 1970.

⁷⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 October 1970 & FCO24/734, Mr Grubb to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 13 October 1970, *Berita Harian*, 13 October 1970.

⁷⁷ *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 October 1970, FCO24/734, Mr Grubb to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 13 October 1970, *Bintang Harian (Daily Star)*, 15 October 1970 & 20 October 1970, *Bintang Harian*, 20 October 1970, *Pelita Brunei*, 21 October 1970.

⁷⁸ *Bintang Harian (Daily Star)*, 21 October 1970.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1970.

⁸⁰ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 147.

only be embarrassing to the British government. As a result, Royle warned Sir Omar that if he made the visit, the British government publicly would make clear its view on Limbang that it did not support Brunei's claim on the territory.⁸¹

Anthony Royle also warned Sir Omar that the issue of Limbang, whatever the basis of his claim, would involve Brunei's external affairs and was therefore the responsibility of the British government.⁸² The provisions of Article 3(1) of the 1959 Agreement, under which the British government had complete control of Brunei's external affairs, were unaffected by the amending agreement, which they initialled in November 1971. This was indeed a shift in British policy because in 1963 the British government had allowed the Brunei government to take the issue of Limbang straight to the Malaysian government and not the British government as Limbang had become part of the State of Sarawak within Malaysia. The British government's stance on the matter showed that it wanted to control Brunei's claim on Limbang. When Sir Omar argued that his claim on Limbang was based on Islamic principles and was thus outside the British government's jurisdiction, Anthony Royle maintained that it was still inside British control as Brunei's external affairs were under the British government's influence.⁸³

Anthony Royle further warned Sir Omar that, in dealing with the issue, the British government would have to take into account the likely views of the Malaysian government. On this, Royle reminded Sir Omar that the Malaysian government might not consider Brunei's claim on Limbang. Royle, however, believed that there could be a possibility of fruitful discussions about border problems if the claim was not pursued.⁸⁴ From here, one can see that the British government did not support Brunei's claim on Limbang, but only supported the possibility of discussions on the border problems. Tun Abdul Razak, the new Prime Minister of Malaysia, indicated in September 1970 to the British authorities that there would be a likelihood of discussions on the border problems if the Limbang claim was not pursued by Sir

⁸¹ FCO24/1380, Record of Meeting between Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Sultan of Brunei, at the FCO, 19 June 1972.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 19 June 1972.

⁸³ FCO24/734, Adair to Aires, 3 October 1970.

⁸⁴ FCO24/1082, Record of a Meeting between Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Sultan of Brunei at the FCO, 22 April 1971.

Omar.⁸⁵ Sir Omar, however, argued that even border problems were presided over by the principles of religion, and in Brunei's view Limbang fell within the borders of Brunei. He proposed that the British government discuss with the Malaysian government whether the latter could agree to talks on an Islamic basis.⁸⁶ Royle at first was reluctant to do this, but after many circular arguments, he finally agreed to consider without commitment whether the British government could ask Malaysia to agree to Sir Omar's proposal.⁸⁷

On 5 May 1971, Royle proposed that Sir Omar prepare a letter expressing the Sultan's views on Limbang, which the British government passed on to the Malaysian government.⁸⁸ In the Sultan's letter, he expressed Brunei's claim on Limbang based on the principles of Islamic Law. These principles are: faith and belief in God; belief in the teaching of the Prophet; belief in the holy books as handed down; belief in the angels; belief in the next world and belief that those who take others' property will not enter heaven and must restore the property to their rightful owners.⁸⁹ However, the Malaysian government refused to receive from the British government a formal request on behalf of the Sultan.⁹⁰ In response to this, Sir Omar stated to Anthony Royle that, if the Malaysian government refused to accept his communication, it would be contravening the arrangement whereby the British government handled Brunei's foreign affairs. Sir Omar stated that, 'if therefore the Malaysian government would not accept representations from HMG on behalf of Brunei, what was the position?'⁹¹ At this stage Sir Omar was obviously disappointed because he knew that the Malaysian government was ignoring his claim over Limbang.⁹²

Brunei's claim on Limbang became an urgent matter when the 1962 Bruneian ex-rebels escaped from the Berakas Detention Camp in Brunei to Limbang in July 1973.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 22 April 1971.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 26 April 1971.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 29 April 1971.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 5 May 1971.

⁸⁹ FCO24/1380, Record of Meeting between Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Sultan of Brunei, at the FCO, 19 June 1972.

⁹⁰ FCO24/1689, Talks with the Sultan of Brunei, Brief no. 3 – Limbang, 3 September 1973.

⁹¹ FCO24/1689, Note of Sir Omar's remarks during Defence Council Meeting, 22 February 1973.

⁹² When Sir Omar brought up the issue of Limbang publicly, Tunku Abdul Rahman had already stated that Brunei's claim to Limbang was a matter for the Brunei and the British Governments (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 October 1970).

At this point, it should be noted that Sir Omar believed they escaped with the connivance of the Malaysian government. Indeed, the Malaysian government was involved in the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels. The reasons for the Malaysian government's involvement in their escape will be explained in detail in the next chapter. It is noteworthy however that one of the reasons for the Malaysian government's involvement in the episode was that it wanted to avert Sir Omar and the Sultan's attention away from the Limbang issue and to redirect their attention to Brunei's independence and constitutional development in the Sultanate. Indeed, following the successful escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Malaysia, the issue of constitutional development and that of the continued detention of the ex-rebels without trial in Brunei came to the fore and occupied the Sultan and Sir Omar.

From the end of the 1962 Rebellion until 1973, fifty-seven political detainees had been held at Berakas Detention Camp. The UN adopted a consensus on Brunei at the 943rd meeting on 23 August 1973 by the UN Special Committee with regard to the implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (the so-called Committee of Twenty-four).⁹³ Under this consensus, Britain should continue to transmit information under Article 73(e) of the Charter with respect to Brunei and ask that the visiting missions of the UN, drawn from the Special Committee, should be received in Brunei.⁹⁴ As mentioned in Chapter Four, before the 1971 Agreement was signed between Britain and Brunei, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had informed the UK mission in New York that when the new agreement was signed, Britain would cease transmission of its reports about Brunei to the UN Secretary-General. The UN had, however, asked the UK mission at the UN to

⁹³FCO24/1684, Record of Conversation between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Sultan at the FCO, 6 November 1973, J.K Hickman to Wilford – Speaking Notes for a meeting between A. Royle and the Sultan on 6 November 1973.

⁹⁴ This worried the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as this might have led to a campaign in New York and elsewhere, which would have been damaging to Brunei's interests, where some countries would express views on Brunei's internal policies. This might in turn stimulate organisations such as Amnesty International and possibly even British members to raise the matter publicly (cited in FCO24/1684, Record of Conversation between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Sultan at the FCO, 6 November 1973, J.K Hickman to Wilford – Speaking Notes for a meeting between A. Royle and the Sultan on 6 November 1973).

continue to transmit these reports.⁹⁵ Consequently, Anthony Royle, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, suggested that Sir Omar release the remaining prisoners. Anthony Royle's suggestion posed a problem for Sir Omar, as he did not want to release prisoners whom he still considered as dangerous to the security of the Sultanate.⁹⁶

The release of the detainees was actually dealt with by a review consisting of a chairman and three assessors appointed by the Sultan, and higher authorities further considered the committee's recommendations.⁹⁷ Usually, releases were conditional upon a detainee denouncing Azahari's leadership and political treachery, volunteering to reform behaviour and pledging loyalty to the Sultan. From the time the detainees were held, none had been brought to trial.⁹⁸ For some years the review committee had not met, as it considered that the remaining detainees were in the 'black', i.e., dangerous, category. The British High Commissioner commented that too much time had passed since the 1962 Rebellion and that it was time for a court-based trial to be held.⁹⁹ The Sultan persistently claimed that when the position of all the detainees was revised by the Special Branch and the security committee in 1970, they had suggested that these detainees remained hard-core troublemakers.¹⁰⁰ Sir Omar explained that the conditions in neighbouring states did not permit the relaxation of security measures in Brunei.¹⁰¹ When Anthony Royle suggested that Sir Omar implement some kind of elected advisory body with limited powers and limited franchise,¹⁰² Sir Omar rejected his suggestion as he did not want to reduce his power to a constitutional monarch.

Although the issues of constitutional development and the continued detention of the ex-rebels without trial in Brunei came to the fore and occupied the attention of the

⁹⁵ FCO58/625, D.P. Aires to Wilford, 23 March 1973.

⁹⁶ FCO24/1684, Record of Conversation between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Sultan at the FCO, 6 November 1973, J.K Hickman to Wilford – Speaking Notes for a meeting between A. Royle and the Sultan on 6 November 1973.

⁹⁷ FCO24/1698, Briefs on Brunei/Malaysia Relations: Escape of Detainees, September 1973.

⁹⁸ Ibid., September 1973.

⁹⁹ FCO24/1698, Briefs on Brunei/Malaysia Relations: Escape of Detainees, September 1973.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., September 1973.

¹⁰¹ FCO24/1679, Record of Conversation between His Highness the Sultan of Brunei and Anthony Royle at the FCO, 6 July 1972.

¹⁰² FCO24/1684, Record of Conversation between Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Sultan at the FCO, 6 November 1973.

Sultan and Sir Omar, they did not abandon the issue of Limbang. To Sir Omar and the Sultan the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang could have posed a threat to Brunei's security. Thus in the interests of Brunei's national security, Limbang had to be reclaimed and Brunei's defence had to be tightened.

In a meeting between Sir Omar and Royle on 19 September 1973 in London, Sir Omar questioned Royle on the results of his communication with the Malaysian government regarding Brunei's claim on Limbang.¹⁰³ Royle confirmed that he would write to Tun Abdul Razak informing him of the discussions. Similarly in the meeting on 12 November 1973 between the Sultan and Royle, Sir Omar once again pressed Royle about his contact with Tun Abdok Razak. Since there had been no reply from Malaysia, Sir Omar suggested Royle send a reminder to Tun Abdul Razak requesting a reply by the end of the year. The Sultan also suggested to Royle that he himself would write a letter to Tun Abdul Razak if Royle did not get an answer from Tun Abdul Razak.¹⁰⁴ Royle, however, stated that Sir Omar's suggestions would only make it more difficult to reach a satisfactory outcome for Brunei's claim on Limbang. As a result, Sir Omar warned Royle that he would withdraw from his position as adviser to the Sultan if he did not receive any reply from Tun Abdul Razak. He insisted on having a reply by 31 December and if he did not get it, he would resign.¹⁰⁵

5.4. The closure of the Limbang issue

On 14 December 1973, Tun Abdul Razak finally replied to Brunei's letter which had been forwarded via Royle in 1971; in the reply, he closed the Limbang issue completely. In the letter, Tun Abdul Razak stated that the Malaysian government was not prepared to entertain any discussions on the Limbang claim by Brunei, because to him such discussions would not serve any useful purpose.¹⁰⁶ In answering the three questions posed by Brunei, the Malaysian government stated that its Constitution did

¹⁰³ FCO24/1684, Record of a Conversation between HH the Sultan of Brunei and Mr Royle at the FCO, 19 September 1973.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 12 November 1973.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 12 November 1973. Sir Omar was appointed as the Sultan's adviser following the latter's accession to the throne in October 1967 (cited from *Utusan Melayu*, 25 October 1967).

¹⁰⁶ FCO24/1679, Tun Abdul Razak to Anthony Royle, 14 December 1973. See also *Pelita Brunei*, 6 February 1974.

not prove that Islam was the official religion, while at the same time guaranteeing complete freedom for the practice of other religions. However, he stated that Muslims in Malaysia followed the Shafeite School of Islam and recognised the authority of the Quran and other holy books of Islam on religious matters. These facts, according to Tun Abdul Razak, were well known, but they did not help Malaysia in any way with regard to the Limbang claim, which was not a religious matter.¹⁰⁷

In response to Tun Abdul Razak's letter, Sir Omar, in a statement which was delivered by the Acting State Secretary Dato Paduka Awang Haji Abdul Aziz on Radio Brunei on 30 January 1974, maintained that Brunei would never give up its claim over Limbang from Malaysia. Brunei would not allow Limbang, which belonged to Brunei, to be part of Malaysia. He further stated that Brunei would continue to claim Limbang from the Malaysian government and that it would discuss with the British government Brunei's intention to continue its pursuit to reclaim Limbang from Malaysia.¹⁰⁸

Following the Sultan's statement, Brunei received persistent warnings from Abdul Rahman Yakub, the Chief Minister of Sarawak. On 21 March 1974, the Chief Minister of Sarawak warned Brunei not to approach Sarawak and that '[we] will never give away an inch of Malaysian soil in Limbang to Brunei'. He further warned Brunei not to 'wake the sleeping tiger. There are a million people here'.¹⁰⁹ The figure of one million was particularly threatening, for it reminded Sir Omar that Brunei had a population of only about 150,000, living in restricted areas hemmed in by Sarawak territory, and furthermore split in two by the disputed Limbang claim. He also provoked Sir Omar by reminding him that the latter needed the Gurkha soldiers in his state, not because Brunei was facing security problems, but because he was afraid of an uprising from his people who were desperate for independence.¹¹⁰

In his further provocation towards Brunei, Abdul Rahman Yaakub stated in the State Council that Malaysians in Sarawak were prepared 'to sacrifice to the last drop of

¹⁰⁷ FCO24/1679, Tun Abdul Razak to Anthony Royle, 14 December 1973.

¹⁰⁸ *Pelita Brunei*, 6 February 1974.

¹⁰⁹ *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 March 1974, *New Nation*, March 22, 1974 & *Straits Times*, 23 March 1974.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

their blood to resist the Brunei claim'.¹¹¹ He called upon Brunei to give up what he termed 'the groundless claim',¹¹² and rejected Brunei's claim on Limbang.¹¹³ In response to this, Sir Omar stated that 'Brunei's claim to Limbang was directed to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and not directed to the Chief Minister of Sarawak.'¹¹⁴ However, in April 1974, Tun Abdul Razak told the House of Commons that he officially supported the Sarawak Chief Minister's rejection of the Limbang claim. He stated that 'because Limbang is part of Sarawak, it is only right that in facing the continuous accusations from Brunei, the Sarawak Chief Minister is forced to take prompt measures to show the feelings of the Sarawak Government and also of its people.'¹¹⁵

The Brunei Government was also accused of indicating a further claim to the Baram River in Sarawak, which was reluctantly ceded by Sultan Abdul Momin to Rajah Brooke in 1882.¹¹⁶ On this, Sarawak warned Brunei that past territorial connections could not be used as a basis for territorial claims. It added that:

If one country claims over another, then one can imagine the number of territorial claims that would crop up all over the world. Brunei will have claims over the whole of Sarawak. Indonesia in turn will have claims over the whole of Borneo.¹¹⁷

Brunei was also accused of referring to Sarawak as a kind of neo-colony with a Malaysian-appointed governor. The Sarawak Chief Minister stressed that the people of Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah should work together to solve common problems, though the sounding was actually directed to the people of Brunei and not the Brunei government.¹¹⁸ In an act extremely provocative to Brunei, in 1974, the Sarawak government renamed the Kampong Pendaruan (where 'Malaysians' had been killed in

¹¹¹ *New Nation*, March 29, 1974, *Nanyang Siang-Pao*, 30 March 1974, *Sunday Tribune*, 31 March 1974 & *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 April 1974.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (Singapore), 2 April 1974, *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 April 1974, *Daily News* (Kuching), 3 April 1974 & *Daily Express*, 8 April 1974.

¹¹⁴ *Pelita Brunei*, 10 April 1974.

¹¹⁵ Radio Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, News Bulletin, 17 April, *Straits Times*, 18 April 1974 & *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (Singapore), 19 April 1974.

¹¹⁶ *Sabah Times*, 7 June 1974.

¹¹⁷ *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1974.

¹¹⁸ Lim, Joo-Jock, 'Brunei: Prospects for a Protectorate' in *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 1976, p. 157.

the 1962 Rebellion) as the Kampong Perjuangan ('Heroes Village'), which was three miles from Brunei's border.¹¹⁹ In the same year, Brunei also witnessed the flight of some of its people to Limbang. In May, nine families from Kampong Lumapas ran away to Limbang,¹²⁰ as the ex-rebels in Limbang provoked them by saying the Brunei Government would arrest them following their intention to reorganise the PRB in Brunei.¹²¹ A month later a group of twenty-two students from Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin College (SOASC) fled to Limbang. The refugees stayed in Limbang, where the Malaysian government then gave them asylum. The issue of the escape of the Bruneian ex-rebels and nine families from Kampong Lumapas and the students from SOASC to Limbang will be explained further in the next chapter.

In order to discredit Brunei's claim on Limbang, on 23 April 1974 Tun Abdul Razak told the House of Commons that the British government had already informed the Malaysian government that it would not support Brunei's claim to Limbang. Tun Abdul Razak could not accept Brunei's claim because Limbang was part of Sarawak and the people of Limbang had decided to join Malaysia in 1963.¹²² In June, Tun Abdul Razak made a further statement about Malaysia's stance on Limbang when he was asked by Goh Hock Guan, M.P. (Gerakan) about the possibility of having an intermediary to solve the problem quietly between the Malaysian and the Brunei governments regarding Limbang. Tun Abdul Razak stated that:

As I have stated many times before, Malaysia does not recognise the so-called claim by Brunei because there is no basis for such a claim. The people of Sarawak have freely chosen to be in Malaysia and their wishes must be respected by Brunei. Therefore the question of a settlement or the use of an intermediary does not arise. Limbang is an integral part of Sarawak, which enjoys independence in Malaysia. As far as I can see the only way the matter can be 'settled quietly' is for Brunei to leave Limbang alone so that its

¹¹⁹ *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (Singapore), 2 April 1974.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1974.

¹²¹ The Head of the refugee group was Osman Bakar, the Deputy Head was Salleh Mahal and family. The followers were Haji Ahad bin Taha, Tamin bin Taha, Syed bin Taha, Mudin bin Nordin, Jeludin, Ghani Miasan, Ahmad Midin and Pak Mohamad Tahir with all their families (cited in Zariani, *Escape From Berakas!*, p. 260).

¹²² *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (Singapore), 23 April 1974, *Daily Express*, 23 April 1974, News Bulletin Radio Malaysia Kuching and Limbang, 25 April 1974.

inhabitants can continue to prosper and live in peace, free from any political controversy.¹²³

Although Sir Omar contended that he would continue to make his claim over Limbang, he could not pursue his contention as his attention was shifted towards the activities of Brunei's ex-rebels in Malaysia and international arena. The activities of the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels in Malaysia posed challenges and problems not only to Sir Omar and the Sultan but also to Britain, which wanted to end its military protection over the Sultanate. The activities of Brunei's ex-rebels in Malaysia and the problems they posed for the Sultan, Sir Omar and the British will be looked into in the next chapter.

5.5. Conclusion

The difficulties faced by the Brunei government regarding its claim over Limbang were the result of the failure of the British government to return Limbang to Brunei before it became the Malaysian part of Sarawak in 1963. The British government should have returned Limbang to Brunei when the Brooke family ceded Sarawak to the British government in 1946. However, because of lack of commitment from the British government, the issue of Limbang persisted until the 1960s. In early 1960 when Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin claimed Limbang from the British government, the latter refused to consider his claim, as it did not want it to endanger the formation of Malaysia. When Brunei claimed its right over Limbang to the federal government after the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the latter did not wish to discuss the matter with the Brunei government because Brunei's foreign affairs came under the jurisdiction of the British government.

However, from the outset, the Malaysian government was not interested in discussing the matter, as Limbang was already part of the Malaysian State of Sarawak. Moreover, the people of Sarawak including Limbang had chosen to become part of Malaysia prior to its entry into Malaysia. Furthermore, the signing of the 1963 Malaysian Agreement validated the transfer of Sarawak including Limbang from

¹²³ *Foreign Affairs* (Malaysia), Vol. 1.7. No 2, June 1974.

Britain to Malaysia; the Malaysian government therefore considered Brunei's claim on Limbang, whatever its basis, as invalid. In addition, the Malaysian government wanted to punish Sir Omar for his obstinacy in not joining Malaysia. The Malaysian government used the Limbang issue as a kind of retribution against the Sultan. To the Malaysian government, the Limbang territory would only be given back to Brunei on provision that Brunei joined the Federation of Malaysia.¹²⁴ Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya, had already recommended to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that, if Brunei did not join Malaysia, there was no prospect of Limbang being returned to Brunei before or after the establishment of Malaysia. Only if Brunei joined Malaysia would there be a possibility of the return of Limbang to Brunei.¹²⁵ Moreover, the British government did not support Brunei's claim on Limbang as Limbang was already part of Malaysia via the 1963 Agreement it had with Malaysia. As a result, the claim was ignored and further reiterations of it resulted in outright rejection.

This study has shown that Brunei's claim on Limbang became an urgent matter when Brunei's 1962 ex-rebels escaped to Limbang in July 1973. For Brunei, Limbang had to be reclaimed from Malaysia in order to safeguard Brunei's national security. Nevertheless, the Malaysian government refused to return Limbang to Brunei and closed the Limbang issue to Brunei in December 1973. Although the Brunei government stated it would continue to claim Limbang from Malaysia, this proved not to be possible as it was occupied with the activities of the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels (who had the support of both Sarawak and the federal government of Malaysia), which to the Brunei government could undermine Brunei's internal and external security.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 235.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 153.

CHAPTER SIX

The Escape of the 1962 Bruneian Ex-rebels and their Political Activities: 1973 – 1975

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to study the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate in connection with its security and survival following the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang in July 1973. From the outset, Sir Omar suspected that Malaysia was involved in the event. This study will show that the reasons behind his suspicion were the disappearance of Malaysian nationals who manned the camp and the speed of the escapees' movements from Limbang to Kuching in addition to the granting of political asylum to all the escapees by the Malaysian government. This study will also show that the reason why the Malaysian government was involved in the escape was that it wanted the ex-rebels to put pressure on the British government to grant Brunei full independence. Furthermore, it wished to divert the Sultan and Sir Omar's attention away from the Limbang issue and direct their attention to the independence of Brunei and to constitutional development in the Sultanate.¹

This study will demonstrate that Malaysia's intention to use Azahari to achieve its aim had given Azahari a chance to continue the struggle that had been repressed by the Indonesian government following the coming to power of Suharto in 1966. The study will describe briefly Azahari's political activities in Indonesia between 1963 and 1966, after which the Indonesian government no longer supported him. In Kuala Lumpur, Azahari and the ex-detainees revived the PRB with the aim of achieving independence for Brunei and implementing a democratic system of government in Brunei. This study will demonstrate that since the Malaysian government did not control the activities of the ex-detainees in west Malaysia, the Brunei government had to recall its students studying in west Malaysia to Brunei as it feared that the ex-rebels would influence the students to work against the Brunei government.

¹ The escaped ex-rebels were aware that the Malaysian government was using them to deflect the Sultan and Sir Omar's attention away from pursuing their claim over Limbang and to switch their attention to the independence of Brunei as being pursued by the escaped detainees when they reactivated the Parti Rakyat Brunei (PRB) in Kuala Lumpur in 1974.

Subsequently, the study will discuss the PRB's political activities in Limbang where it will show that the Chief Minister of Sarawak was actively involved in the PRB's political activities in order to push Britain to grant Brunei independence and to subvert Brunei's security. In addition this study will discuss Britain's efforts to resolve the conflict between Brunei, Sarawak and the Federal Government of Malaysia, especially following Britain's announcement on 27 November 1974 that it planned to review its 1959 Agreement with Brunei. Although there was a lull in the PRB's political activities in Kuala Lumpur and Limbang toward the end of 1974 (following Britain's warning over Malaysia), this was only temporary as the PRB's political activities shifted into the international arena. This study will show that the PRB was supported not only by Malaysia but also by the international communities, and it was their support which led to the presentation of the PRB's case at the UN in November 1975. It will also discuss the response made by Britain's ambassador to the UN and the Sultan following the PRB's representation at the UN.

Lastly, it will look at the precautionary measures undertaken by the Sultan and Sir Omar to ensure the security of the Sultanate following the escape of Brunei's 1962 ex-rebels to Limbang. The chapter will show that as a result of the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels, the Sultan accelerated the phase of forming the second battalion, continued the emergency orders in Brunei and established the Department of Security and Intelligence (DSI) in order to ensure the security of the Sultanate.

6.2. The escape of Brunei's ex-rebels

The eight ex-rebels who escaped from Berakas Detention Camp to Limbang were Zaini Haji Ahmad, the former Vice-President of the PRB, who, during the rebellion was with Azahari in Manila on a mission to represent their case at the UN.² Next, Mohammad Yassin bin Abdul Rahman (alias Yasin Affandy), the former Secretary-General of the PRB, and the Deputy Prime Minister of the NKKU, and Commander-in-Chief of the TNKU, the militant wing of the PRB who was shot and caught during the rebellion by the British Gurkha army. Then there were Samul Jamaluddin, Yusof

² After the unsuccessful rebellion, Zaini renounced Azahari and sought asylum in Hong Kong, but the British turned him over to Brunei. See D. Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast Asian Islamic Sultanate*, Kuala Lumpur, Forum, 1990, p. 57.

Ibrahim, Ghani Metusin, Sheikh Salleh Sheikh Mahmud, Othman Latiff and Omar Tamin.³ They had been in prison since the end of the rebellion in 1963. Two other Bruneians who assisted their escape from the camp, Mahmud Murshidi Othman and Awangku Hamzah Pengiran Salleh, also followed the eight political detainees.

The disappearance of Raja Azlan, the principal officer of Berakas Detention Camp, and Ahmad Desa, the warder of the camp, both of whom were Malaysians⁴ convinced Sir Omar that the escape was carried out with the support of the Malaysian government. According to the *Borneo Bulletin's* report dated 28 July 1973, Raja Azlan left the state without warning.⁵ Moreover, the Malaysian government had never mentioned the disappearance of its nationals Raja Azlan and Ahmad Desa from Brunei.⁶ The speed with which the escaped party was moved from Limbang to Kuching and granted political asylum made Sir Omar believe even more firmly that the Malaysian government was involved in the incident.⁷

The Malaysian government was indeed involved in the episode.⁸ According to Mahmud Murshidi, the man who helped the detainees to escape from the Berakas Detention Camp, the reason for this involvement was Malaysia's adoption of ZOPFAN, the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in 1971, which aimed to neutralize Southeast Asia.⁹ The Malaysian proposal for the neutralisation of Southeast Asia was adopted at a special Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 1971. Tun Abdul Razak viewed Brunei as a hindrance to the achievement of ZOPFAN, as Brunei was still under British protection. In order to achieve ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia, Tun Abdul Razak decided to work with Azahari (who had been in Indonesia since

³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 28 July 1973.

⁴ Malaysians and some Singaporeans manned the Berakas Detention Camp.

⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 28 July 1973.

⁶ Malaysians working as warders at the Berakas Detention Camp were later replaced by Brunei citizens (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 4 August 1973).

⁷ FCO24/1675, Johnston to FCO, 14 December 1973. Also see FCO24/1684, Record of Meeting between the Sultan of Brunei and A. Royle at the FCO, 19 September 1973, FCO24/1675, Douglas-Home to Moffat, 14 December 1973 & See FCO24/1684, Wilford to Youde, 23 November 1973.

⁸ Author's interview with Mahmud Morshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 March 2006.

1963), so that Azahari could put pressure on the British government to grant Brunei full independence.

Another reason, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was that the Malaysian government wanted to divert the Sultan and Sir Omar's attention from pursuing their claim over Limbang to the independence of Brunei and to constitutional development in the Sultanate. As well as using the detainees to divert the attention of the Sultan and Sir Omar away from pursuing their claim over Limbang, the Malaysian government (as suggested by one of the strongest supporters of the PRB) was using the detainees to achieve its ultimate aim of bringing Brunei within Malaysia. By supporting the political detainees in the achievement of their aims, the Malaysian government was hoping that one day they could be persuaded to enter Malaysia. Nevertheless, according to a statement made by another supporter of the PRB to the author, the PRB would not bring Brunei into Malaysia as that would be against their struggle to gain independence for Brunei outside Malaysia.

Malaysia's intention to use Azahari to achieve its aim had given Azahari the opportunity to continue his struggle which had been repressed by the Indonesian government after the coming of Suharto to power in 1966. When Sukarno was in power, Azahari received material and moral support from the Indonesian government. As noted before, Sukarno supported and recognized the establishment of the NKKU, which was proclaimed by Azahari on 8 December 1962. Sukarno's support was the main reason for Azahari moving from Manila to Jakarta. In Jakarta, Sukarno allowed the PRB to set up its headquarters and to open a Representative Office for the NKKU. As stated previously, in 1965, Azahari formed an organisation called the United National Revolutionary Front of North Kalimantan, whose aims included opposition to British imperialism and the protection of the NKKU which was under his leadership.¹⁰

A year later, however, the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia came to an end.¹¹ This was following the coming to power of Suharto as a result of a coup d'état on 1 October 1965. When a group of dissident pro-Communist army and air force troops

¹⁰ Minutes of the First Conference of the North Kalimantan People's Revolutionary Consultative Committee, 16 to 29 March 1965, Document No. 25/PRB/65 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 253 – 262).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

attempted to seize control of the government in Jakarta in October 1965 Suharto, who was particularly anti-Communist, successfully suppressed them. The army alleged that the PKI was responsible for the abortive coup. Subsequently, in March 1966, Suharto persuaded President Sukarno to authorize him to restore security and order, which effectively transferred executive authority to Suharto. The issuance of 'Supersemar' (Surat Perintah 11 Maret, or the March 11 Order) by Sukarno on 11 March 1966 gave Suharto sweeping powers to take action as he saw fit to restore order and stability in Indonesia and reverse many of Sukarno's policies.¹²

This development worried Azahari as the Indonesian government could change its policy regarding its support for his cause until Brunei was granted independence. Although during Azahari's meeting with Suharto the latter assured him that there was no change in Indonesia's policy regarding its support for his cause until Brunei was granted independence, Suharto's support did not materialise. Azahari was deprived one by one of the facilities offered by Sukarno. For example, Azahari's monthly allowance of 500,000 Rupiah was stopped.¹³ After the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation was over the TNKU collapsed and by June 1966 it was completely destroyed. As Indonesia recommenced its diplomatic relations with Malaysia, the TNKU could no longer find support from any section in Indonesia.¹⁴

Azahari's position in Indonesia was further threatened when it was implied by General Sudisman (Indonesia's former ambassador to Egypt) that Azahari had had a meeting with Chen Yi of the People's Republic of China and Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia. At the meeting General Sudisman claimed that Azahari, Chin Yi and Prince Sihanouk planned to turn Southeast Asia into a Communist region.¹⁵ Earlier in 1966, Azahari's position in Indonesia was threatened when Mohammad Manggol (who was once appointed as a First Legation¹⁶ by Azahari in 1963)¹⁷ in a press statement

¹² Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995, pp. 39 – 40.

¹³ According to Zariani, 'Azahari's facilities were withdrawn for some sinister regional reasons understood only by a few' (cited in Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 219).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 222–3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹⁶ The position of a First Legation emerged after the Indonesian government which supported Azahari requested him to appoint a representative from the NKKU in order to represent the latter outside Indonesia.

implicated Azahari as a Communist.¹⁸ Subsequently, in May 1967, Panglima Komando (Commander of commandoes) Mandala Siaga issued an order for the return of NKKU's Representative Office in Jakarta, and in July Azahari moved from Jakarta to Bogor.¹⁹ Therefore it can be said that the coming of Suharto to power in 1966 had in many ways affected Azahari's struggle for the formation of the NKKU as Suharto did not support him.

As mentioned before, Malaysia's intention to use Azahari to push the British to grant Brunei full independence had given Azahari an opportunity to continue the struggle that was suppressed when Indonesia was ruled by Suharto. Azahari agreed to work with the Malaysian government to achieve ZOPFAN with conditions that: the political detainees in Berakas were released; Kuala Lumpur would become a host for the PRB and the Malaysian government must treat the PRB as an 'equal partner' to Malaysia rather than as an inferior group.²⁰

Following the meeting Raja Ahmad, also from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was commanded by the Ministry to pass a message to Raja Azlan, the principal camp officer of the Berakas Detention Camp (who became the middleman to the Malaysian conspiracy), to inform one of the detainees (apparently Sheikh Salleh Sheikh Mahmud) that the Malaysian government would grant the detainees political asylum if they managed to escape from the camp to Malaysia.²¹ They were, however, to devise their own plan of escape.²² Having been assured by Raja Azlan that they would be granted asylum in Malaysia, Sheikh Salleh and other detainees agreed to escape.²³

¹⁷ Zariani, *Escape From Berakas*, p. 199.

¹⁸ It is noteworthy that in September 1964, Azahari replaced Muhammad Manggol by Jais Abbas as the First Legation as the former had become more ambitious and wanted to take over from Azahari as the Prime Minister of NKKU (cited in *ibid.*, p. 200).

¹⁹ Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 224.

²⁰ Author's interview with Mahmud Murshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

²¹ The plan was given to Raja Azlan with the promise that, if he achieved this mission, he would be given the post of Director at Pudu Prison at Kuala Lumpur (Raja Azlan Raja Ngah, *Kearah Kemerdekaan Brunei*, pp. 52, cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 236).

²² This was to ensure that the Malaysian government would not be implicated by the Brunei government for the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels.

²³ Zaini was however the last person to be informed by Sheikh Salleh about the escape that is the eleventh hour before they escaped from the Berakas Detention Camp to Limbang (cited in Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, pp. 15 – 16).

They agreed to escape as they themselves were unsure of when they were likely to be released. Some time between 1967 and 1968 their plan to escape did not materialize as they were not sure where to go. If they escaped to Malaysia, they feared that they would not be granted asylum as they were the very people who were against the Malaysian Plan. They also feared escape to Indonesia as previous escapees had been badly treated by the Indonesian authorities.²⁴

Moreover, their appeal for release from the Brunei government was also rejected. In 1964, Zaini Haji Ahmad, Yassin Affandy, Mesir Keruddin, Osman Latif, Awang Momin Ahmad, Sheikh Salleh Sheikh Mahmud and several other detainees²⁵ had written a letter to the Brunei Chief Minister, Marsal Maun, requesting their release.²⁶ Subsequently, the positions of the three leaders of the PRB, Awang Momin Ahmad, Mesir Keruddin and Zaini Haji Ahmad were considered by the Review Committee. The committee recommended their release and asked Internal Security for a second opinion. Internal Security endorsed the Review Committee's recommendation and approved their release. However, according to Zaini Haji Ahmad, 'for reasons best known to the government, the recommendation of the Review Committee was ignored'.²⁷ Since the detainees' chance for freedom was remote and since the Malaysian government assured that they would be granted asylum if they successfully escaped to Malaysia, they agreed to do so.

However, the detainees made certain conditions to the Malaysian Foreign Affairs that upon their successful escape they wanted the Malaysian government to allow them to continue their political activities in Kuala Lumpur. The detainees also wanted the Malaysian government to bring Azahari to Malaysia from Indonesia and demanded that the Malaysian government must not use them as a political 'pawn' over the Limbang

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 20 – 21.

²⁵ Awang Abdullah Jahfar, Haji Garip Dato Haji Mangol, Abdul Hamid Muhammad, Jais Haji Karim and Awang Lalim Haji Serudin.

²⁶ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 54.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 55 – 56. As a result, Zaini repeatedly appealed to the Brunei government to free him, but was unsuccessful. When all efforts failed, Zaini made his desperate bid for freedom by declaring that he was prepared to renounce his Bruneian citizenship if he were allowed to leave Brunei in exile. 'A neighbouring country', apparently Malaysia, according to press reports 'indicated its willingness to grant him political asylum' (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 54).

issue.²⁸ Undoubtedly, as explained before, one of the reasons for the Malaysian government plotting the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels was that it wanted to use them to divert the attention of the Sultan and Sir Omar away from pursuing their claim over Limbang and to redirect their attention to the independence of Brunei and to constitutional development in the Sultanate.

To make the escape possible, Sheikh Salleh sought Mahmud Murshidi Othman's (Sheikh Salleh's nephew) help to assist the detainees. Mahmud Murshidi, who had been given a pass by the detention camp officer to enter the camp regularly with his small lorry to collect spring chickens from Sheikh Salleh (who reared chickens in the camp), was to transport the detainees from the detention camp to Pangkalan (Wharf) Sibabau, off the Berakas-Muara road.²⁹ According to their plan, from Pangkalan Sibabau, they were to flee to Limbang by using a boat which was prepared by Awangku Hamzah, Mahmud Murshidi's cousin. Both Mahmud Murshidi and Awangku Hamzah also joined the escapees to Limbang.

The episode of the escape of the Bruneian ex-rebels from Berakas Detention Camp to Limbang has been delineated in detail by Zariani in her book *Escape from Berakas! 1962 Brunei Revolt*. Her delineation is based on the interview she made with the escaped ex-rebels. In her description she stated that Sheikh Salleh had recruited Ahmad Desa, one of the camp's warders, to help the detainees to escape from the camp³⁰ by manning tower number two whereupon the escapees cut the wire fence below the tower in order to escape from the camp.³¹ Having successfully escaped, they leapt into Mahmud Murshidi's pick-up that was waiting outside the camp and were driven to Pangkalan Sibabau, from where they fled to Limbang.

Once they arrived in Limbang, they surrendered themselves at the local Police Station, where they informed the police officer of their escape and stated their request for political asylum in Malaysia. The police officer in turn advised them to write a letter

²⁸ Author's interview with Mahmud Murshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

²⁹ Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 236. By 1967, the detainees were allowed into the vegetable and chicken farms in order to occupy their time.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

to the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Abdul Rahman Yakub.³² Consequently, all eleven were flown to Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, in a Caribou Transport of the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF).³³ In Kuching, Abdul Rahman Yakub asked them to write individually to Tun Abdul Razak, requesting political asylum. After about seven days in Kuching, they were then flown to Kuala Lumpur³⁴ and when they arrived there, the escapees were immediately granted political asylum by the Malaysian government on 20 July 1973. A statement issued by the Malaysian Foreign Affairs stated:

The Government of Malaysia announces that a group of ten citizens of the State of Brunei, having made their escape to Malaysia, have requested asylum in this country, and after due consideration, the Government of Malaysia has decided in accordance with international law and practice to grant them their request.³⁵

As mentioned before, the speed with which the escaped party were moved from Limbang to Kuching and granted political asylum made Sir Omar even more convinced that the Malaysian government was involved in the incident.³⁶ Following Malaysia's decision to grant asylum to the escaped ex-rebels, an announcement was made over Radio Brunei on 25 July in which it was stated that 'it is clear that the escape was planned from a neighbouring country'.³⁷ Emphasis was also placed on the role of Malaysian nationals whom Brunei considered as violating the peace of the state of Brunei. It also slammed the Malaysian government for being treacherous to Brunei.³⁸

6.3. PRB political activities in Kuala Lumpur and Limbang

Nearly a year after the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang, on 7 May 1974, the defunct PRB was officially reactivated in Kuala Lumpur.³⁹ When the PRB was reactivated, the following leaders were elected as its Executive Committee Members in

³² Ibid., p. 20.

³³ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 18 – 20.

³⁵ *Straits Times*, 27 July 1973; *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, vol. 6 (4) 1973.

³⁶ FCO24/1675, Johnston to FCO, 14 December 1973.

³⁷ FCO24/1698, R.P. Flower talks with the Sultan, 12 September 1973.

³⁸ Ibid., 12 September 1973.

³⁹ PRB headquarters was at 141 Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya.

exile: A.M. Azahari, the President of the PRB and Head of the Bureau of Politics, Zaini Haji Ahmad, Acting Vice-President and Head of the Economic Bureau, Yasin Affandy, the Secretary-General, Sheikh Salleh Sheikh Mahmud, Acting Treasurer, Omar Tamin, Head of the Social Bureau, Osman Latif, Head of the Department of Information, Samad Jamaluddin, Head of the Department of Organisation, Yusuf Ibrahim, Head of the Agriculture and Fishery Bureau, Mahmud Murshidi Othman, Head of the Youth Section and Rogayah Abdul Rahman, Head of the Women's Section.⁴⁰

The main objectives of the PRB in exile were to establish an independent kingdom of Brunei with the Sultan as constitutional head, and with political sovereignty vested in an elected parliament.⁴¹ Although the formation of the NKKU was no longer stated as one of their objectives, the PRB's ambition to form the NKKU never ceased; this was mentioned by one of the members of the PRB to the author. However, the mission was impossible as they were at that time in Malaysia supported by the Malaysian government. Moreover, Sabah and Sarawak were already part of Malaysia, and the PRB recognised the independence of Sarawak and Sabah inside Malaysia.⁴²

The reactivation of the PRB in Kuala Lumpur by Azahari and the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels caused apprehension to the Sultan and Sir Omar as they might provoke students to oppose the Brunei government and push the British to grant Brunei full independence. This was because the Malaysian authorities did not prevent Azahari and the escaped ex-rebels engaging in political activities throughout west Malaysia.⁴³ These political activities were actually contrary to the assurances given by the Malaysian government when the latter granted them political asylum.

⁴⁰ Zaini, *Partai Rakyat Brunei*, p. 57.

⁴¹ Partai Rakyat Brunei Manifesto Politik 1975 inside *ibid.*, pp. 285–301.

⁴² Author's interview with Mahmud Morshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

⁴³ FCO24/1679, Hickman to Wilford, 1 November 1973. According to the Brunei Special Branch Report, Mahmud Murshidi, the man who had assisted the eight detainees in their escape from Berakas, was actively engaged in trying to subvert Bruneian students. He was enrolled as a student at the MARA Institute of Technology. The Malaysian Government did not only allow him to have classes with Bruneian students at MARA, but also allowed him to stay in the same hostel as Bruneian students. Mahmud Murshidi advised the students that Malaysia would offer them better scholarships than those offered by the Brunei Government. The students were also advised to abscond to Limbang where they would be given political asylum should they encounter any difficulties with the Brunei Government upon their return to Brunei (cited in FCO24/1675 G.E. Coster to Acting Brunei High Commissioner, 27 December 1973).

When the Malaysian government granted political asylum to the escapees, they were subjected to the conditions that they should not undertake any political activities in Malaysia and that they should reside in Peninsular Malaysia.⁴⁴ In September 1973, Tun Abdul Razak, in his meeting with Anthony Royle, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, made further confirmation that the former detainees would not be allowed to leave Peninsular Malaysia, where they would be closely watched and their movements restricted.⁴⁵

When J.K. Hickman, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, met Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs, in London on 11 September 1973, Tan Sri Ghazalie Shafie assured him that the Malaysian government was keeping a close watch on the former detainees and was not permitting them to take part in political activities.⁴⁶ However, the Malaysian government did not keep its word⁴⁷ (as it did not stop the escaped Brunei ex-rebels from carrying out their political activities in west Malaysia). Furthermore, the Malaysian government did not prevent the escapees from leaving west Malaysia.

In December 1973, the Brunei Special Branch had reported that Awangku Hamzah had been seen in Bangkok in the first week of December. Earlier, he and Mahmud Murshidi had been visiting Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. According to the Brunei Special Branch, they had left Kuala Lumpur on 17 October. In another Special Branch Report, it was reported that Zaini Haji Ahmad and his wife went to Mecca where 600 Bruneian pilgrims were making the haj.⁴⁸

Since the Malaysian government did not stop the political activities of Brunei's ex-rebels or the movement of the escapees from west Malaysia to east Malaysia and to other countries, in November 1973, the Brunei government ordered more than one hundred Bruneian students who were studying in west Malaysia to return to Brunei for fear the ex-rebels would incite them to work against the Brunei government and to push

⁴⁴ FCO24/1698, Talks with the Sultan of Brunei – Brief No. 2, Brunei/Malaysia Relations: Escape of Detainees, September 1973.

⁴⁵ FCO24/1684, Record Meeting between the Sultan and A. Royle at the FCO, 19 September 1973.

⁴⁶ FCO24/1679, Hickman to Wilford, 1 November 1973.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 November 1973.

⁴⁸ FCO24/1686 Moffat to FCO, 6 December 1973. Also in FCO24/1675.

the British to grant Brunei full independence.⁴⁹ These were the students who were studying at educational institutions such as MARA Institute of Technology, the University of Malaya, the University of Kebangsaan Malaysia and the Agricultural University in Serdang.⁵⁰

Consequently, Ungku Aziz, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, appealed to the Brunei government to allow two of the Brunei's students due to take their final degree examination in January to return for the period of the examination, but he was unsuccessful.⁵¹ When he approached the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia as to whether he could help him to settle the matter, the former stated that the Malaysian government could not intervene.⁵² It was therefore obvious that the Malaysian government was not concerned over Brunei's situation.

Apart from the PRB's political activities in west Malaysia, the Brunei Special Branch reported that there were some 'liberal' activities in the students' union in London. The Brunei Special Branch attributed their activities to Zaini and other ex-detainees in their efforts to subvert Brunei's students wherever they were outside the Sultanate.⁵³ According to G.E. Coster, Head of Brunei Special Branch, Zaini's objectives were:

- i. to enlist the support of Amnesty International to embarrass the government;
- ii. to enlist the support of the committee of Twenty-Four of the United Nations
- iii. and, if his objectives could not be attained by these and other peaceful means, to foment opposition in the state.⁵⁴ According to one of the ex-detainees/rebels statement to the author, their aim was not only to foment opposition in the state but also to launch another revolution in Brunei.

⁴⁹ FCO24/1686, Johnston to FCO, 28 December 1973.

⁵⁰ Several of these students were actually within days of taking their final examinations for degrees and diplomas, and some were even in the middle of their examinations. Malaysian newspapers said that some of the students were frustrated at the recall and some had begged to be allowed to stay for the examinations (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 December 1973).

⁵¹ Ungku Aziz also assured the Deputy Prime Minister that he would give them a university flat and would personally guarantee that they were kept out of contact with any other persons outside the exam room and would return them to Brunei immediately the exam was concluded. Ibid, 28 December 1973.

⁵² Ibid., 28 December 1973.

⁵³ Ibid. & FCO24/1675, Moffat to Hickman, 22 November 1973.

⁵⁴ FCO24/1675, Moffat to FCO, 20 November 1973 & FCO24/1675, Moffat to Hickman, 22 November 1973.

When the High Commissioner suggested to Sir Omar that the British government could ask the Malaysian authorities to deport Zaini to the United Kingdom, Sir Omar was against his idea as he was concerned that Zaini would subvert Brunei's students there. In 1972, when Royle suggested that Sir Omar release Zaini from the detention camp and that the British would make arrangements for him to come to Britain, or to one of Britain's colonies, Sir Omar also disagreed for the same reason stated previously.⁵⁵ Sir Omar also declared that in the interests of Anglo-Brunei friendship it would be better if Zaini were not released.⁵⁶

Besides operating in Kuala Lumpur, the PRB also operated in Limbang. Since Kuala Lumpur was far from Brunei, the PRB set up a base in Brunei's former territory so that their objectives to push the British to grant Brunei full independence could be more effective. Yasin Affandy was the head of the PRB headquarters in Limbang.⁵⁷ In Limbang, Abdul Rahman Yakub, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, was directly supporting the PRB political activities in Limbang. This was mentioned by the Head of Brunei Special Branch during the Brunei Defence Council Meeting on 8 July 1974.⁵⁸ According to the Brunei Special Branch report, in May 1974, Yasin Affandy and Othman Latif (the second most important figure in the PRB in Limbang) visited Miri in Sarawak where they had a meeting chaired by Abdul Rahman Yakub.⁵⁹ The report of the meeting between Abdul Rahman Yakub, Yassin Affandy and Othman Latif in Miri suggested that the Chief Minister of Sarawak was supporting the PRB's political activities in Limbang.⁶⁰

During the meeting, Abdul Rahman Yakub and Yasin Affandy stressed that it was essential to re-organise the PRB with a view to wresting independence from the British. In the meeting, Abdul Rahman Yakub advised those present on how to plan the campaign of subversion, which was necessary to achieve independence.⁶¹ Although he emphasised that there was to be no violence, he agreed to use sabotage as a weapon and

⁵⁵ FCO24/1380, Record of Conversation between HH the Sultan of Brunei and Mr Royle at the FCO, 6 July 1972.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6 July 1972.

⁵⁷ Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 259.

⁵⁸ FCO24/1962, R.P. Flower to Hickman, 15 July 1974.

⁵⁹ FCO24/1962, Callaghan to British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, 4 July 1974.

⁶⁰ FCO24/1951, Eric Norris to K.M. Wilford, 18 June 1974.

⁶¹ FCO24/1951, Gautrey to British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, 9 July 1974.

promised military training in this context. He also advised that anyone who feared he was in danger of arrest should flee to Limbang.⁶² According to one of the sons of the remaining detainees who was arrested and detained by the Brunei authorities in 1975, he had attended an explosive and small arms course given by Malaysian army instructors near Kuching, Sarawak to prepare him and others for acts of sabotage within Brunei.⁶³

With the support of the federal government and the Chief Minister of Sarawak, the PRB's propagandists and recruits infiltrated Brunei to distribute anti-British leaflets, flags, membership application forms, Hari Raya (Eid) cards and even recorded speeches of the party leader, Azahari. The leaflets called on the people of Brunei to support the long defunct PRB and to end the presence of foreign troops in Brunei. In February 1974, for example, the leaflets which were scattered throughout Brunei called upon the people of Brunei to revive and support Azahari. In March 1974, other leaflets from the ex-rebels were circulated throughout Brunei which 'call upon all the people of Brunei, wherever they may be, to strengthen and close their ranks for our national struggle for an independent and sovereign state of Brunei, both internally and externally'.⁶⁴ In June 1974 (that was after the reactivation of the PRB) more leaflets were again distributed.

In the same year, nine families from Kampong Lumapas ran away to Limbang,⁶⁵ as the PRB members in Limbang incited them by saying that the Brunei government would detain them following their plan to reorganise the PRB in Brunei.⁶⁶ Some of them had been in contact with the PRB's branch in Limbang. The refugees stayed in Limbang, where the Malaysian government granted them political asylum.⁶⁷ A month

⁶² Ibid., 9 July 1974.

⁶³ FCO24/2102, UK policy towards Brunei, Briefs for talks with Sultan of Brunei 1976.

⁶⁴ FCO24/1951, A Copy of translation of a leaflet being circulated in Brunei which formed an annex to the draft, Gautrey to Hickman, 8 May 1974.

⁶⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 21 May 1974.

⁶⁶ The Head of the refugee group was Osman Bakar, the Deputy Head was Salleh Mahal and family. The followers were Haji Ahad bin Taha, Tamin bin Taha, Syed bin Taha, Mudin bin Nordin, Jeludin, Ghani Miasan, Ahmad Midin and Pak Mohamad Tahir with all their families (cited in Zariani, *Escape From Berakas!*, p. 260).

⁶⁷ Some of them had been formerly detained for their part in the unsuccessful 1962 Rebellion. According to Awang Osman, 'because we have decided to work for Brunei's independence we

later a group of twenty-two students from Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin College (SOASC) also fled to Limbang, provoked by the PRB who suggested that they would be captured by the Brunei government.⁶⁸ According to the Brunei Special Branch report, from Limbang the students were sent to Miri and then to Kuching in military planes and flown from Kuching to Kuala Lumpur in Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) aircraft.⁶⁹ Some of these escapees were later despatched to Libya (with the connivance of the Malaysian government). According to one of the ex-political detainee's statement to the author, about thirty Brunei Malays, including some of the students from the SOASC, were sent to Libya via Italy to be trained as commandos. However, Mahmud Murshidi, the man who helped the ex-rebels to escape from the detention camp, denied this. According to Mahmud Murshidi, the Libyan government was only offering 'tarbiyah' (education) scholarships to Brunei students where para-military training might be one of the courses offered in their studies.⁷⁰

The dispatches of Brunei students to Libya caused the Sultan to be apprehensive over the security of the Sultanate. Libya at this time was linked with terrorism by the west where Colonel Gaddafi was implicated as actively supporting international acts of terrorism. In this regard, potential terrorists were being trained by terrorists from the Japanese 'Red Army'.⁷¹ In 1976, *Asiaweek* reported that a meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur which was attended by Azahari, Libyans and Moro National Liberation Front representatives. During the meeting, Libya offered to train and finance a Bruneian

are sure that they will arrest us. We hope that the Sarawak Government will let us stay in Sarawak; we don't want to return to Brunei.' (cited in *Sabah Times*, 21 May 1974).

⁶⁸ Given Brunei's very small student population, 22 are considered significant.

⁶⁹ This was not unusual, as RMAF aircraft had brought out most of the families of the escapees from Limbang. For example the wives of Yasin Affandy and Zaini Haji Ahmad were reported to have been transported from Limbang to Miri by RMAF aircraft (cited in FCO24/1686 Moffat to FCO, 6 December 1973. Also in FCO24/1675 & FCO24/1686 Moffat to FCO, 8 December 1973). Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie stated to Royle that this flying-out of families of escapees proved nothing more than a sympathetic attitude to the escapees themselves. When the issue of Zaini's pilgrimage to Mecca was brought to him by Johnston, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, he stated that the Malaysian Government was unable to refuse as it was a religious duty (cited in FCO24/1686, Johnston to FCO. Also in FCO24/1675). He further added that, if one of the ex-detainees was offered an opportunity to study in America and Britain, Tan Sri Ghazali would not regard it as hostile to Brunei to allow him to take advantage of the opportunity (cited in (FCO24/1675, Johnston to Hickman).

⁷⁰ Author's interview with Mahmud Morshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

⁷¹ Lord Alun Chalfont, *By God's Will: A Portrait of the Sultan of Brunei*, London, 1989, p. 114.

'liberation' army where in return the PRB had to agree that once Brunei had been 'liberated', the country would be used as a launching platform for the escalation of the Mindanao conflict.⁷² It should be borne in mind that Mindanao (where the population was predominantly Muslim) since the Philippines' independence in 1945, was fighting for its own independence from the central government. The Muslims in Mindanao had supported Azahari and his struggle for the formation of the NKKU in the 1960s.⁷³ Some of them proposed to lead volunteer forces to fight together with the rebels; others proposed non-military support, as well as supporting the PRB's mission to the UN.⁷⁴ Mahmud Murshidi Othman on the other hand claimed that there was no such scheme between the PRB and Libya regarding the use of Brunei as a base for the acceleration of the Mindanao conflict.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the Libyan government was a strong supporter of the PRB. In 1975, Azahari and his delegation were guests of the Libyan government for two weeks when they were lobbying for their cause in Africa and the Middle-East.⁷⁶ In Libya they discussed important issues such as the PRB's struggle, problems of the Muslim Community and how the PRB and the Libyan government could cooperate to eliminate colonialism and imperialism.⁷⁷ It was Ali Tureiki (the Director-General of Asian Affairs), who later served as Libya's Public Relations at UN and also its Foreign Minister, who initiated the move that the Muslim League should support the PRB and all Libyan embassies abroad should support and render any assistance required by the PRB delegation.⁷⁸ The Libyan government was also claimed by one of the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels to be a sponsor of the PRB. According to an officer of the DSI who visited Labuan in August 1975, the party as mentioned by Sheikh Salleh (whom he met face to face) was being financed by the Libyans.⁷⁹

⁷² *Asiaweek*, 6 January 1984.

⁷³ Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 183.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁷⁵ Author's interview with Mahmud Morshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

⁷⁶ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 60 -61.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60 – 61.

⁷⁸ Zariani, *Escape From Berakas*, pp. 252-253.

⁷⁹ FCO24/2098, Report on the Security Situation in Brunei from the period 10 August 1975 until 4 September 1975.

Apart from the Bruneians receiving training in Libya, some of the PRB members were receiving training at Dusun Tua in Peninsular Malaysia.⁸⁰ Dusun Tua (the name means Old Orchard) was a government youth training centre in Ulu Langat Selangor about 12 miles from Kuala Lumpur. It was established in 1966 where the students were mainly rural Malays who had failed their school examinations. It offered technical subjects and could take about 1,000 students. The courses, which lasted between six and three years, had a so-called paramilitary division which appeared to be analogous to a British School OTC (Officers Training Corps). Although it was not used for clandestine military activity, to Eric Norris of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office it would be a suitable cover.⁸¹ According to Norris, the objective of the course for the Bruneians was probably to fit them for specific operations in Brunei.⁸²

It was the activities of the PRB in Malaysia, and the support it gained from the Federal government of Malaysia and Sarawak, which posed doubts to the Sultan and Sir Omar as to achieving independence for Brunei. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which felt that the PRB, Sarawak and the federal government's activities towards Brunei could create instability in the Sultanate and could cause continuous rejection of independence by the Sultan and Sir Omar, made efforts to settle the problems between Brunei, Sarawak and the federal government of Malaysia. In June 1974, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office brought up the activities of the PRB in Kuala Lumpur and Limbang with the Malaysian Foreign Affairs which claimed that it was unaware of the alleged activities of the PRB setting up its temporary office in Kuala Lumpur.⁸³

According to the Malaysian Foreign Affairs (as reported by *Utusan Malaysia* on 19 June 1974), the PRB was not registered in Malaysia and because of that it was not able to set up an office in Kuala Lumpur, temporary or otherwise.⁸⁴ The Malaysian government emphasised that the position of the former members of PRB who had been granted political asylum in Malaysia remained unchanged under normal conditions of

⁸⁰ FCO24/2090, Norris to FCO, 9 December 1975.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9 December 1975.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 9 December 1975.

⁸³ FCO24/1951, Norris to FCO, 20 June 1974.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1974.

political asylum. They were not permitted to engage in any political activities during their stay in Malaysia.⁸⁵ However, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office knew well that in reality this was not the case. The Malaysian government had been making the claim that it was not permitting the ex-rebels to taking part in political activities since September 1973. However, the Malaysian government never kept its word.

On the other hand, Malcolm MacDonald, the former UK Commissioner General in Southeast Asia in the 1950s, suggested that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office might consider the feasibility of a long-term policy designated to settle the problem by a package deal. In the package deal, the three Northern Borneo territories would come together in a federation under the Sultan of Brunei as a titular head of state. There would be no changes in frontiers and the Limbang claim would be relinquished. In the future, the federation could in turn either come together with Peninsular Malaysia in the form of a confederation or form ties with Singapore.⁸⁶

However, his suggestion was not welcomed by J.K. Hickman of the British High Commissioner to Malaysia. Hickman, in his letter to Mr Galsworthy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office dated 18 July 1974, stated that he did not think the package deal was realistic and that the Malaysian government would consider it to be totally unacceptable and interference in their affairs.⁸⁷ D. Gordon of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in his telegram to Hickman argued that 'if it were to come to the Malaysians' ears that MacDonald was talking about the possible attractions of a North Borneo federation, particularly with a possible link with Singapore, we should be in trouble'.⁸⁸ Moreover, Sir Omar had stated unequivocally in the Brunei Defence Council meeting on 8 March 1974 that he objected to Brunei entering a grouping of the three Northern Borneo states.⁸⁹

Indeed it was not the first time that Malcolm MacDonald had suggested the incorporation of Brunei with Sarawak and Sabah and with Malaysia and Singapore. In 1968, Malcolm MacDonald had also suggested to the Foreign and Commonwealth

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1974.

⁸⁶ FCO24/1962, Record of Meeting between Lord Goronwy-Roberts and Malcolm MacDonald in the House of Lords, 16 July 1974.

⁸⁷ FCO24/1962, Hickman to Galsworthy, 18 July 1974.

⁸⁸ FCO24/1962, Gordon to Hickman, 9 August 1974.

⁸⁹ FCO24/1962, Wilford to Lord Goronwy-Roberts, 27 July 1974.

Office that both Brunei and Singapore should be incorporated into a wider Malaysia.⁹⁰ In MacDonald's discussions with Malaysia and Singapore's leaders, and his own consideration of the problem regarding Brunei's future, he considered it desirable for Britain to try to influence affairs in those countries towards the creation of a wider Malaysia, which would be a looser federation than the present Malaysia.⁹¹ However, nothing came out of his discussion as it had been confirmed by the Labour government that it would grant Brunei independence and would allow the latter to make its own decision as to whether it wanted to enter into some sort of association with Malaysia.⁹²

In Britain's subsequent attempt to solve the problems between Brunei, Sarawak and the federal government on 29 July 1974, the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur gave Tan Sri Zaiton, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an account of the PRB's meeting at Miri and other PRB political activities in Sarawak.⁹³ Following Britain's announcement on 27 November 1974 that the Labour government planned to review the 1959 Agreement, which was amended in November 1971, the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur met the Prime Minister of Malaysia on 28 November. The former gave formal representations of the meeting between the PRB's members and the Chief Minister of Sarawak in May 1974.⁹⁴

Following the meeting, Tun Abdul Razak undertook to restrain the activities of the PRB and their Malaysian supporters and assured the High Commissioner that Malaysia had no wish to absorb Brunei forcibly. Nevertheless, Tun Abdul Razak warned the High Commissioner that the British government should use its influence to bring about constitutional development in Brunei without which he foresaw continuous trouble.⁹⁵ Although these representations had a positive effect (whereby the paramilitary training of the PRB members appeared to cease and as there was a lull in other PRB political activities in both Kuala Lumpur and Limbang), this turned out to be no

⁹⁰As being mentioned in Chapter Two, Malcolm MacDonald in the 1950s was delegated to carry out the task to closely associate the Northern Borneo territories before they were merged with Malaya.

⁹¹ FCO24/236, MacDonald to Thomson, 14 March 1968, FCO24/236, A.R. Adair to J. Johnston, 11 March 1968 & FCO24/222, Adair to Robin, 29 February 1968.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ FCO24/2102, UK policy towards Brunei, Briefs for talks with Sultan of Brunei 1976.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

more than a pause to prepare for an all-out political campaign on the international plane which the PRB launched in March 1975 with the espousal of the Malaysian government.⁹⁶

6.4. PRB political activities in the international arena

In the international arena, the PRB political activities were supported by many countries and international organizations. Its political campaign outside Malaysia began in December 1973 when the ex-detainees in west Malaysia appointed Dr Mahmud Saedon Othman, a Bruneian student graduate at Al Azhar University, Cairo, as their representative in Egypt and in the Middle East.⁹⁷ His duty was to make political contacts with the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) whose political support Azahari enjoyed between 1963 and 1966 and with Arab Embassies for the purpose of soliciting their moral and material support.⁹⁸

Azahari, in his effort to bring about the formation of the NKKU between 1963 and 1966, gained support not only from Indonesia, but also from some countries in Africa and Asia; the NKKU especially enjoyed support from AAPSO.⁹⁹ In February 1963, AAPSO, which held its conference in Moshi, Tanganyika in Africa, supported the Brunei Revolution.¹⁰⁰ Representatives of Malaysia and Singapore were excluded from this conference. The Indonesian delegation appealed for support for the 'revolutionary government' headed by Azahari and called for opposition to the incorporation of the Borneo territories into Malaysia.¹⁰¹ At the Afro-Asian Journalists' Conference held in Jakarta, Indonesia between 2 and 30 April 1963 and the Afro-Asian Writers'

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ People's Party of Brunei Mandate No. 4/M/PPKB/75 issued to Dr Saedon Othman, Cairo, Egypt (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 57).

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

⁹⁹ AAPSO was a non-governmental organization which from its inception in the late 1950s struggled against colonialism, apartheid, wars and endeavoured for peace. The Organization and its national affiliate committees and member liberation movements extended all forms of support to peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Cited in http://www.aapso.org2o.com/Aboutus/Aboutus_home.htm).

¹⁰⁰ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 48.

¹⁰¹ Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. 84.

Preparatory Committee held in Bali, Indonesia between 16 and 21 July 1963, the participants also supported Azahari and the establishment of the NKKU.¹⁰²

As well as Dr Mahmud Saedon Othman, Jais Abbas, the former ambassador of the NKKU during the revolution, was appointed by the PRB committee as a representative to Jakarta in order to lobby the Indonesian government for recognition and at the same time to revive contact with former supporters and sympathisers of the PRB.¹⁰³

In its effort to solicit moral and material support, in March 1975 the PRB sent its first petitions addressed to the Commonwealth of Nations Secretariat in London. In its appeal, the PRB outlined the history of the party, its struggle and achievements in the years prior to the 1962 Brunei Rebellion.¹⁰⁴ It then asked the leaders of the Commonwealth assembled in Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, to counsel the British government to convene a Tripartite Conference between the Sultan of Brunei, the PRB and the British government. This was done with a view to paving the way for early self-government and independence for Brunei.¹⁰⁵

In addition to soliciting support from the Commonwealth, in April 1975, the party appealed for support from the Organization of Islamic Conferences' members in the Middle East. The party received support from Rabetat Al Islamy, a Saudi government-funded body organised to help Muslim organisations to achieve fraternal brotherhood among the Islamic community all over the world.¹⁰⁶ In May 1975, in recognition of the PRB's struggle, the Secretary-General of the AAPSO, Youseff El-Sebai, wrote an open letter of appeal to all Muslim leaders to extend their fraternal support to the leader of the party in his quest for freedom and independence.¹⁰⁷ A joint communiqué between the Secretary-General of the AAPSO and Azahari was also made whereby they considered it constitutionally desirable for a Tripartite Conference to be convened

¹⁰² Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 49 – 50. The support, however, eventually minimised as some of the members of AAPSO refused to perceive Malaysia as a manifestation of neo-colonialism (cited in Liefer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. 104).

¹⁰³ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter III. Document No. 27/PRB/75. Dated 17 March 1975 (cited in *Ibid.*, p. 58).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁷ *Kemuncak Perjuangan Kita*, Jabatan Penerangan, PRB Kuala Lumpur & See Chapter III. Document No. 32/PRB/75. Dated April 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 59).

between the British government, the Sultan of Brunei and representatives of the PRB to work out a plan for the immediate transfer of political power to the people of Brunei in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.¹⁰⁸

In the same month, through a document dated 20 March 1975, the PRB requested political rights for the PRB, the development of a new constitution for Brunei, discussions for independence and an amnesty for all PRB detainees and escapees to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.¹⁰⁹ The PRB also sent a copy of its political manifesto to the Sultan whereby it declared its desire to establish an independent kingdom of Brunei with the Sultan as constitutional head, with political sovereignty vested in an elected parliament. It underlined the country's ideology which was Islamic, Nationalist and Democratic and its development plan which would continuously strive for political stability and the development of Brunei's economy, society and culture of the Sultanate.¹¹⁰

In terms of politics, the party encouraged the development of political awareness among the population of Brunei by establishing party politics where elections based on adult suffrage would be held every five years. In relation to the economy, the exploitation of natural resources was to be 'evaluated on the basis of equal and just partnerships with local control', with a substantial amount of public revenues devoted to the funding of indigenous projects.¹¹¹ In terms of social improvements, the PRB pledged to give allowances to widows and orphans of the 1962 rebels (who died during the rebellion), handicapped people, as well as those who were fifty and over, especially if they were incapable of working. There would be a national housing programme whereby every family would have a decent house and government loans would be made available to enable people to buy houses with easy payments.¹¹² In terms of culture, emphasis was put on the development of education, the sending of more students to

¹⁰⁸ Joint-Communique between Secretary-General, AAPSO and President, People's Party of Brunei, Document No. 31/PRB/75. Dated 4 May 1975 (cited in *ibid.*, pp. 303 – 304).

¹⁰⁹ FCO24/2098, Davidson to FCO, 16 April 1975.

¹¹⁰ The Political Manifesto, The People's Party of Brunei, Document No. 29/PRB/75, 1 April 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 285 – 301).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 285 – 301.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 285 – 301.

universities abroad (not necessarily to the UK, Canada, Australia or New Zealand) and the establishment of a university 'Universitas Hassanal Bolkiah'.¹¹³

In response to this letter, Sir Omar reported to J.A. Davidson of the British High Commissioner that the PRB was banned in Brunei, and that if the detainees who had escaped wanted to return to Brunei, they would have to be detained 'so as not to be able to subvert and incite the people of Brunei or spread the influence of the central government of Malaysia among the people of Brunei'.¹¹⁴ Finally, the Sultan reported that Britain should protest to Malaysia.¹¹⁵ The Sultan strongly pressed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for representations to the Malaysian government on the grounds that the political activities of the PRB were a flagrant breach of their earlier undertakings.¹¹⁶

In May 1975, in a further effort to solicit moral and material support, the PRB delegation went to Cairo, Egypt. The trip was sponsored by AAPSO to gain support for its cause at the United Nations when the Special Committee of Twenty-Four discusses the question of Brunei's independence during the current session'.¹¹⁷ On 6 May 1975, Youseff El-Sebai despatched a telegram to the Decolonisation Committee of the UN where it stated that 'AAPSO supports the Brunei People's Party struggling for liberation in Brunei.'¹¹⁸ In Algeria, Libya and Iraq, the PRB delegations received assurances from these countries that they would sponsor the party's mission in front of the UN.¹¹⁹

Eventually, on 11 July 1975, the meeting with Australia's Duncan Campbell, Co-Chairman of Sub-Committee II, produced a draft proposal on Brunei; it was this draft

¹¹³The Political Manifesto, The People's Party of Brunei, Document No. 29/PRB/75, 1 April 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 285 – 301).

¹¹⁴ FCO24/2098, Davidson to FCO, 17 April 1975.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 17 April 1975.

¹¹⁶ FCO24/2098, L. Bevan to Male, 27 June 1975.

¹¹⁷ Text of Speech of A.M. Azahari during the extended meeting of AAPSO, Cairo, 4 May 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 60).

¹¹⁸ Telegram sent to United Nations Decolonisation Committee by Youseff El-Sebai, Secretary-General of AAPSO. Dated 6 May 1975 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 60).

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 60–61.

proposal that finally brought about consensus on Brunei and was endorsed by the Committee of Twenty-Four.¹²⁰ The Brunei Consensus read:

The Special Committee, having examined a petition concerning the situation in Brunei, and having heard the important statement made by A.M. Azahari...which in the 1962 election received 98 per cent of the votes cast, endorses the call by the PRB for immediate tripartite talks between the administering power, the Sultan of Brunei and the PRB with the object of fixing a date for the independence of Brunei and the holding of free and democratic elections under the supervision of the United Nations.¹²¹

On 15 July 1975, when the PRB delegation presented its case before the Special Committee II (the first time the PRB raised their voice at the UN) Azahari among other things called upon the UN to give its strong support to the PRB's quest for the independence of Brunei, to call the committee to reaffirm the inalienable rights of the people of Brunei to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, and to call upon the administering power to take immediate measures to transfer all powers to the people of Brunei, without any conditions or reservations, by holding a general election in Brunei under the supervision of the UN.¹²² He also urged the committee to call upon the administering power to hold a tripartite conference between the administering power, the Sultan of Brunei, and the legitimate representative of the People's Party of Brunei with a view to working out the measures that had been mentioned.¹²³ He further urged the committee to reaffirm and endorse the proclamation of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Brunei by the People's Party of Brunei on 8 December 1962 and to render moral and material support to the People's Party of Brunei in its fight against British Colonialism.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Personal Note of Zaini Haji Ahmad. Dated 11 July 1975 (cited in *ibid.*, p. 63).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹²² Cited in statement delivered by Mr A.M. Azahari, President of the People's Party of Brunei before Sub-Committee II of the Committee of 24, United Nations, New York, Document No. 32/PRB/75, 15 July 1975. Cited in Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, pp. 303 – 314.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 303 – 314.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 303 – 314.

Next, the PRB made efforts to gain the support of the Fourth Committee during its thirteenth session in November. The Malaysian government sponsored the Brunei Resolution,¹²⁵ and it was co-sponsored by Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Tanzania.¹²⁶ In the final count of votes for the Brunei Resolution, ninety states voted in favour, none against, and there were fourteen abstentions.¹²⁷

Following the PRB representation at the UN, in September 1975, Azahari made a secret visit to Limbang.¹²⁸ A gathering of some thirty people, a number of whom had travelled from Brunei, listened to an address during which Azahari denied responsibility for the 1962 Rebellion and claimed to have been persuaded to lead the people of Brunei once more in their struggle for independence by a Malaysian authority (who visited him in Jakarta in 1973).¹²⁹ At the meeting, he promised to achieve independence for Brunei in the near future and to resort to violence if the PRB failed in its non-violent struggle for Brunei's independence.¹³⁰

Two months after his visit to Limbang, on 13 November 1975, the Bruneian Resolution was finally adopted by the Fourth Committee of the UN. The Bruneian Resolution:

Calls upon the Administering Power, consistent with its responsibility as the Administering Power, to take all steps within its competence to facilitate expeditiously the holding of free and democratic elections by the appropriate

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 66.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 66–7. Singapore, wishing to keep the bridge to Brunei open, did not co-sponsor the Malaysian Resolution. According to Zariani, the reason why Singapore did not agree to co-sponsor the Malaysian Resolution was because it did not wish to offend Brunei and wanted to appease Brunei, especially in matters of business and defence (cited in Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 256).

¹²⁷ Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 65. Those who abstained were Canada, Germany (F.R.), Ireland, Netherlands, Israel, Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark, France, the United States of America and two others.

¹²⁸ He arrived in Limbang on 1 September 1975 and spent the night in the house of Yasin Affandy which was guarded at the time by the Malaysian soldiers (cited in FCO24/2089, Report on the Security Situation in Brunei from the Period 10 August 1975 to 4 September 1975).

¹²⁹ FCO24/2089, Report on the Security Situation in Brunei from the Period 10 August 1975 to 4 September 1975.

¹³⁰ Ibid. Azahari, however, did not stay long in Limbang as he was apprehensive that he might be kidnapped by British Intelligence. Consequently, he was flown by government helicopter to Kuching, Sarawak (cited in Zariani, *Escape From Berakas*, pp. 258 – 259).

government authorities in Brunei in consultation with and under the supervision of the United Nations in accordance with the inalienable rights of the people of Brunei to self-determination and independence, and further calls, prior to the elections, for the lifting of the ban on all political parties and the return of all political exiles to Brunei so they can participate freely and fully in the elections.¹³¹

In Azahari's petition to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations, he reviewed the political development of Brunei between 1956 and 1975.¹³² In his speech, he criticised the British government for prolonging its protection over Brunei because of the oil factor and added that Brunei's surplus was invested in London to sustain an ailing British economy. Azahari also condemned the British view that Brunei was never a British colony and argued that if it had not been, the British government would not have sent 10,000 troops during the height of the 1962 Brunei rebellion.¹³³

Azahari's speech was supported by Malaysian Ambassador Khir Johari who spoke on behalf of the co-sponsors of the Brunei Resolution declaring his disagreement with the British claim that Brunei was already a self-governing state and thus Britain had no responsibility over the internal affairs of the state.¹³⁴ To Malaysia, the self-governing state should have political parties, legislative councils or assemblies and some form of a ministerial system of government by the elected representatives of the people.¹³⁵ He suggested that the Brunei government which was supported by the British should lift the ban on political parties and at the same time allow the 'return of all political exiles to Brunei so that they can participate freely and fully in the elections'.¹³⁶

¹³¹ United Nations Document No. 4/L. 1103. Dated 12 November 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 69).

¹³² See Chapter III. Document No. PRB/33/75. Dated 13 November 1975 (cited in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 66).

¹³³ Ibid. p. 67.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 68. In October 1975, a spokesman for the PRB said that party leaders living in exile were ready to return home if the Sultan agreed to elections and not to detain them again. However, the Bruneian Government's stance was that it would not negotiate with any illegal organisation (cited in the *Borneo Bulletin*, 25 October 1975). The PRB leaders living in exile who wanted to come back must seek an audience with the Sultan to ask for a pardon (cited in the *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 November 1975).

The Brunei Resolution was conveyed to Brunei through the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.¹³⁷ Subsequently, Ivor Richard, British representative to the UN, responded by informing the UN decolonization that Brunei was a sovereign state, which was not and never had been a British colony. Ivor Richard further stated that political development in Brunei was an entirely internal matter in which Britain had no responsibilities and no power. His comments came shortly after a similar declaration in Britain's House of Lords, which was told that Britain's responsibilities in Brunei were limited to defence and external affairs.¹³⁸

Richard also added that Brunei had freely chosen to maintain a treaty relationship with Britain for more than a hundred years. He emphasised that agreements with Britain during this time had been 'voluntarily entered into' by Brunei and throughout that time Britain was responsible for the internal affairs of Brunei.¹³⁹ He further explained that since the 1971 Agreement, however, Britain had not taken any part in Brunei's internal affairs and stated that 'My Government responsibilities are confined to the conduct of Brunei's external relations and to a commitment to consult with the Government of Brunei in the event of external attack.'¹⁴⁰ Referring to the decolonization committee's resolution that Britain should press for elections in Brunei, Richard stated that this was impossible, as it was related to Brunei's internal affairs.¹⁴¹

Speaking at the opening of the Legislative Council session at the Dewan Majlis on 29 December 1975, the Sultan stated in defence that Brunei was not and never had been a colony. He further added that his government would continue 'to defend the position of Brunei as a fully internal self-governing state with full authority'¹⁴² and at the same

¹³⁷ Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 256.

¹³⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 13 December 1975.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13 December 1975.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 December 1975.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13 December 1975. Following the PRB's success in presenting its case at the UN, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who visited Brunei from 5 – 9 January 1976 in his interview with the *Borneo Bulletin* stated that: 'We are of course perhaps one of the cradles of democracy, and very much in favour of every country – and this means every country – moving in the direction of free institutions. The pace of this varies from country to country according to circumstances. But our basic view is that for that to happen, and from time to time of course we intimate, especially to our friends, our views, our hopes and our encouragement. And this applies to Brunei' (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 January 1976).

¹⁴² *Borneo Bulletin.*, 3 January 1976.

time Brunei would continue to strengthen the treaty of friendship with Britain concerning defence.¹⁴³

6.5. Brunei's precautionary measures

Following the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Malaysia in 1975, the Sultanate took several precautionary measures to ensure the security of the state. One of the measures implemented by the Sultanate was to accelerate the phase of forming the second battalion where, since the decision had been made on 23 May 1973, the recruitment had not yet begun. In the 1st September edition of the *Borneo Bulletin*, the Brunei government advertised the recruitment for the formation of the battalion.¹⁴⁴ The Sultan maintained that the planned expansion of the battalion was to enable the Brunei government to meet its obligations under the 1971 Agreement, according to which it was responsible for its own internal security. This was because if the government did not have enough troops it could not fulfil its role of defending Brunei.¹⁴⁵ Eventually, the second battalion was formed on 2 January 1975.

Another precautionary measure implemented by the Sultanate was to continue the Emergency Orders in Brunei whereby during the defence council meetings on 26 – 27 November 1973, he announced that the Emergency Orders would remain in force as long as Brunei's neighbours behaved in an 'unfriendly manner'. Sir Omar also expressed his concern that Malaysia was not keeping its word over undertakings concerning detainees and was continuing to interfere in Brunei's affairs.¹⁴⁶

Sir Omar, who was continuously suspicious of Malaysia's intentions to subvert Brunei's security, also took precautionary measures by ceasing the transit of the Malaysian forces to Brunei from Miri to Limbang or vice-versa.¹⁴⁷ The transit had actually been carried out on the basis of friendly arrangements going back to the British

¹⁴³ Ibid., 3 January 1976.

¹⁴⁴ FCO24/1698, R.P. Flower's talks with the Sultan, 12 September 1973.

¹⁴⁵ FCO24/1684, Record of Meeting between the Sultan and Royle at the FCO, 19 September 1973.

¹⁴⁶ FCO24/1675, Record of Brunei Defence Council 26–27 November 1973 & FCO24/1686, Moffat to D. Tonkin, 27 November 1973.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

days in the three territories.¹⁴⁸ In December 1973, Sir Omar instructed the Attorney General to look into legislation which would give effect to his decisions to prohibit the transmitting of Malaysia's security forces, whether police or military, and to forbid the entry of Malaysian vessels into Brunei waters. If Malaysia's troops landed in Brunei on any kind of aircraft, then the aircraft should be inspected; if it was necessary for an aircraft to land for technical reasons, then service or police personnel should not be allowed to leave the air field.¹⁴⁹

Sir Omar also attempted to discontinue the connection between the Brunei Special Branch and the Sarawak Special Branch and suggested that any loss of information caused by the break with the east Malaysian Special Branches be made up by intelligence from the British.¹⁵⁰ Coster backed by the Commissioner of Police, however, rejected Sir Omar's suggestion, as Brunei would suffer intelligence service that was available through those contacts.¹⁵¹ This was because British Intelligence tended to be concerned only with overall communist penetration in the region and not specifically with the more detailed intelligence that the Brunei Special Branch could pick up from local sources across the border. Sir Omar eventually accepted this.¹⁵²

In 1975, following the activities of the PRB in Limbang, the Department of Security and Intelligence (DSI) was established in order to strengthen Brunei's security. The task of the new department was to identify members and sympathisers of the banned

¹⁴⁸ FCO24/1675 Moffat on Commentary on the Record of the Meeting of the Brunei Defence Council, 26–27 November 1973.

¹⁴⁹ FCO24/1675, Johnston to FCO, 14 December 1973.

¹⁵⁰ The relationship between the Bruneian Special Branch and the Special Branches of the neighbouring territories of east Malaysia derived from close association during the Emergency and Confrontation, and also from the backbone of European ex-Malaya Special Branch officers who, in effect, under Coster ran Brunei, all of whom had literally decades of service in the region (cited in FCO25/1675, Moffat on Commentary on the Record of the Meeting of the Brunei Defence Council, 26–27 November 1973).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 26–27 November 1973.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 26–27 November 1973. Although this was the Bruneian Special Branch stance regarding the east Malaysian Special Branches, the Bruneian Special Branch was also actually suspicious about the sincerity of the Sarawak Special Branch and the presence of Malaysians in Brunei. Some of them were working in the Brunei Government services, some were people from Sarawak or Sabah who merely crossed the border to get into Brunei and some were from Peninsular Malaysia. Some of them held important positions in the Bruneian Government. Because of Coster's suspicion of the sincerity of the east Malaysian Special Branch and the Malaysians in Brunei, Coster preferred to provide Jack Johnston, the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, with information to be passed by word of mouth than to be attributed to a report.

PRB and other dissidents, as well as to monitor their activities against the state.¹⁵³ In the *Borneo Bulletin* dated 6 December 1975, a government spokesman warned that further arrests would be made unless 'this drift towards the PRB ceases'.¹⁵⁴ He further added that anyone attempting to revive the banned party was committing an offence and was likely to be arrested and detained.¹⁵⁵

The Brunei government was also taking a deliberately anti-Malaysian (and on occasion pro-Singapore) line. One example was the decision to sever the currency link with Malaysia while retaining one with Singapore. When the Malaysian government wanted to terminate the Board of Commissioners of Currency, which issued currency for Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories, including Brunei, and to replace the Straits dollar with the new currency issued by the Bank of Malaysia, Brunei followed Singapore in issuing its own currency, which subsequently became interchangeable between the two countries. In another example, when Malaysia-Singapore Airlines split up into Singapore International Airline (SIA) and Malaysia Airlines System (MAS), Brunei chose to allow landing rights only to SIA.¹⁵⁶

6.6. Conclusion

From this chapter it has been shown that the Malaysian government was involved in the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels with the aim of putting pressure on the British to grant Brunei independence and diverting the Sultan and Sir Omar's attention away from the Limbang issue and redirecting it to the independence of Brunei and constitutional development. The study has also shown that the objective of the Malaysian government in using Azahari to achieve its aim gave Azahari an opportunity to resume his struggle which was contained by the Indonesian government when Suharto came to power in

¹⁵³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 April 1975.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1975. In October 1975, the Sultan stressed that his country would destroy attempts made by a 'neighbouring state' to destabilise the country, whether from outside or inside the country (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 October 1975).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1975.

¹⁵⁶ *Asia Research Bulletin*, 1 – 31 July 1973. In August 1973 (i.e. following the escape of Bruneian ex-rebels to Limbang), the Brunei government stated that it would not renew the work permits of unskilled migrant workers from Malaysia. These unskilled jobs include shop assistants, clerks, and telephone operators (cited in FCO24/1679, Douglas-Home to British High Commissioner to Brunei, 31 August, 1973).

1965. In Kuala Lumpur, Azahari and the escaped detainees revived the PRB which aimed to achieve independence for Brunei and to implement a democratic system of government in the Sultanate.

The PRB's political activities in west Malaysia caused apprehension to the Sultan and Sir Omar as the Malaysian government did not control these activities (although it had stated that the escaped detainees were not allowed to get involved in any political activities). This chapter has also shown that since the Malaysian government did not control the activities of the PRB, the Brunei government had to recall Bruneian students who were studying in west Malaysia to Brunei for fear that the escaped detainees would influence the students to work against the Brunei government. The chapter has also demonstrated that the PRB's political activities in Limbang which threatened Brunei's security were supported by Abdul Rahman Yakub, who aimed to push Britain to grant Brunei independence and to destabilise Brunei's security. From Limbang, the PRB spread its propaganda and its recruits infiltrated Brunei.

Although in June and July 1974 the British warned Malaysia about the activities of the PRB in Limbang, the Malaysian government did not put an end to these activities. This study has demonstrated that the PRB's political activities were supported not only by Malaysia but also by other countries and international organizations which led the PRB to present its case at the UN in November 1975. At the UN the PRB persistently called upon Britain to grant Brunei full independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The PRB's call at the UN coincided with the Labour government's decision in October 1974 to revive its 1966 policy to end its agreement with Brunei. This put more pressure on the Sultan and Sir Omar as neither of them wanted Britain to end its agreement with Brunei. The next chapter will look into the revival of the 1966 Labour government's policy to end its agreement with Brunei and the challenges and problems this posed for the Sultanate.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Revival of the British Policy of 1966:

1974 – 1979

7.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to study Brunei's political development as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with the Sultanate. When the Labour Party returned to power in 1974, Sir Omar and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah faced similar problems to those they had faced in the 1960s. In November, in accordance with Article VIII of the Amended Agreement of 1971, the Labour government gave one-year's notice to Brunei to review the agreement's term. This notice took effect in November 1975 and negotiations began in January 1976. Sir Omar was reluctant to accept Britain's decision as he and the Sultan lacked confidence over Brunei's internal and external security. The Sultan and Sir Omar's apprehensiveness regarding Brunei's security was shared by General Sir Walter Walker who once commanded British forces in Borneo. This chapter will show that after several arguments between the Sultan and Sir Omar and the British, the Sultan and Sir Omar won temporary retention of the British Gurkha battalion in Brunei. However, the date of the British final withdrawal from Brunei remained unsettled.

This chapter will also show that Malaysia's hostile attitude towards Brunei and its continuous support of the PRB was the main reason why the Sultan and Sir Omar were not confident regarding independence. Although Tun Abdul Razak assured the British High Commissioner that Malaysia would prohibit the activities of the escaped ex-rebels and that the incorporation of Brunei into Malaysia was less important, the Malaysian government repeatedly displayed unfavourable attitudes towards the Sultanate. This study will demonstrate that Malaysia's support of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor in December 1975 and its comparison of Brunei's situation with the annexed territory, together with the Malaysian government's accusation that Brunei was financing the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) in its election campaign in Sarawak were examples of Malaysia's hostile attitudes towards Brunei.

However, the Indonesian and Malaysian changes of policy towards Brunei in 1976 reduced the Sultanate's tension over its security. This chapter will show that when Hussein Onn came to power following the death of Tun Abdul Razak in January 1976, he changed his predecessor's policy from an adventurist to a friendly one. Indonesia, which did not want any radical regime to appear in Brunei that would influence the stability of the region, spelled out its goodwill policy towards the Sultanate. Following the Malaysian government's change of policy towards Brunei, the PRB no longer gained support from Malaysia and this led to the demise of the PRB. This chapter will show that the change of attitudes of the Malaysian and Indonesian governments towards Brunei and the demise of the PRB created a favourable atmosphere for the signing of an agreement between Brunei and Britain in 1979. Under this agreement Brunei would achieve full independence at the end of 1983.

7.2. Revival of policy

The Labour government's objectives when it came to power in October 1974 were to end Britain's anachronistic relationship with Brunei, to review the agreement with the Sultan with a view to terminating Britain's responsibility towards Brunei, and to leave behind a peaceful and stable situation in which British economic interests would be safeguarded. In order to achieve these objectives, Malaysia's co-operation or at least acquiescence was essential to Britain.¹

As mentioned before, it was on 27 November 1974 that the Labour government informed the Brunei government of its plan to review the 1959 Agreement, which had been amended in November 1971. In his message, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, informed Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of the British government's decision to withdraw its Gurkha battalion in 1976. At the same time, he gave formal notice (in accordance with Article VIII of the Agreement of 23 November 1971), of the British government's desire to review its agreement of 29 September 1959 as amended by the Agreement of 23 November 1971.² As a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei and withdraw its forces from the Sultanate, Sir Omar

¹ FCO24/2096, L. Beavan to D.McD Gordon, 1975 & Moffat to R.P. Flower, 3 February 1975.

² FCO2102, UK policy towards Brunei, Briefs for the talks with the Sultan of Brunei 1976.

and the Sultan felt that they were thrown into a situation similar to the one they had been in before the Conservative government came to power in June 1970. They did not want Britain to end its agreement with the Sultanate – not at a time when they still felt insecure over Brunei's internal and external security.

Sir Omar and the Sultan's apprehensiveness over Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from Brunei was also shared by General Sir Walter-Walker, who commanded British forces in Borneo and the Brunei rebellion in 1962. He joined the battle on behalf of Sir Omar and the Sultan to retain the British Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate. Sir Walter Walker argued that the retention of nine hundred and seventy-seven Gurkha soldiers in Brunei would not cost the British taxpayer a single penny and the British government's defence cuts east of Suez, made on financial grounds, did not apply to Brunei.³ He also argued that Brunei needed the Gurkha army to back up its own army which was still young. If the Gurkha battalion was taken away from Brunei, he was concerned that this would leave a gap in the state's defence line which would likely be filled by the enemy.⁴ Sir Walter-Walker also warned Britain over the security of the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company which he thought deserved to be fully protected.⁵

In 1975 Brunei was at the height of its oil production. Oil prices had begun to rise sharply in the international market following the OPEC cutbacks of the early 1970s. The value of exports for crude oil had increased sharply from B\$295,221,358 in 1971 to B\$1,939,913,413 in 1975.⁶ Moreover, Brunei was at the height of its natural gas production. Gas production in the Sultanate had become increasingly important when the world's biggest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Plant owned by a joint venture between the Brunei Government, Shell and Japanese interests, the Mitsubishi Corporation, was officially opened by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in 1973. Since then, the

³ *Sunday Times* (London), 23 February 1975.

⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 25 January 1975.

⁵ According to Walter: The Shell people are making 20% of their income from the Brunei oilfields, and natural gas from Brunei is earning £8 a second. It is madness to deprive the Sultan of the presence of the Gurkha Battalion at the very time that his neighbours are casting avaricious eyes on his wealth (cited in *Sunday Times* (London), 23 February 1975).

⁶ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1971 & 1975.

value of exports for gas had significantly increased from B\$534,363 in 1971 to B\$424,969,365 in 1975.⁷

The British government, however, made it clear that it could not treat Brunei as an exceptional case in its defence cutbacks and future commitments because it did not think that Brunei's situation would permit the retention of the Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate. Although Brunei paid for the maintenance of the Gurkha battalion, it would not affect Britain's decision to withdraw the battalion from Brunei.⁸ John Grovers, public relations chief at the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, said that the reason behind the proposed withdrawal 'goes wider than a search simply for financial savings'.⁹ The British government wanted to concentrate on the defence of Britain and on its involvement on NATO; Britain's non-NATO commitments were considered case by case against strategic priorities. It would for example consider a case where the 'political effects of the withdrawal at the present time militate against such a step'.¹⁰ In other words, the country concerned might find itself in a difficult situation. The British government, however, felt that Brunei did not fall under that category and because of that its forces would be withdrawn from Brunei.¹¹

When the meeting to discuss the timing of the withdrawal of the Gurkha battalion was held from 25 February until 11 March 1975 between Brunei and Britain, the Sultan argued that the British government should not precipitate the date of the withdrawal of the Gurkha battalion and should take full account of the time scale needed for the building up of Brunei's own forces.¹² The Sultan's delegation also argued that the Gurkha battalion in Brunei did not cost the British government a penny, as Brunei met all the payment and maintenance costs.¹³ To get round the reduction in the RAF's transport fleet announced in December 1974, the Sultan offered to use Brunei's civil aircraft to ferry the Gurkhas to and from their base at Hong Kong.¹⁴ As a result, the Sultan won temporary retention of the Gurkhas, but the date of the final withdrawal

⁷ Ibid., 1971 & 1975.

⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 15 February 1975.

⁹ Ibid., 15 February 1975.

¹⁰ Ibid., 15 February 1975.

¹¹ Ibid., 15 February 1975.

¹² *Times*, 21 May 1975.

¹³ Ibid., 21 May 1975.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21 May 1971.

remained inconclusive.¹⁵ The security of Brunei was definitely the reason why the mission was unable to reach a conclusion. At the meeting of the Brunei Defence Council on 7 May 1974, the Head of Special Branch presented a draft report which indicated a deterioration of the security position in Brunei and implicated 'that forces in Sarawak are directing, rather than merely exploiting the struggle for independence'.¹⁶

This development caused the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to be apprehensive about Brunei's situation. Nevertheless, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not want to appear, either to Malaysia or in public, too closely committed to the maintenance of Sir Omar's regime at all costs or too closely identified with Sir Omar's belief that discontent was the result of Malaysia's interference rather than his own illiberalism and autocracy.¹⁷ To the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in order for the British withdrawal from Brunei to be smooth, Malaysia's co-operation or at least its acquiescence was indeed significant.

At the meeting between Tun Abdul Razak and Lord Goronwy-Roberts in London on 14 April 1975, the latter mentioned the British wish to review the latter's 1959 Agreement with Brunei and stressed that while the negotiations between Brunei and Britain were in progress, it was essential that the activities of the PRB should be kept low key (so that Brunei would have no reason to be unduly alarmed about external threats to its stability).¹⁸ Although Tun Abdul Razak assured Lord Goronwy-Roberts that he would do all he could to restrain the activities of the PRB in Malaysia, there were limits to this. Here Tun Abdul Razak emphasised that the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei was essential and if the Sultan of Brunei failed to achieve this, the people would rebel. Tun Abdul Razak also pointed out his preference to work with an elected government in Brunei rather than with the Sultan and stressed that Brunei's integration into Malaysia was secondary.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 July 1975 and also FCO24/2096, Draft Briefs, The Prime Minister's Talks with the Malaysian Prime Minister, 14 April 1975.

¹⁶ FCO24/1951, Gautrey to British High Commissioner to Kuala Lumpur, 18 May 1974.

¹⁷ FCO24/1686, Johnston to FCO, 11 December 1973.

¹⁸ FCO24/2096, Record of Meeting between the Parliamentary Under Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Prime Minister of Malaysia, 14 April 1975.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1975.

Tun Abdul Razak's contentions showed that Malaysia was continuously hostile to Brunei. In 1974, in an act of hostility towards Brunei, Malaysia accused Brunei of financing the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) leaders in their election campaign in Sarawak. Malaysia also accused Brunei of transmitting to Datuk James Wong of the SNAP party a large sum of money totalling \$4,000,000 in exchange for arranging the return of Limbang in the event of his SNAP party winning the 1974 elections in Sarawak.²⁰ Although Brunei made no response to such an allegation, the Malaysian attitude towards Brunei was hostile. According to Jim Davidson, the British High Commissioner to Brunei, when he was in London, he was informed by the Chartered Company that it had granted Wong an overdraft to the amount of millions of dollars not long before he was alleged by Tun Abdul Razak to receive that money from Sir Omar.²¹

In October 1974, Datuk James Wong was detained under the ISA (Internal Security Act).²² Peter Searle thought that Wong's arrest appeared to be motivated by 'personal revenge that culminated a long and bitter political rivalry between the two men'.²³ It should be noted that James Wong was Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak where Stephen Kalong Ningkan was then Chief Minister. Historically, SNAP had antipathy towards Abdul Rahman Yakub (the Chief Minister of Sarawak) and the federal government for their high-handedness over the Stephen Kalong Ningkan affair.²⁴ If Wong were removed from the party, the federal government hoped that the party would disintegrate as it would not receive any financial or psychological support from Wong.²⁵

In another example, on 31 August 1975, the Sarawak Government Information service played a film which covered the appearance before the UN Decolonization Committee of Azahari, Zaini and Yasin on the Limbang padang (field).²⁶ As mentioned

²⁰ FCO24/2096, C.A. Munro to S.L. Hutchinson, 24 November 1975.

²¹ FCO24/2098, G. Kidd to C.A. Munro, 1 December 1975.

²² FCO24/2096, C.A. Munro to S.L. Hutchinson, 24 November 1975.

²³ FCO24/1962, S.M. Bolt, British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur to R.P. Flower, 1975.

²⁴ Ibid., 1975.

²⁵ Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak 1970 – 1976, The Iban Perspective*, Oxford, OUP, 1983, p. 184.

²⁶ FCO24/2098, Report on the Security Situation in Brunei from the period 10 August 1975 until 4 September 1975.

in the previous chapter, this was the PRB's first appearance before the Committee where Azahari among others called upon the UN to give its strong support to the PRB's quest for independence. The main reason why the Sarawak government Information Service played the film was to incite the people of Brunei to work against the British government and to gain more support from the people of Brunei.

Then in September 1975, in his speech in London, Datuk Mohammed Rahmat, Malaysian Deputy Minister, told the Inter-Parliamentary Union in London that 'the Malaysian contention that Brunei is still a British dependent territory is fully shared by the United Nations Committee of 24' and that 'the remnants of colonialism must not be allowed to remain in existence'.²⁷ According to Craig of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Rahmat's speech seemed to suggest that Brunei should be incorporated in the larger neighbour as 'there was genuine concern over their (small territory) because of economic and geographical factors'.²⁸ The editorial of the *New Straits Times*, the Malaysian newspaper which commonly reflects Malaysian government opinion, rubbed it in, drawing a parallel with current events in East Timor, saying that 'an untenable enclave in our midst, open to those who may wish to fish in troubled waters, is a threat to Malaysian stability.'²⁹

Another display of the Malaysian government's hostile attitude towards Brunei was when Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie spelled out his anti-colonial explanation for his government's hostility towards Brunei during a seminar³⁰ in Jakarta in October 1974. He drew attention to 'the security issue that revolves around the continuing exercise of vestigial colonial territories in our region'.³¹ He warned that 'their existence, besides being historically anomalous, also makes them the foci of local discontent and foreign intrigue. The security issues that they may pose may be peripheral of the ambit of our concern here, but they are nevertheless potential areas of instability.'³²

²⁷FCO24/2098, Craig to FCO, 26 September 1975.

²⁸Ibid., 26 September 1975.

²⁹New Straits Times, 11 September 1975 (cited in FCO24/2096).

³⁰Lord Alun Chalfont, *By God's Will: A Portrait of the Sultan of Brunei*, London, 1986, p. 115.

³¹Tan Sri Muhammad Ghazalie bin Shafie, 'ASEAN's Response to Security Issues in Southeast Asia', in Centre for Strategic and International Studies, *Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1975, p. 23. Cited in Liefer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', p. 247).

³²Ibid., p. 247.

Further to that, in the meeting on 14 October 1975 between the Malaysian Prime Minister and Mr Whitlam, the Prime Minister of Australia, the former mentioned that Malaysia felt that Brunei should become a state in its federation. The source indicated that Australia was not opposed to Malaysia's proposal provided the people of Brunei were not against joining Malaysia. It is understood, however, that members of the PRB were not in favour of such a move.³³ According to the *Canberra Times* newspaper dated 14 October 1975, 'the banned PRB whose leaders are now in Malaysia, is strongly opposed to this course.'³⁴

In the meeting between Suharto and Tun Abdul Razak in Parapat, Indonesia in November 1975,³⁵ Tun Abdul Razak regarded Brunei as a 'constitutional problem'. Although Abdul Razak claimed that there was no parallel between the situation in Brunei and that in Portuguese Timor, the Malaysian government supported Indonesia and its policy over East Timor. Abdul Razak stated to Indonesia that 'Malaysia was willing to be convinced that the policy of limited action that Indonesia was adopting was the right policy and that it would succeed.'³⁶

In November 1975, the Indonesian military intervened in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor and claimed it as Indonesia's twenty-seventh province. Timor, which had been a Portuguese colony since the mid-seventeenth century, was declared as the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia in July 1976. When it was abandoned by Portugal in 1975, East Timor unilaterally declared itself independent on 28 November 1975. Nine days later, however, it was invaded by Indonesia before it could be internationally recognized. Indonesia alleged that the popular East Timorese Fretilin Party, which received some vocal support from the People's Republic of China, was Communist. With the American cause in South Vietnam lost and as America feared a Communist domino effect in Southeast Asia, the US along with its ally Australia did not object to the pro-Western Indonesia government.³⁷

³³ FCO24/2096, J.A. Davidson to P. de Coucry Ireland, 22 September 1975.

³⁴ *Canberra Times*, 14 October 1975 (cited in FCO24/2096).

³⁵ President Suharto met Tun Abdul Razak for two days from 15 to 17 November 1975.

³⁶ FCO24/2998, G.A. Duggan to Muir, 26 November 1975.

³⁷ See James Dunn (3rd ed.), *East Timor: a Rough Passage to Independence*, Double Bay, N.S.W., Australia, Longueville Books, 2003 & Paul Hainsworth & Stephen McCloskey (ed.), *The East Timor Question: the Struggle for Independence from Indonesia*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2000.

Malaysia's encouragement towards Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor within the former worried Brunei as Malaysia might in its own interest want to take over Brunei. Malaysia's success in testing its military offensive capability in 1975 worried Brunei even more. In that year, Malaysia had successfully tested its offensive capability in a combined operation, which involved a seaborne landing of a full infantry brigade of about 3,000 men with supporting arms. Naval and close supports were part of the exercise, which took place in beaches near Mersing on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.³⁸ It should be noted that the coastline of Brunei extends for some 160 km, of which 112km front the South China Sea. By the proclamation of 1954, Brunei annexed the continental shelf up to a water depth of 183 meters, thereby doubling the total area of the State of 14,516 sq kilometres.³⁹ Brunei's lack of sufficient infantry and coastal defence vessels might have put its territory in danger. Moreover, it totally lacked an effective air force.

In January 1976, Lord Goronwy-Roberts again continued to discuss with the Sultan the issue of Britain's withdrawal and the need for further change in the British-Brunei relationship. However, the mission ended somewhat inconclusively.⁴⁰ Lord Goronwy-Roberts, however, claimed at a press conference that 'our view is that there is no inherent or real threat to Brunei...(even though) it is not for me to deny that the Sultan is apprehensive about the security of his state'.⁴¹ To emphasise his point, Lord Goronwy-Roberts made a statement in Kuala Lumpur. In his talks with Hussien Onn, the new prime minister of Malaysia and the Malaysian Foreign Minister, Tengku Ahmed Ritaudeen in Kuala Lumpur in January 1976, Lord Goronwy-Roberts told them that the Sultan was apprehensive about the security of Brunei and 'it was up to every one concerned to remove (Brunei's) apprehension through friendly discussions'.⁴²

³⁸ Joo-Jock Lim, Lim, Joo-Jock, 'Brunei: Prospects for a Protectorate', *Southeast Asian Affairs 1976*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. p. 163.

³⁹ A.J. Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of a Small State', in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1978*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1978, p. 77.

⁴⁰ *Straits Times*, 15 January 1976.

⁴¹ *New Straits Times*, 15 January 1976.

⁴² *Borneo Bulletin*, 17 January 1976 & 24 January 1976, *Guardian*, 17 July 1976.

7.3. Malaysia and Indonesia: change of attitudes

In 1976, the Malaysian government unexpectedly showed a change of policy towards Brunei when Hussien Onn became Prime Minister of Malaysia in January 1976 (following the sudden death of Tun Abdul Razak). Tun Abdul Razak passed away on 14 January 1976 while seeking medical treatment in London due in part to leukemia.

Hussien Onn, whose early career was as a military man, was a Secretary-General of UMNO Youth until his father, Datuk Onn bin Ja'afar, the party-founding President, resigned in 1951 to form the Independence of Malaya Party. Hussien Onn was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1969 and appointed Federal Minister of Education in 1970. In 1973, he was appointed as Minister of Trade and Industry and Deputy Prime Minister.

When Hussien Onn became Prime Minister he changed his predecessor's adventurist policy towards Brunei to a friendly one. One of the reasons for doing this was his realisation that Malaysia's political adventurism towards Brunei would not make it easier for the British to leave Brunei.⁴³ He therefore wanted to establish a viable relationship with Brunei based on mutual interest and political equality.⁴⁴ Hussien Onn's change of policy towards Brunei was also the result of British persuasion and pressure. The British government, which had already urged the late Tun Abdul Razak to be on good terms with Brunei, also told Hussien Onn of Britain's concern over the PRB's political activities which repeatedly sought international support from extreme Arab governments such as Libya in its desire to achieve its aims. Callaghan pointed out that it could not be in Malaysian interests (or in that of others in the region) that outside powers should be given an opportunity to meddle in Brunei's affairs as this could easily lead to Communist exploitation.⁴⁵

Moreover, the Malaysian government's change of policy also stemmed from its wish to uphold the ASEAN treaty and declaration – the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia and the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord. Both documents, which were signed by the ASEAN countries at the first summit meeting in

⁴³ Liefer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', p. 249.

⁴⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 December 1979. The new prime minister was said to be free of any previous prejudicial experience or bias. Searle, *Politics in Sarawak*, p. 192.

⁴⁵ FCO24/2098, Callaghan to British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, 30 June 1975.

Bali, Indonesia in February 1976, signified ASEAN's aim towards establishing peace and stability in the region.⁴⁶ Although Brunei was not a member of ASEAN, its geographical position made it necessary for ASEAN members especially Malaysia, which shares its border with Brunei, to have good relations with the Sultanate.⁴⁷

Furthermore, Brunei no longer represented a source of wealth to Malaysia, whose oil and natural resources had been confirmed and were being exploited.⁴⁸ In 1971, Shell had struck natural gas off Sarawak which was at least comparable to Brunei's project. In the same year, oil was found at Erb West and in 1973 at Samarang, both in Sabah. In 1975, Sabah became Malaysia's second oil-producing state.⁴⁹ By 1973, although there was no existing production of oil and gas in West Malaysia, a number of encouraging strikes had been reported. Esso's exploration had discovered natural gas off Trengganu while the Consortium of Continental Oil, El Paso and Broken Hill Proprietors had struck oil off Kuantan.⁵⁰

Furthermore, the federal government no longer experienced conflict with leaders in Sarawak and Sabah who since 1963 had been inclined towards autonomy and separatism. In the 1960s, the independence of Brunei worried Malaysia as it would lead Sabah and Sarawak to follow Brunei's step. By 1976, however, the two west Malaysian states had been brought under the federal government's umbrella and the federal leaders believed that nothing would encourage leaders in Sarawak and Sabah to revert to the autonomous rein.⁵¹ In 1976 Tun Mustapha, the Chief Minister of Sabah, had been removed from office because of his continuous pursuit of greater autonomy from the federal government since the mid 1970s. With the removal of Tun Mustapha from power, the major threat to federalism was neutralised, and contending forces emerged

⁴⁶ ASEAN: An Overview, Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1995, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Donald E. Weatherbee, 'Brunei: The ASEAN Connection', *Asian Survey*, 23(6), 1983, p. 730.

⁴⁸ A.J. Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of a Small State', p. 79.

⁴⁹ <http://allmalaysia.info/>

⁵⁰ FCO24/1692 E-Jones Parry to Hickman, 12 December 1973). See K. Young, W.L.C. Bussink, P. Hassan, *Malaysia: Growth and Equity in a Multiracial Society*, Baltimore, Published for the World Bank by Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 283 – 287 for description on oil and gas in Malaysia between 1970 and 1980.

⁵¹ Bruce Ross-Larson, *The Politics of Federalism*, Bruce Ross-Larson, Singapore, 1976, p. 213.

to balance each other in a manner that made them dependent on Kuala Lumpur for their future.⁵²

Malaysia's change of policy towards the Sultanate was revealed in 1977 when Hussien Onn met Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah at Queen Elizabeth's jubilee celebration in London.⁵³ Following the meeting, in March 1977, Tun Mustapha Harun, the former chief minister of Sabah, made a private visit to Brunei, spending four days in the Sultanate and succeeding in having an audience with the Sultan.⁵⁴ He made a statement to the press that Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei 'should work closely together because no one country in the world can afford to be alone'.⁵⁵ Similarly, in March 1977, Abdul Rahman Yakub, the chief minister of Sarawak, directed by Hussien Onn to convey Sarawak's wishes to improve relations with Brunei and in December 1978, visited Brunei where he briefly met the Sultan.⁵⁶ His meeting with the Sultan was historically significant as it led to the process of improving relations between Brunei and Sarawak. The *Borneo Bulletin* of 5 December 1981 stated that the visit 'marked the end of an era of official hostility between Brunei and Sarawak that began in 1970'.⁵⁷ The Malaysian government also clarified its stance over Limbang, stating that the issue of the latter would only be discussed when Brunei achieved its full independence. According to Tun Hussien Onn, Malaysia could not discuss the issue of Limbang with Brunei as Brunei was not yet an independent country.⁵⁸

Despite these positive developments, the Malaysian government under Hussien Onn pressed for the British decolonization of Brunei. In November 1977, the Malaysian government co-sponsored the PRB's resolution, which was adopted by the Fourth Committee. The Brunei Resolution appealed to the world body that it 'reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Brunei to self-determination and independence in

⁵² Ross-Larson, *The Politics of Federalism*, p. 213.

⁵³ It was also reported by the press that the British Government's determination to end its responsibilities over Brunei was made clear by the Queen in her letter to the Sultan (cited in 'Royal Persuasion', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 June 1978).

⁵⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 March 1977.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 March 1977. See also 'Looking for a New Friend', *Asiaweek*, 3 March 1978.

⁵⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 9 December 1978.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5 December 1981.

⁵⁸ Author's interview with Jasin Affandy, 6 December 2004.

accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)'.⁵⁹ The reason for Hussien Onn pressing for the British decolonization of Brunei was that to him the existence of a colony in the ASEAN region would affect the confidence of other countries towards the creation of ASEAN as a neutral region of peace. Moreover, he believed that the granting of full independence to Brunei was consistent with the ASEAN resolution for peace and stability in this region and would represent a step forward in the realisation of the concept of a zone of peace and neutrality.⁶⁰ Tengku Ahmed Ritaudeen, the minister of foreign affairs of Malaysia, in his speech to the House of Representatives stated that 'As a peace loving country which upholds the policy of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism consonant with the principles and charter of the UN, Malaysia would like to see an end to British colonialism in Brunei'.⁶¹ The *Utusan Melayu* newspaper argued that 'the delay by Britain in granting [Brunei's] independence and holding free elections will only give the opportunity to the Communists to look for a new base in the midst of the ASEAN nations'.⁶²

Similarly, in a dramatic turn of events, Indonesia spelled out its policy towards Brunei. Indonesia's reason for doing so was its apprehensiveness over the prospect of any kind of radical regime emerging in Brunei, which in turn would affect the stability of the region.⁶³ When Aswismarno, Minister/Counsellor at the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore, met W.J. Watts, British High Commissioner in Singapore, he stated that his government was against Malaysia's support of the PRB. Indonesia felt that if Malaysia continued to support the PRB, this would be undesirable for Brunei and the region and could even lead to the break up of ASEAN. Indonesia wanted stability in the region and had no desire to see it endangered by Malaysia's support of the PRB.⁶⁴

The 'new order' thinking of Indonesia at that time was that Indonesia needed foreign aid and investment; domestic stability was therefore necessary, which to some

⁵⁹Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 354.

⁶⁰ *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 11, No. 2, June 1978.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, June 1978.

⁶² *Utusan Malaysia*, 28 June 1978.

⁶³ D.E. Weatherbee, *Indonesia's Security Perceptions and Policies: Implications for US Policy* (South Carolina: Institute of International Studies, University of North Carolina 1979). Cited in Menon, 'Negara Brunei Darussalam from Protectorate to Statehood: the Ceaseless Quest for Security', p. 383.

⁶⁴ FCO24/2098, W.J. Watts to L. Bevan, 2 June 1975.

extent depended on regional stability.⁶⁵ The 'new order' was established by Suharto as a contrast with the 'old order' of Sukarno. Under the 'new order' the Suharto government promised national economic development and improvements to levels of education and welfare. To achieve these promises, the Suharto government needed massive foreign loans from western countries; in order to obtain such loans he had to ensure the stability of Indonesia, which to some degree depended on the stability of the region as a whole.⁶⁶ Moreover, after the invasion of East Timor, Indonesia wanted as much as possible to regain trust from countries in the region and also throughout the world. Indonesia therefore had to prove to the world that it was not an expansionist country.⁶⁷ Many countries had condemned Indonesia for its invasion of East Timor in 1975 and its confrontational policy towards Malaysia in 1963. The 1969 Act of Free Choice of West Irian had also caused suspicion in the region and in the world as a whole.⁶⁸

In 1962, when an agreement was concluded between the Netherlands and Indonesia allowing Indonesia to control West New Guinea which was then renamed West Irian, Indonesia was required to conduct an election on self-determination with UN assistance no later than 1969. Once in control, however, Indonesia quickly suppressed any political groups that demanded outright independence for the territory. When the so-called 'Act of Free Choice' was conducted by UN officials in August 1969, Indonesia selected 1022 West Papuans to vote publicly and unanimously in favour of integration with Indonesia. In this regard, Indonesia had evidently failed to meet its international obligations although in November 1969 the UN "took note" of the "Act of Free Choice" and its results. Therefore, in order to regain trust from countries in the region and the world as a whole, Indonesia had to prove that it was not an expansionist country. As Djisman Simandjuntak said:

⁶⁵ V.G. Kulkarni, 'Asean's Sixth Member', *FEER*, 26 November 1984, p. 33.

⁶⁶ M.C. Ricklefs (3rd ed.), *A History of Modern Indonesia since c1200*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 342 - 358. Under the First Five-Year Development Plan 1969 – 1974, three quarters of Indonesia's expenditure was financed by foreign loans.

⁶⁷ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*, New York, 1995, pp.196 – 7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196 – 7.

We also want to show that Indonesia was not an expansionist country...if Indonesia behaved as if it were going to be expansionist all the time, it would be very difficult to create a peaceful environment necessary for economic development – especially as Indonesia is so dependent on outside source'.⁶⁹

Like Malaysia, Indonesia also pressed for Britain's decolonization of Brunei but did not want any kind of Malaysia federation solution to this decolonization.⁷⁰ In this regard, Indonesia would strongly reject any attempt by the Malaysian government to incorporate Brunei by force into Malaysia.⁷¹ In 1975, Indonesia co-sponsored with nineteen other countries a resolution by Malaysia and the PRB before the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly calling for the decolonization of Brunei.⁷² In 1977, Indonesia again voted for a resolution co-sponsored by Malaysia calling on Britain to take steps to facilitate the holding of free elections in Brunei. Indonesia's support for the resolution on Brunei in the UN was reflected in a statement made by Vice-president Adam Malik in 1978:

As a general principle, we'd like to see the removal of all remnants of the old colonial powers in the region...in forcing Brunei to become independent, there shouldn't be a situation that would inject instability into the area. This is why Indonesia and Malaysia have offered to help the Sultan with either military or civilian assistance – to enable him to stand on his own feet. We'd like to see the growth of some form of democratic government in the state, and therefore we would like to see the presence of one or two political parties. But they must be loyal to the Sultan.⁷³

In the meeting between Suharto and Hussien Onn in May 1978, Suharto emphasized that Brunei was to be discussed first in the context of regional security and stability.⁷⁴ Both the Indonesian and Malaysian leaders reiterated that neither Malaysia

⁶⁹Dewi Fortuna Anwar's interview with Dr Djisman Simandjuntak, CSIS, Jakarta, 29 January 1986, p. 198.

⁷⁰ Weatherbee, 'Brunei: The ASEAN Connection', pp. 729 – 730.

⁷¹ FCO24/2098, W.J. Watts to L. Bevan, 2 June 1975.

⁷² Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 65.

⁷³ A Talk with Adam Malik', *Asiaweek*, 17 July 1978.

⁷⁴ Weatherbee, 'Brunei: The ASEAN Connection', p. 730.

nor Indonesia had designs on Brunei.⁷⁵ Indonesia also preferred Brunei to be included in ASEAN. In June 1978, when Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, met Suharto in Jakarta, Lee revealed that he was asked to convey to Brunei the message that it would be welcome to join ASEAN.⁷⁶

7.4. The demise of the PRB

Apart from witnessing the changing attitudes of the Malaysian and Indonesian governments towards Brunei, between 1976 and 1979 Brunei also witnessed the diminishing strength of the PRB which had gained support from the Malaysian government between 1973 and 1975. This happened after Hussien Onn became Prime Minister of Malaysia in January 1976. Since Hussien Onn had abandoned the aggressive policy of the late Tun Abdul Razak towards Brunei, the support extended to the PRB operating from Malaysia was circumscribed.⁷⁷ According to Mahmud Murshidi Othman, Hussien Onn suppressed the political activities of PRB as he had to bow to pressure imposed on him by the British. The British pressurised Hussien Onn to stop the PRB's activities as Britain had promised to grant Brunei independence.⁷⁸ Consequently, the Malaysian government withdrew the facilities extended to the escaped ex-rebels under Tun Abdul Razak: for example, the Malaysian authorities confiscated their passports and their office was closed.

Towards the end of 1976, when the Libyan connection was brought to his attention, Hussien Onn exercised his authority to sever it.⁷⁹ According to one of the escaped 1962 ex-rebels' statement to the author, when Hussien Onn found out that Bruneians were sent to Libya, he was annoyed and ordered those who had sent them to return them to Malaysia. Hussien Onn also banned Azahari from Malaysia, and at the same time obtained Indonesia's concurrence in keeping the PRB leaders, '...bottled up in

⁷⁵ Timothy Ong, 'Modern Brunei: Some Important Issues', *Southeast Asian Affairs 1983*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983, p. 82.

⁷⁶ See *Tempo* (Jakarta), 5 July 1980, 14 – 17 & *Straits Times*, 4 July 1980 for the text of an interview with PM Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore.

⁷⁷ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 381.

⁷⁸ Author's Interview with Mahmud Morshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

⁷⁹ Leifer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', pp. 248 – 49.

Bogor'.⁸⁰ In Indonesia, Suharto banned Azahari from carrying out any anti-Brunei activities.

To make matters worse, in early 1976 there was a fundamental split in the PRB's leadership. The Vice President and Head of the Economic Division of the PRB, Zaini Haji Ahmad, suspended his support of the party's president, Azahari, as Zaini claimed there were 'several defects in his leadership'.⁸¹ Indeed by the end of December 1974, there were signs of disagreement on the use of violence between Azahari and Zaini. According to an unnamed source [which G.E. Coster, Head of Brunei Special Branch passed to Davidson who contacted Azahari following his returned to Kuala Lumpur on 23 November (that was after his appearance in New York)], Azahari mentioned that since there was no prospect of negotiation with Britain, he decided to use violence to achieve his aim.⁸²

According to the Department of Security and Intelligence (DSI) report of 6 December, Azahari decided to organise an 'act of violence' originating externally to make the Brunei government 'sit up' and listen to the PRB.⁸³ The same source said that ten of the fugitive students who were known to be at the Malaysian government youth training centre at Dusun Tua were receiving training designed to prepare them for 'specific operations' in Brunei. Subsequently, on 18 December 1974, Zaini visited the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and claimed that Azahari favoured following the PRB's aims by violent means and this had led to disagreement between them.⁸⁴ However, as mentioned by Mahmud Murshidi, Azahari never resorted to the use of violence to achieve the PRB's aims but preferred peaceful means to achieve them.⁸⁵

According to one of the members of the PRB, the conflict between Azahari and Zaini was more personal than Zaini's claim that Azahari preferred peace to violence in achieving the PRB's aim as Azahari never resorted to using violence to achieve the party's aim. Although sometimes Azahari talked of violence in order to achieve his aim, he never meant it. If Azahari had resorted to violence, he would have carried it out

⁸⁰ *Asiaweek*, 6 January 1984, p. 32.

⁸¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 3 January 1976.

⁸² FCO24/2098, Davidson to FCO, 6 December 1975.

⁸³ FCO24/2102, UK Policy towards Brunei: Briefs for talks with Sultan of Brunei, January 1976.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, January 1976.

⁸⁵ Author's interview with Mahmud Murshidi Othman, 7 March 2006.

when Indonesia and Malaysia were supporting him between 1963 and 1966 and between 1973 and 1976 respectively (as both countries were willing to render military support to him). However, Azahari did not accept their support for security reasons. In this regard, Azahari was apprehensive that if he accepted either Indonesia or Malaysia's offer of the use of force in Brunei, the latter's sovereignty would be lost to either Indonesia or Malaysia. Moreover, Azahari was apprehensive that the military assault over Brunei would only cost lives amongst the Bruneians.

Zaini's self-suspension from the party and his public pronouncement of his distrust of Azahari had strong repercussions for the PRB's members and followers both in Brunei and in exile. His suspension caused the party members to split up. The PRB's members and followers were also said to be increasingly critical of the inept leaderships of Zaini and Azahari.⁸⁶ According to one of the former students of SOASC, he and his associates were thoroughly disgusted with Zaini and the other PRB leaders as there was a lack of positive action in connection with the 'struggle'.⁸⁷ Many of the students from the SOASC who fled to Limbang in June 1974 returned to Brunei.⁸⁸ According to a Brunei Special Branch Report, they returned to Brunei as they were frustrated with the slow rate of progress towards the achievement of Brunei's independence.⁸⁹ When they were in Brunei, these students together with other members of the PRB made a statement to the press that they no longer had confidence in Azahari's leadership and urged Azahari to step down from the presidency.⁹⁰

In addition to Zaini and the students, many members and supporters of the PRB in Brunei and Limbang no longer supported Azahari and other leaders of the PRB, as they realised that their leaders were no longer in a position to gain control in Brunei.⁹¹ According to one of the supporters of the PRB 'I was first advised that the PRB would be in control in Brunei in 1976. Then it was 1977, and then 1978. I now know they

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ FCO24/2102, UK Policy towards Brunei: Briefs for talks with Sultan of Brunei, 3 January 1976.

⁸⁹ FCO24/2098, Report of the Security Situation in Brunei State for the period 16 February 1975 to 19 March 1975.

⁹⁰ Eusoff Agaki Haji Ismail, 'Brunei Darussalam: its Re-emergence as a Sovereign and Independent Malay-Muslim Sultanate (1959-1983) M.A.thesis, University of Hull, p. 194.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 194.

were talking rubbish'.⁹² With the increased hardship, frustration and lack of achievement, many members of the PRB became disillusioned and gave up their support of the party leaders. One of the supporters of the PRB who had once been a political detainee said that the PRB members had no money and little food in Limbang.⁹³ This was largely due to the action of the Department of Security and Intelligence (DSI). When the DSI was established, its officers intensified their monitoring and surveillance of its suspected members and sympathisers of the PRB, preventing them from giving any aid to the PRB members and refugees in Limbang.

In 1976, the lives of the refugees in Limbang deteriorated when they were implicated by the Brunei Special Branch (which reported to the Malaysian Special Branch) that they wanted to overthrow the Sultan of Brunei. This happened when a function was held in one of the refugees' residence where a Brunei Intelligence officer reported to the Brunei Special Branch that the gathering aimed to campaign for new PRB recruits with the purpose of overthrowing the Sultan of Brunei. As a result, the Malaysian government (which had changed its policy towards Brunei) did not give them any more allowances or assistance. After that episode Yasin Affandy, the head of the PRB in Limbang, left the latter for Kuala Lumpur as he feared arrest.⁹⁴ As the Bruneian refugees in Limbang could not endure the suffering and hardship, most of the eighteen families who had escaped to Limbang in 1974 returned to Brunei.⁹⁵

The release of the political detainees by the Brunei government, which partly aimed to counter the activities of the PRB leaders in exile, played a significant role in undermining the PRB. In November 1974, despite Sir Omar's unwillingness to release the political prisoners, a group of three detainees was freed: they were the first to be freed since 1967. A month later, the Brunei government freed another group of four detainees – one of them was Mesir Keruddin, a former TNKU commander and Legislative Councillor detained since May 1963.⁹⁶ Jais bin Haji Karim, the most influential Kedayan tribe member and also the military commander of the TNKU forces

⁹² *Borneo Bulletin*, 25 February 1978.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 25 February 1978.

⁹⁴ Zaraini, *Escape From Berakas!*, p. 259.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

and the former Head of Economic Section of the PRB in Brunei at the time of the revolution were released by the Brunei government. In his public statement he denounced Azahari and Yasin Affandy's past activities.⁹⁷

In June 1975, seven more PRB members were released.⁹⁸ This was followed by a further four releases in September 1975.⁹⁹ However, Brunei's aim of countering the activities of the PRB backfired when, in January 1975, Mesir bin Keruddin, who was released in December 1974 for the purpose of countering the PRB's influence, crossed to Limbang and joined the campaign for independence.¹⁰⁰ He claimed that he crossed to Limbang because he did not want to be exploited by the Brunei government to counter the influence of the PRB leaders living abroad as he felt that he was betraying the PRB's struggle to attain independence.¹⁰¹

In a dramatic turn of events, in January 1975, some of the families who had earlier fled to Limbang returned to Brunei after the Brunei government assured them that they would not be arrested.¹⁰² The defunct BAKER party also took a pledge of support for the Sultan's government and pleaded to the public to do the same, vowing to fight any 'elements inside or outside the state' who might try to cause disloyalty and disunity.¹⁰³ Some said that the BAKER party reacted in such a way towards the PRB to counter the ex-rebels' attempts to revive the banned PRB. Zainal bin Puteh, the President of the Party, claimed that the PRB's revival attempts were 'useless', purely because the people inside Brunei would not support them.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ He stated that, because of the promises made to them by the revolt's leader Azahari, the Kedayan people in Brunei had suffered 'very false greatly, both physically and financially' in the 1962 rebellion (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 15 March 1975).

⁹⁸ *Pelita Brunei*, 18 June 1975.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 September 1975.

¹⁰⁰ Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, *The People's Party of Brunei*, p. 59.

¹⁰¹ According to Mesir, the ex-detainees were asked to deliver speeches and talks regarding the PRB (cited in Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 258). However, according to the report on the internal security in Brunei from the period 10 August 1975 until 4 September 1975, the reason for the flight as interpreted from remarks made on arrival in Limbang appeared to be a conclusion drawn on their part that Azahari was the likely victor in the struggle (cited in FCO24/2098).

¹⁰² *Borneo Bulletin*, 8 January 1975. They mainly returned to Brunei because of their poor lives in Limbang. However, the men of the families were imprisoned once again for 3 years in Jerudong Prison before they could be released. See Zariani, *Escape from Berakas!*, p. 259.

¹⁰³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 July 1975.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 July 1975. He also claimed that the BAKER party did still exist and had a five-thousand strong membership.

In April 1975 Awangku Hamzah Pengiran Salleh, who fled together with the escaped detainees from the Berakas Detention Camp in July 1973, urged the people of Brunei not to listen to men he had helped to free. Awangku Hamzah was speaking at a press conference on his release after spending three months helping the police with their inquiry into the incident. Awangku Hamzah surrendered himself to the Brunei authorities in January 1975.¹⁰⁵

In October 1975, a committee of former detainees with the encouragement of the Brunei government stepped up their campaign against the banned PRB to condemn the PRB leaders, particularly Azahari.¹⁰⁶ Public rallies denouncing PRB activities were held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Seria and also in Temburong. According to Awang Momin bin Ahmad, treasurer and information adviser to the committee, 'our aim is to show that the people condemn the PRB leaders, including Azahari, and that they are loyal to the Sultan.'¹⁰⁷ He and the committee also spent every Friday and Saturday visiting villages to answer PRB propaganda and to tell the people why they should support the Sultan's government. The Brunei government's Chief Information Officer, Pehin H.M. Salleh, also took part, urging the people to unite and to co-operate to defend Brunei's peace and prosperity.¹⁰⁸

In March 1976, four political detainees who were released after about ten years in prison had openly condemned Azahari for not keeping his 'promises'.¹⁰⁹ In February 1978, a further release of four former rebels who had spent fifteen years in prison warned everyone in the state to steer clear of any PRB supporters who should not and could not be trusted.¹¹⁰ Support for the PRB had also gradually dwindled as the standard of living in Brunei improved and as former supporters of the party had been rehabilitated, most being given posts in government service.¹¹¹ In his 1976 New Year's

¹⁰⁵ FCO24/2089, Internal Security in Brunei, 1975.

¹⁰⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 25 October 1975.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1975.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1975.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6 March 1976.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 February 1978.

¹¹¹ Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of a Small State', p. 89.

message, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah issued a warning that no mercy would be shown to traitors whether working from inside or outside the State.¹¹²

Therefore, the change of attitudes of both Malaysia and Indonesia towards Brunei and the declining popularity of the PRB following the loss of support from the Malaysian government and the people of Brunei were indeed a significant development, especially at a time when Britain wanted to relinquish its remaining responsibilities towards Brunei. The change of attitude of both Malaysia and Indonesia and the demise of the PRB had reduced the Sultan and Sir Omar's tension over Brunei's security and created an encouraging atmosphere for Britain and Brunei to finalise an agreement in 1979. According to a news analyst, a key 'reason behind what appeared to be a sudden change of policy by Brunei lay in the new and full appreciation of a changed atmosphere in the region towards Brunei'.¹¹³

7.5. Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, 1979

On 7 January 1979, a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Britain and Brunei was signed in Bandar Seri Begawan to effectuate Brunei's full independence.¹¹⁴ Under the treaty, Brunei was to assume full responsibility as a sovereign and independent state after the end of 1983, five years after the signing of the agreement. However, in May 1983 it was officially announced in Brunei that the actual date of independence would be 1 January 1984.¹¹⁵ Since Brunei would resume control of its external affairs and defence from Britain after 1983, the Brunei government sought British assistance during the five-year period in those fields. Article 2 of the Agreement was central to these matters and read as follows:

¹¹² *New Straits Times*, 3 January 1976.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 11 September 1978.

¹¹⁴ *Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei with Exchange of Notes*. CMND 7496. London: HMSO, 1979 (hereafter cited as *Treaty of Friendship and Commerce*).

¹¹⁵ *Pelita Brunei*, Tahun 28, Bil. 22, 1 June 1983 & *Borneo Bulletin*, 28 May 1983. Pehin Aziz made the announcement at the end of his speech opening at the national Quran-reading competition held at the SMJA Secondary School Padang in Bandar Seri Begawan. He said January 1 Brunei would resume full international responsibility as a sovereign and independent state – and that meant this date will be Independent Date for Brunei.

Her Majesty's Government shall, until the Government of the State of Brunei can make alternative arrangements, and in such manner as shall in no way affect the sole responsibility of the Government of the State of Brunei for the external relations of the State, give sympathetic consideration to any specific request by the Government of the State of Brunei for diplomatic or consular assistance in the conduct of those relations and in particular Her Majesty's Government shall, in appropriate cases, if the Government of the State of Brunei so request:

- i. act as a channel of communication between the Government of the State of Brunei and the governments of states with which the State of Brunei is not in direct diplomatic communication, or between the Government of the State of Brunei and international organizations;
- ii. employ their good offices, as appropriate to promote the admission of the State of Brunei to any international organisation which it may wish to join;
- iii. afford protection to a citizen of the State of Brunei through their diplomatic and consular representatives in a foreign country where there is no Brunei representative;
- iv. assist with the establishment and training of the Brunei Diplomatic Service; offer advice on the printing and supply of Brunei new passports.¹¹⁶

In the field of defence HMG will at the request of the Government of the State of Brunei continue to assist the Armed Forces of the State of Brunei within the capability of the UK, in accordance with detailed arrangements to be decided, by:

- i. the loan of personnel to assist in the staffing, administration and training of those Forces;
- ii. providing advice and assistance in connection with the provision and maintenance of the equipment of those Forces;
- iii. providing assistance for training those Forces;

¹¹⁶*Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei with Exchange of Notes*. CMND 7496. London: HMSO, 1979 (hereafter cited as Treaty of Friendship and Commerce).

- iv. providing assistance in recruitment of persons for service in police and military posts in the state;
- v. providing expert advice and training for the Police Force of the State.¹¹⁷

The treaty, which was accompanied by Five Exchanges of Notes, terminated the special relationship between Britain and Brunei as well as all other agreements and arrangements inconsistent with the assumption of full international responsibility. The exchanges of notes covered the following issues: the termination of the special treaty relationship, assistance to the Brunei Armed Forces and training facilities for British Forces, questions of nationality, assistance in judicial matters and assistance on the establishment of diplomatic services.

Britain also continued to station a battalion of Gurkhas in Brunei for five years from the date of signature of their letter of 31 December 1978. In this regard, the British government delayed the withdrawal of the British Gurkha battalion in Brunei from 1976 (as suggested earlier by Lord Goronwy-Roberts when he informed the Sultan on 27 November 1974) to 1983. The battalion would remain in Brunei on the same basis as formerly, that is the Gurkhas would be directly answerable to the British government and the Sultan would continue to pay for its upkeep. Britain would retain the right to withdraw the battalion to deal with contingencies elsewhere if this proved necessary.¹¹⁸

The decision to continue stationing the Gurkha battalion in Brunei was believed to stem from the British concern that Sir Omar might withdraw Brunei's sterling reserve from London. If the Sultan suddenly decided to pull out nearly £400 million from London¹¹⁹, the ailing British economy would suffer even more.¹²⁰ Moreover, Brunei had remained faithful to British economic management of its resources, despite successive devaluation of the British pound that entailed a depreciation of Brunei's reserve.¹²¹ In 1976, when the sterling depreciated, Brunei did not end or transfer or

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ FO93/214/1A, Sultan of Brunei to Lord Goronwy-Roberts, 28 September 1978.

¹¹⁹ £400 million in 1982 was approximately £1,228 million at 2005 prices.

¹²⁰ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 380.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 380.

withdraw or diversify its reserves.¹²² However, Brunei and British sources continued to maintain that Brunei's investments in Britain 'were not being used as a lever to retain the Gurkhas in the state'.¹²³

Furthermore, the retention of the British Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate would help the British government to keep the Gurkhas without incurring costs. From the Ministry of Defence's point of view, given that the Sultan paid for the battalion, there would be neither resource cost in keeping it, nor resource gain (in terms of relieving over-stretch) in removing it.¹²⁴ The battalion would also be available for use in the rapid reinforcement of Hong Kong.¹²⁵ In June 1979, about 200 Brunei-based Gurkha troops were sent to Hong Kong to help strengthen British forces there (to stem the wave of illegal immigrants pouring in across the Chinese border).¹²⁶ In January 1980, the Brunei-based Gurkha troops were again assisting Hong Kong in its efforts to control the influx of illegal Chinese and Vietnamese refugees. This was in accordance with the provisions of Brunei's treaty with the British government, where Brunei agreed to the loan of two companies from the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles to serve in Hong Kong for three months from January.¹²⁷

7.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the coming of the Labour Party to power in October 1974 caused anxiety to Sir Omar and the Sultan as the Labour government had decided to end its agreement with Brunei and withdraw its Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate. The Sultan and Sir Omar did not agree to Britain's decision as they were still not confident over Brunei's security. This study has shown that Malaysia's continuous hostile attitude towards Brunei was the main reason why the Sultan and Sir Omar were not confident over establishing independence. In this chapter it has been shown that Indonesia's annexation of East Timor and Malaysia's support of Indonesia's act of aggression and

¹²² *Borneo Bulletin*, 3 January 1976.

¹²³ Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p.380.

¹²⁴ FCO24/1688, H.J. Blanks to Hickman, 28 December 1973.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 28 December 1973.

¹²⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 23 June 1979.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12 January 1980.

its comparison of Brunei's status with East Timor made Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Sir Omar apprehensive about the future of Brunei.

However, the Indonesian and Malaysian changes of policy towards Brunei in 1976 reduced the Sultanate's tension over its security. In that year, the Indonesian government spelled out its friendly policy toward Brunei in order to downplay world condemnation of its annexation of East Timor in 1975, its controversial 1969 Act of Free Choice of West Irian and its confrontational policy toward Malaysia between 1963 and 1966. Furthermore, the Indonesian government changed its policy towards Brunei as it did not want a radical regime to replace the rule of the present monarch which in turn would affect the stability of the region.

The untimely death of Tun Abdul Razak in January 1976 and the coming of Hussien Onn as Prime Minister of Malaysia--who preferred a friendly policy towards Brunei than the aggressive policy of the former premier--minimised the tension between the Brunei and Malaysian governments. British pressure and persuasion also contributed to the change of policy of Hussien Onn towards Brunei. Moreover, the Malaysian government wanted to uphold ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia and the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord which contemplated peace and security in the region. Furthermore, the PRB lost its credibility after the Malaysian government ceased its support of the party and after a split occurred in its leadership.

This chapter also showed that the sudden change of policy of the Malaysian and Indonesian governments and the fall of the PRB lessened the Sultan and Sir Omar's tension toward the security of Brunei and created a favourable atmosphere for the successful conclusion of the 1979 Agreement between the British and Brunei governments. By the 1979 Agreement, Brunei would become independent at the end of 1983. The five-year transition period provided under the agreement was indeed significant not only in preparing the Sultanate in its external affairs but also in strengthening its internal and external security in the wake of Brunei's independence. The next chapter will look into this period in depth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Preparations Towards Independence:

1979 – 1983

8.1. Introduction

Between 1906 and 1971, Brunei's internal and external security had been fully safeguarded by the British. However, between 1971 and 1983 Britain was only consultatively responsible over Brunei's external security and after 1983 Brunei had to handle its external security on its own. Between 1963 and 1975, the source of Brunei's insecurity came largely from Malaysia, Indonesia and the PRB. From 1976 onwards the tensions between Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia began to ease as Indonesia and Malaysia changed their policy towards Brunei from an aggressive to a friendly one.

This chapter will show that after the signing of the 1979 Agreement, Brunei took significant steps by making more contacts with Malaysia and Indonesia in order to re-establish and strengthen its relations with them. Although the personal antagonism between Tunku Abdul Rahman, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Sir Omar arose in the process of Brunei re-establishing its relations with Malaysia, this did not stop Brunei from strengthening its relations with Malaysia.

This chapter will also show that apart from re-establishing relations with Malaysia and Indonesia, Brunei also made efforts to secure itself externally by joining regional and world organisations, namely ASEAN and the UN. This chapter will also show that as well as securing itself within regional and world organizations, Brunei incessantly re-equipped, expanded and strengthened its military in order to safeguard itself against any internal and external threats. This chapter will look into how the Sultanate expanded and strengthened its Royal Brunei Armed Forces and how it ameliorated the shortage of military personnel. One of the solutions was by retaining the Gurkha battalion in Brunei. Finally, this chapter will show that the Sultan also strengthened Brunei's security by imposing the Internal Security Enactment, by continuing Emergency Laws and by improving the social welfare of the people of Brunei.

8.2. Re-establishing relations with Malaysia and Indonesia

Since its rejection of Malaysia in 1963, Brunei had never had a steady relationship with the Malaysian government. Following Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's coronation in 1968, no official visits had been made between the two countries. In 1981, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah put an end to this by making his visit to Sabah – his first official visit to any Malaysian states.¹ Earlier in February 1979, the Malaysian Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithaudeen had visited Brunei: the first official visit since Tunku Abdul Rahman had attended Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's coronation in 1968. He personally conveyed Malaysia's congratulations to the Sultan and the government of Brunei on the signing of the independence agreement with Britain in January 1979. He also stressed the need for 'common understanding' between the two countries which could be achieved by exchange visits.²

Indeed, the exchange visits made by the leaders or the representatives of the two countries helped to enhance the relationship between Brunei and Malaysia. In July 1979 Malaysia's Prime Minister, Datuk Hussien Onn, attended Brunei's royal wedding and in March 1980, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong (the supreme ruler) of Malaysia visited Brunei.³ In July the same year, the Sultan paid a five-day visit to Malaysia and attended the installation of the Yang Di Pertuan Agong where the Sultan was the only foreign monarch present at the ceremony. The Malaysian Yang Di Pertuan Agong had already established 'polo diplomacy' with Brunei when earlier that year the Malaysian team under the newly appointed Yang Di Pertuan Agong had played the Sultan's team in Brunei.⁴ Another visit was made a year later in connection with the wedding of the Yang Di Pertuan Agong's daughter.⁵

¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 September 1981.

² *Ibid.*, 10 February 1979.

³ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1980.

⁴ Puspha Thambipillai, 'Brunei in ASEAN: the Viable Choice', in *South East Asian Affairs 1982*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982, p. 109.

⁵ Timothy Ong, 'Modern Brunei: Some Important Issues', p. 82.

In 1981, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Abdul Rahman Yakub, accompanied by his designated successor Datuk Amar Taib Mahmud, paid a visit to Brunei⁶ and the new Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Haris Salleh, attended the Sultan's 35th birthday celebration.⁷ Both the official and unofficial visits made by Brunei and Malaysia created a friendly atmosphere, which was hardly achieved after Brunei's rejection of Malaysia in 1963. The coming of Dr Mahathir Mohamad, whose foreign policy was based on diplomatic adventurism, to the office of Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1981, further ameliorated Brunei's relations with Malaysia.⁸

As a result of improved relations between Brunei and Malaysia, in January 1982 Brunei opened up a government agency office in Kuala Lumpur – the same day that the Malaysian government established a representative office in Bandar Seri Begawan.⁹ In September 1982, Brunei announced that it had offered diplomatic privileges and immunities to the Malaysian Government Agency representative, a move which was well received among diplomatic circles. In October 1982, the Sultan announced that the government had agreed to upgrade the Malaysian Government Agency to the status of Commissioners.¹⁰

To assist in Brunei's efforts to train more of its people in various skills and expertise, the Malaysian government offered the Brunei government training on numerous courses, especially in education. A one-week visit to Malaysia by Brunei's Acting Chief Minister, Pehin Aziz Umar, in January 1982 was followed by a significant three-day visit to Brunei in March by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam. The latter's visit concluded with a number of accords which centred on

⁶ Eusoff Agaki Haji Ismail, 'Brunei Darussalam: its Re-emergence as a Sovereign and Independent Malay-Muslim Sultanate (1959-1983)', p. 206.

⁷ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 September 1981.

⁸ Joseph Chinyong Liow, *The Politics of Indonesia – Malaysia Relations: One Kin, Two Nations*, London, 2005, p. 134. Tun Hussien Onn announced his stepping down as premier at the local party congress in his hometown Johore Bahru, Malaysia. He retired as the prime minister of Malaysia due to ill-health.

⁹ Brunei, Published for and on behalf of the Information Secretary, Department of State Secretariat, Brunei by Media Publishing (m) sdn.bhd. Printed by Grenier Insular sdn.bhd, No 5 Jln 51/201, Off Jln Tandang, Petaling Jaya, 1981.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 1981.

education and training where Malaysia offered its expertise.¹¹ A year earlier, a team of officials led by the Director of Education, Dato Haji Ahmad bin Haji Jumat, led an exploratory visit to Malaysia on matters regarding education.¹²

Following the withdrawal of Brunei's students from various institutions in West Malaysia in 1973, the majority of Brunei's students were sent to England and Singapore for higher education. Although much controversy had been aroused in England by the increase in fees for overseas students, education officials in Brunei stressed that this was not the reason for sending students to Malaysia. Brunei officials claimed that sending students to Malaysia would help overcome language difficulties because students going to England for higher education invariably had to undergo an intensive course in the English language to prepare them. Another factor was that life and culture in Malaysia were similar to those of Brunei and this would help the students to settle in more easily.¹³

Despite the growing ties between the Brunei and the Malaysian governments, personal antagonism between Sir Omar and Tunku Abdul Rahman, which had occurred since Brunei's rejection of Malaysia in 1963, continued. In October 1981, Tunku Abdul Rahman appeared in his weekly column *Watan*, in which he claimed that one of the reasons for Brunei not joining Malaysia was that Sir Omar's desire to become Yang Di Pertuan Agong (supreme ruler) of Malaysia had not been fulfilled.¹⁴ Sir Omar, however, rebuked the statement by saying that he would not allow prosperous Brunei to become a dependency of Malaysia¹⁵ and stressed that Brunei's decision not to join Malaysia was final.¹⁶ In 1983, once again Tunku Abdul Rahman gave the same reason for Sir Omar's rejection to join Malaysia in the Malaysian newspaper *Mingguan*

¹¹ The Malaysian Government also offered training to Brunei police officers in basic detective work (cited in *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 October 1983).

¹² *Ibid.*, 6 June 1981.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 6 June 1981.

¹⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 7 November 1981 & *Watan*, 23 October 1981.

¹⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 7 November 1981. The Bruneian Government also said that the conditions attached to a 'voluntary donation' involved in the Malaysian arrangements would have made it tantamount to tribute and because of that Brunei would have become 'a dependency and a conquered territory and servitude'.

¹⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 7 November 1981. See also *Pelita Brunei*, 11 November 1981.

Malaysia.¹⁷ Ghazali Shafie, Malaysia's Foreign Minister, on the other hand claimed that the reason Brunei did not join Malaysia was because of 'poor communication' between the Tunku and the Sultan.¹⁸ Although Brunei's efforts in re-establishing and strengthening its relations with Malaysia were hampered by these episodes, they did not stop the Brunei government from pursuing its wish to have close relations with the Malaysian government.

As well as Malaysia, Brunei was also re-establishing its relations with Indonesia. In April 1981, the Sultan made his first official visit to the republic. In their speeches, both Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Suharto spoke of strengthening socio-cultural ties and acknowledged that bilateral relations could be built on their shared cultural and linguistic traditions.¹⁹ A year later, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar Kusumatmadja, made a reciprocal visit to Brunei.²⁰ The visit was significant not only for Brunei in its efforts to re-establish and strengthen its relations with Indonesia, but also for the latter. This was because Indonesia was keen to re-establish ties with Brunei which had been suspended in 1963 (following the abortive rebellion). The Indonesian officials viewed the Sultan's visit as 'very significant in shaping a regional order based on peace, stability and harmonious relations'.²¹ Dr Mochtar Kusumatmadja assured Brunei that there would be no return to past policies, which had given rise to hostilities between Brunei and Indonesia.²² He also assured Brunei that the changes of

¹⁷ *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 October 1983. Also see *Mingguan Malaysia*, 18 September 1983.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* In 1968, a Malaysian newspaper, *Sabah Times*, reported the reason for the Sultan's refusal to join Malaysia was because of his aim to become Yang Di Pertuan Agong of Malaysia had not been met. Consequently, Sir Omar, in his broadcast over Radio Brunei as well as in the local newspaper, the *Daily Star*, stated that Brunei would never join Malaysia (cted in FCO24/222, Adair to Walker, 3 September 1968; *Daily Star*, 23 August 1968; *Straits Times*, 24 August 1968). In September 1968, Sir Omar published private letters exchanged between himself and Tunku Abdul Rahman, with the aim of contradicting Malaysia's claim that the former Sultan of Brunei had refused to join the federation because he was not offered the position of Yang Di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia (cited in FCO24/222, Adair to Walker, 3 September 1968). Subsequently, in February 1969 Tunku Abdul Rahman hinted at 'the possibility' of another revolt in Brunei when he compared Brunei with the African State of Zanzibar, where a Communist-inspired revolution in 1964 had overthrown the government just one month after the country had gained independence, forcing its sultan to flee to England; the sultan, Tunku said, was now working in a London restaurant (cited in OD39/89&FCO24/429/1, D.P. Aires to Ward, 11 April 1969).

¹⁹ *Straits Times*, 26 October 1984.

²⁰ *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 April 1981; *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), 14 August 1982.

²¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 April 1981.

²² *Ibid.*, 18 April 1981; *New Straits Times*, 14 August 1982.

government (in Indonesia) and of president and the reversal of past policies 'everything has followed from that'.²³ He further added that his government would welcome Brunei joining ASEAN.²⁴

Following the Sultan's first visit to Indonesia, Brunei lifted the restrictions that prevented Brunei citizens travelling to Indonesia.²⁵ From the early 1960s until Brunei's independence and membership of ASEAN in 1984, Bruneian passports were not valid for visits to communist countries or to Indonesia.²⁶ According to Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the foreign minister of independent Brunei, the friendship consistently offered to Brunei by President Suharto transformed relations between Brunei and Indonesia and enabled Brunei to have confidence in its independence which 'we rarely felt in the fifties and early sixties.'²⁷

8.3. Strengthening security through ASEAN and the UN

In addition to re-establishing and strengthening relations with Indonesia and Malaysia, Brunei also ventured into the possibilities of entering ASEAN and the UN in order to ensure its external security when Britain ended its military protection over Brunei.

ASEAN, which was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, until Brunei's entry into ASEAN in 1984 consisted of five countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It was formed with the aim of promoting economic co-operation and welfare of the people in the region. Even though initially political co-operation was not included in the declaration, ASEAN members were actually more involved in political co-operation than in economic and social co-operation.²⁸ On 24 February 1976, political co-operation was included at the First ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia, where ASEAN heads of government signed the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, which became the framework for ASEAN political

²³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 14 August 1982.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 August 1982.

²⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 August 1981.

²⁶ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN*, p. 230.

²⁷ Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River: Brunei Darussalam 1947 – 2000: A Memoir*, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Press, 2000, p. 169.

²⁸ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN*, p. 165.

co-operation. The summit also endorsed ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality) for South-East Asia, introduced in Kuala Lumpur on 27 November 1971, as the objective of ASEAN political co-operation. Under the ZOPFAN, ASEAN members would co-operate to safeguard South-East Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from interference of outside powers.²⁹ The First ASEAN Summit also produced the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia whereby rules of conduct for countries in South-East Asia in their relations with each other were set out. Under this treaty, they agreed to renounce threats or the use of force to settle disputes, and to resolve conflicts only through peaceful means.³⁰

From its inception in 1967, Brunei had watched with interest the development of ASEAN.³¹ The possibility of Brunei joining ASEAN had existed as early as 1978, several years before its independence and even prior to the signing of the Treaty of Friendship with Britain in 1979.³² Geographically, ASEAN is part of the Malaysian-Indonesian core area in South-East Asia. The countries in ASEAN were historically and culturally inter-related and the histories of the member states overlap considerably. Most of the ASEAN nations had at one time or another been under the domination of foreign powers. However, the most important reason for Brunei's interest in joining ASEAN was that of security. In his speech in Bangkok, Thailand in January 1984, Prince Mohamad Bolkiah stressed that Brunei's admission into ASEAN was 'guided by our political and security interests, upon which our security hinges'.³³

By joining ASEAN, Brunei could expect that it would not be threatened by its neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia. Instead both countries would be expected to take the same seat as Brunei.³⁴ By participating in ASEAN, Brunei could expect that it would be accepted and tolerated by its neighbours as an equal state. If Brunei perceived

²⁹<http://www.aseansec.org/92.htm>

³⁰Ibid.

³¹ Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River: Brunei Darussalam 1947 – 2000: A Memoir*, p. 164.

³² Ibid., p. 164.

³³ *Straits Times*, 17 January 1984.

³⁴ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN*, p. 227. A prominent political scientist from the National University of Singapore, Professor Chan Heng Chee, clearly stated that: 'The success of ASEAN is predicated upon the fact that Indonesia as the largest member is prepared to take the same seat as Singapore and Brunei. This has been the wonder of ASEAN.' (cited in Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN*, p. 226).

a threat from outside the sub-region, it could expect support and perhaps physical aid from ASEAN, and would enjoy strength from such collective support.³⁵ When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in 1978, the ASEAN members showed their commitment in opposing Vietnamese action at the UN. On 14 November 1979, the ASEAN states sponsored a UN resolution on Cambodia calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country. ASEAN also led the annual lobby at the UN condemning the continuing Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and denying the legitimacy of the Heng Samrin regime.³⁶

Brunei could also expect by joining ASEAN that disputes between member countries could be settled amicably: under the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, ASEAN members agreed to renounce the use of force to settle disputes, and to solve conflicts only through peaceful means.³⁷ Moreover, by joining ASEAN Brunei could expect no interference in its internal affairs by the members of ASEAN. Chapter I Article 2(c) of the treaty clearly upholds the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. This was what the Sultanate wished for. Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, in his speech at the ASEAN ministerial meeting in Singapore in June 1982, stated that Brunei, being a small country, 'gives great importance to the principle of non-interference'.³⁸ In the ASEAN context, any attempt by a member state to interfere in the internal affairs of another would only damage the Association's cohesion and viability.³⁹

By participating in ASEAN, Brunei could benefit from the 'ASEAN way' of diplomacy, which is based upon the Malay cultural practices of 'musjawarah' and 'mufukat', which Sukarno and the Indonesians introduced. Musjawarah and mufukat represented an approach to decision making that emphasizes consensus and consultation. The negotiations that take place in the spirit of musjawarah are 'not as

³⁵ Puspha Thambipillai, 'Brunei in ASEAN: the Viable Choice', pp. 110-111.

³⁶ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN*, pp. 184 – 5. When Vietnam invaded Cambodia and toppled Pol Pot in December 1978, Heng Samrin was appointed by Hanoi to run a puppet government.

³⁷ For details of the treaty see <http://www.aseansec.org/1217.htm>

³⁸ *Straits Times*, 7 January 1984.

³⁹ Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 140.

between opponents but as between friends and brothers.’⁴⁰ It is a consultative process that is primarily motivated by the desire to create a stable intramural environment.⁴¹ According to Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, ASEAN always ‘led to decisions by consensus and that was exactly the way we like to work. It matched our own traditional method. We certainly felt at home and were comfortable in our new regional surroundings.’⁴²

Brunei's entry into ASEAN was strongly supported by senior diplomatic circles in London.⁴³ A senior British diplomat, Kevin Burns (Head of the Foreign Office's South-East Asian Department), reportedly discussed ASEAN with the Sultan during his visit to Brunei. He was quoted as saying ‘I can go as far as we in London hope Brunei will decide to join ASEAN. But this is entirely up to His Highness and his advisers. We are confident ASEAN would welcome Brunei as a member.’⁴⁴ Lord Belstead, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who visited Brunei in 1982, said that Britain would be ‘very happy’ if Brunei joined ASEAN as ‘it would give Brunei membership of one of the strongest trading groups in the world and membership of a politically important trading group which stands at a bastion against communism from Vietnam through Cambodia’.⁴⁵

Among the ASEAN members, Brunei's entry into ASEAN was strongly supported not only by Malaysia and Indonesia but also by Singapore. Singapore was in fact the only member of ASEAN with whom Brunei had established a favourable relationship. Although strikingly different in terms of cultural and racial identity, the two states nonetheless identified with one another in terms of relative size, sense of vulnerability and sources of external threat. Brunei had political, economic and military relations with the small island-state, i.e., the relations were outside of the terms of the Anglo-Brunei Agreement of November 1971.⁴⁶ Unlike other ASEAN states which supported the PRB's struggle for Brunei's independence to the UN, Singapore did not support the PRB.

⁴⁰ Jorgenson-Dahl, *Regional Organisation and Order*, p. 166.

⁴¹ Shaun Nairne, *Explaining ASEAN*, Boulder, CO.; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002, p. 31.

⁴² Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River*, p. 167.

⁴³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 28 February 1981.

⁴⁴ *New Sunday Times*, 1 March 1981.

⁴⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 December 1982.

⁴⁶ Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, p. 249.

In terms of economy, Brunei has huge investments in Singapore.⁴⁷ The Brunei dollar is also on par with the Singapore dollar as the result of a parity agreement and the two currencies are acceptable in both states. Because of Singapore's friendly relationship with Brunei (while Malaysia and Indonesia had problems with the Sultanate), President Suharto asked Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, to convey to Brunei the fact that it would be welcome to join ASEAN. In September 1981, a one-day seminar on the five-nation group was held in Singapore. The conference was specifically organised by the Singapore Foreign Ministry to familiarise Brunei's emerging diplomats with the broad aspects of ASEAN.⁴⁸

Thailand and the Philippines also strongly supported Brunei's entry into ASEAN. In March 1981, Thai Deputy Foreign Minister, Arun Bhanupong, visited the Sultanate as he was encouraged by the fact that Brunei would be welcome to join the grouping. The Philippines, which organised the 1981 Annual Foreign Ministers' Meeting, hosted the Brunei delegation in Manila and supported its membership.⁴⁹ From the ASEAN point of view, Brunei was geographically part of the region and therefore the most logical choice of member if and when ASEAN increased its membership. Moreover, Brunei faced similar political and security issues, which were therefore compatible with the rest of ASEAN goals.⁵⁰

In order for Brunei to achieve its aim of joining ASEAN, an ASEAN section was established when the Sultanate formed the Diplomatic Service Department in 1980 that functioned as a national secretariat to facilitate Brunei's participation in the regional organisation.⁵¹ In May 1981, it was officially announced from the palace that the Sultan would be sending an observer to the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in Manila in June 1981.⁵² ASEAN leaders collectively decided to invite Brunei as an observer to this annual meeting until it became independent in 1984, at which time it could become a

⁴⁷ Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of a Small State', p. 81.

⁴⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 September 1981.

⁴⁹ Puspha Thambipillai, 'Brunei in ASEAN: the Viable Choice', p. 110.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁵¹ Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River: Brunei Darussalam 1947 – 2000: A Memoir*, p. 164.

⁵² *Borneo Bulletin*, 16 May 1981.

full member if it chose.⁵³ The significance of the occasion was underlined in a speech to the conference by Prince Mohamed Bolkiah who referred to it as 'our maiden appearance at a regional or international conference.'⁵⁴ He also noted that the Sultanate was aware that it was part of South-East Asia and could not separate itself from developments in the region and therefore Brunei was willing to be part of the grouping.⁵⁵ Brunei became an official observer in 1982.⁵⁶

However, it was only in June 1983 that Prince Mohamed Bolkiah was able to reveal officially that Brunei intended to join ASEAN. According to Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, 'We were, however, still cautiously feeling our way'.⁵⁷ In November 1983, six weeks before its independence, the Brunei government confirmed that Brunei would become the sixth member of ASEAN on 7 January 1984.⁵⁸ Prince Mohamed Bolkiah found ASEAN's straightforward record of solidarity and co-operation remarkable. In fact, immediate membership of ASEAN was Brunei's best insurance policy.⁵⁹ It served the security interests of the Sultanate because 'the five founding states would be obliged to be restrained in political intent towards their new regional partner'.⁶⁰

Apart from ASEAN, Brunei ventured into the possibilities of joining the UN. Like its entry into ASEAN, the Sultanate was interested in joining the UN mainly for security reasons. The Charter of the United Nations, which was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco after the end of the Second World War, spells out the principles of maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination principle.⁶¹

⁵³ Puspha Thambipillai, 'Brunei in ASEAN: the Viable Choice', p. 109.

⁵⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 6 June 1981.

⁵⁵ *Pelita Brunei*, 24 June 1981.

⁵⁶ Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River: Brunei Darussalam 1947 – 2000: A Memoir*, p. 164.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 164 – 165.

⁵⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 19 November 1983.

⁵⁹ Pengiran Perdana Wazir Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah, *Time and the River: Brunei Darussalam 1947 – 2000: A Memoir*, p. 165.

⁶⁰ See Bilveer Singh, 'Vulnerable Allies: Singapore-Brunei Defence Bilateralism', *Asian Defence Journal*, No. 5, 1992, p. 12.

⁶¹ <http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreignpolicy/unitednation.htm>

For a small state like Brunei, the world body is the vital asset in ensuring its continuous security and survival. It is 'a global assurance policy' for Brunei.⁶² In his first address to the UN, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah noted that:

Small countries like ours want peace but we see a world where others want to settle issues by force of arms. Our only hope is to look to the moral and persuasive authority of the United Nations and its machinery for the maintenance of peace and security. We shall, of course, endeavour to build up our defences to the extent that men and resources permit, but we believe that in the world of today the collective strength of the United Nations is the ultimate hope for us small countries.⁶³

When a Brunei delegation attended the UN ASEAN Conference on Palestine held in Kuala Lumpur, it gave its support for the Palestinian cause and let it be known that it expected to be able to rely on the international community for its own future security.⁶⁴ In this event, the Brunei delegation stressed the impotence of the United Nations in the face of Israeli aggression, particularly since Brunei placed its trust and hope of its own security and existence in the ideals declared in the Charter of United Nations.⁶⁵

In September 1982, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and Brunei's Attorney General attended the 37th Assembly of United Nations at the invitation of the Malaysian Foreign Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie.⁶⁶ The aim was to take a close look at the workings of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in preparation for its forthcoming independence.⁶⁷ In 1983, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah attended the 38th United Nations General Assembly in New York. He joined the ASEAN delegation at the invitation of Singapore's Foreign Minister, Mr S. Dhanabalan. Earlier in 1981 Singapore UN had a Bruneian attached to it. Brunei finally joined the UN at the 39th General Assembly of

⁶² Puspha Thambipillai, 'Diplomacy and the Small State: Brunei Darussalam and the International System', in Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Haji (ed.), *Sumbangsih UBD: Essays on Brunei Darussalam*, Bandar Seri Begawan, Akademi Pengajian Brunei, 1992, p. 283.

⁶³ At the speech to the United Nations, on Brunei's admission in September, 1984. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Memasukan Negara Brunei Darussalam ke Pertubuhan Bangsa Bangsa Bersatu', p. 22 & <http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreignpolicy/unitednation.htm>

⁶⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 14 May 1982.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1982.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1982.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1982.

the United Nations on 21 September 1984 with the aim of securing its position within the world body.

Besides ASEAN and the UN, Brunei became a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in January 1984, which aimed to strengthen its international Islamic identity. On the day of its independence on 1 January 1984, Brunei also immediately became a member of the Commonwealth, which aims to promote international peace and order, which the Brunei government sought after.⁶⁸

8.4. Strengthening Brunei's defence organisation

In addition to joining ASEAN and the UN as a way of increasing its external security, Brunei also expanded its defence organization as a way of strengthening its internal and external security. Brunei's internal and external security is the responsibility of four distinct defence organizations: the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment (RBMR), the Royal Brunei Police, the Gurkha Reserve Unit, and the British Army Gurkha Battalion. In order to bolster Brunei's security in the wake of Brunei's independence, the Sultanate re-equipped and expanded its armed forces – the RBMR.

The Regiment, which was formed in early June 1961, was initially stationed in the Federation of Malaya where recruits underwent training common to that of army personnel. Initially, the main component was designated as the Task Force, but to allow expansion and future roles this was reorganised as the First Battalion, RBMR, in March 1972.⁶⁹ The tasks of the Regiment were limited to providing guards at the Sultan's palace, as well as carrying out the responsibility for the internal security of the state and of the coastal waters of Brunei.⁷⁰ The tasks carried out by the Regiment changed slightly after the end of the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation in 1966 and at the run-down of the British troops in the state. They were responsible for public order, patrolling the interior of the state and its coastal waters, and for the provision and control of helicopters for the use of the regiment and government officers.⁷¹ To carry

⁶⁸ Cited in <http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreignpolicy/commonwealth.htm>

⁶⁹ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1972.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1965. Other tasks were assisting with the manning of military landing crafts and controlling of the government helicopters.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1966.

out these commitments, one company remained stationed in Temburong, and the remainder of the Regiment was in Berakas Camp. In 1969, in addition to the tasks mentioned before, the force also operated in jungle terrain and functioned as a deterrent against external aggression.⁷²

In 1970, the RBMR continued to expand in order to carry out more efficiently its primary roles of deterring outside aggression and supporting the police in preserving order. In 1971, the RBMR held a greater responsibility, as under the amended agreement of 1971 Britain relinquished its responsibility over Brunei's internal security. Under the 1971 Agreement, it became the responsibility of the Brunei government 'to raise, equip and maintain forces sufficient for the preservation of internal public order and to be the first line of external defence'.⁷³ Since internal security had been passed to the Brunei government, the latter maintained its efforts to increase and equip its forces in order to safeguard its internal security. Under the 1971 Agreement Britain would not be automatically responsible for Brunei's defence and this led the Sultanate to expand the role of the RBMR to include both external and internal defence, instead of concentrating solely on the internal role.

Brunei's spending on defence also increased considerably from year to year. In 1962, Brunei's defence budget was only about \$2,000,000 but in 1963 (at the outset of the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation) the defence budget was \$8,000,000.⁷⁴ At the run-down of Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from the region, Brunei's defence spending increased from \$8,000,000 in 1963 to \$19,000,000 in 1966.⁷⁵ From 1966 onwards, because of uncertainty over the maintenance of the British military presence in the Sultanate, the latter's spending on defence had increased.⁷⁶ In 1967, the defence

⁷² Ibid., 1969.

⁷³ *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23 November 1971, Cmnd. 4932, London, HMSO, 1972. Also in FCO58/6814, *Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Highness the Sultan of Brunei, Amending the Agreement of 29 September 1959*.

⁷⁴ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1963.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1966.

⁷⁶ Tim Huxley, *Brunei Defence Policy and Military Expenditure*, Canberra, Australia National University, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 166, 1988, pp. 13 – 14; Tim Huxley, 'Brunei: Defending a Mini-State', Chin Kin Wah (ed.), *Defence Spending in*

budget had risen from \$17,967,613⁷⁷ to \$30,117,209 in 1971.⁷⁸ After the Labour government announced its decision to revise its agreement with Brunei and to withdraw its Gurkha battalion from the Sultanate in 1976, the Brunei government spent nearly \$100 million⁷⁹ whilst for the year 1979 the RBMR received \$374 million and in 1980 it received \$288 million. According to Tim Huxley 'in terms of military expenditure per capita, the Sultanate was outspending its future ASEAN associates even in the mid-1960s'.⁸⁰

A considerable proportion of the defence budget was actually used to acquire sophisticated weapons and artilleries. The Regiment, which was established in 1961, acquired a flotilla based at Muara and an air wing of helicopters. The *Pahlawan*, flagship of the flotilla in the early 1970s, was in her time the fastest warship afloat. The flotilla also boasted a troop-carrying hovercraft. In 1978, Brunei ordered a battery of *Rapier-Blindfire* surface-to-air missiles. New patrol boats ordered in 1979 were fitted with French Exocet missiles. In the same year, six Bo 105C-armed helicopters were ordered.⁸¹ In early 1981, the government ordered three Rotork 12.6m patrol boats, SF260 armed training aircraft and three Bell 212 helicopters.⁸² A squadron of British-made Scorpion tanks provided extra punch on land. The armed forces also deployed a highly sophisticated and advanced tactical communications system.⁸³

By 1983, Brunei's forces were well-equipped and able to deal with emergencies on the oilfield and to respond to a threat of sabotage or piratical attack at sea. On land they could respond to a cross-border incursion or domestic insurrection.⁸⁴ According to the Deputy Commander of the RBMR, Colonel Pehin Mohamad Daud, when Britain gave up its responsibility for Brunei's defence Brunei would be 'as well equipped as any

Southeast Asia, Pasir Panjang, Singapore, Regional Strategic Studies Programme, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987, p. 244.

⁷⁷ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1967.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1971.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1975.

⁸⁰ Tim Huxley, *Brunei Defence Policy and Military Expenditure*, p. 1; Tim Huxley, 'Brunei: Defending a Mini-State', p. 224.

⁸¹ See Table 4 in Tim Huxley, *Brunei Defence Policy and Military Expenditure*, p.32; Tim Huxley, 'Brunei: Defending a Mini-State', p. 232.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁸³ *Far Eastern Economic Review Asia 1980 Yearbook*, p. 145.

⁸⁴ Saunders (2nd ed.), *A History of Brunei*, London, p. 167.

army in this neighbouring region. The only danger is if we equip ourselves too much, we could land ourselves with problems'.⁸⁵ Therefore it could be concluded that money is not a problem in wealthy Brunei, 'with its per capita income the highest of any country east of the Arabian Gulf',⁸⁶ however lacking manpower is.

As mentioned earlier, Brunei's small population was the stumbling block for it to compete with other countries in terms of military personnel. It was also a reason for Brunei acquiring sophisticated weapons. As Brunei did not have a sufficiently large population to set up sizeable armed forces, it had to turn to technology to compensate for the lack of manpower. From 1961 to 1962, the strength of the army was only about 400. At the run-down of the British forces from the Far East in 1966, the total strength of the army was about 500.⁸⁷ In 1970, for the first time, the strength of the army reached 1,000 and because of the shortage of personnel, in 1965 the Brunei government requested the British government to provide seconded officers and NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers). The Brunei government also requested that the British government provide seconded officers and NCOs; the Malaysian government ceased to provide officers and NCOs training to the regiment, partly because of the increased demands made on their personnel as a result of the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation in 1963⁸⁸ and partly because the Malaysian government wanted to teach Brunei a lesson for not entering Malaysia. In fact, the armed forces relied heavily on British officers on secondment from the British army or hired on contract. In 1981, their numbers were close to 200, but a policy of Bruneization brought this down to about 150 by independence and to around eighty in 1989.⁸⁹

In order to ameliorate the shortage of military personnel, on 1 January 1979, the Brunei government formed a Young Soldiers Company with an intake of thirty-one recruits for the three-year course.⁹⁰ In 1981, the Brunei government formed the RBMR Women's Company. However, the intake was small and the Women's Company only

⁸⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 June 1981.

⁸⁶ Shuhud Said, 'The Royal Brunei Armed Forces – Money Cannot Buy Men', *Asian Defence Journal*, January 1988, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Brunei Government/State of Brunei, *Annual Report*, 1966.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 1965.

⁸⁹ Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast-Asian Islamic Sultanate*, p. 142.

⁹⁰ Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of a Small State', p. 90.

carries out non-combat duties. The uses of arms in the training are purely for self-defence purpose.⁹¹ Furthermore, the Sultan independently recruited a Gurkha Reserve Unit which guarded the palace and government installations. This unit was in fact one of the distinct organizations that were responsible for Brunei's internal security. The Gurkha Reserve Unit is directly under the command of the Sultan. Its 900 or so men had been discreetly recruited, mainly from among retiring British army Gurkhas and officers. The unit functioned primarily as a praetorian guard that protected the Sultan against any internal or external threat that might arise.⁹²

A further solution to ameliorate the shortage of military personnel was to retain the Gurkha battalion in Brunei. The Gurkha battalion was another distinct defence organization that was responsible for Brunei's internal and external security. In April 1968, when Britain decided to withdraw its forces from the Far East, the Sultan agreed to pay the full cost of maintaining the Gurkha Army in Brunei of about £1,000,000 a year.⁹³ Since its stationing in the Sultanate in 1963, the Brunei government had been voluntarily paying half of the cost of maintaining the battalion.⁹⁴ The Sultan paid £600,000 directly to the British government. Moreover, the Brunei government provided barracks at Seria, petrol, oil and lubricants, fuel, light and water, together with various other services to the British government free of charge, making a total saving of about £180,000 per annum.⁹⁵

The Gurkha battalion acted as a deterrent against any external attacks. It also acted as reinforcement to local security forces in maintaining general security within the state with special emphasis on the protection of oil and gas installations in Belait and Seria. The Gurkhas were in addition guarding the hangar that housed the RBMR's 748 aircraft at the airport and Berakas Camp.⁹⁶ A paper presented in 1982 by the Deputy Commander of the RBMR, Col. Mohamed, at a seminar in Honolulu spelled out that 'a threat could develop along one of three main lines, or a combination of them':

- a. external attack, presumably aimed at taking control of the country's oil wells;

⁹¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 June 1981.

⁹² <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9181.html>

⁹³ FCO24/236, A.T. Lindsay to I.K.C. Ellison, 9 May 1968.

⁹⁴ WO32/21069, Henn's Minutes to the War Office, April 1968.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, April 1968.

⁹⁶ *Borneo Bulletin*, 12 August 1978.

- b. guerilla activity aimed at overthrowing the government and backed by an external power; and finally
- c. terrorist activity involving the seizure of aircraft or vital installations like oil rigs or other 'soft' objectives as a political gesture.⁹⁷

However, the British government initially refused to retain the Gurkha battalion in Brunei as it was concerned that the battalion might find itself called upon to assist the Sultan in another popular uprising in Brunei.⁹⁸ Eventually, however, Britain agreed to let the Ghurkas remain in the Sultanate as the British were reportedly concerned that Brunei might end the agreement under which the Royal Dutch Shell Group jointly exploited the Sultanate's resources.⁹⁹

Since 1975, the Brunei government has had a 50–50 shareholding with the Royal Dutch Shell Group. The Brunei government in the *Borneo Bulletin* dated 7 May 1982, however, strongly denied the report which was made by the international news agency *Reuters* and stated that the agreement had no relation whatsoever directly or indirectly to defence talks between Brunei and Britain.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, in May 1982, a deal was signed between the Brunei government and Jasra Jackson Private Limited, which was 25 per cent a Bruneian Company and 75 per cent owned by a United States firm called Jackson Exploration Incorporated where some 700,000 acres had been granted.¹⁰¹

Britain was also reportedly concerned that the Sultan might decide to pull out nearly £400 million of Brunei's investment managed by the Crown Agents from London. As mentioned previously, if the Sultan did decide to withdraw these investments, Britain's economy was bound to suffer even more.¹⁰² Moreover, Brunei had been faithful to the Crown Agents in spite of successive devaluations of the sterling pound that entailed depreciation of Bruneian reserves. In 1976, when the sterling depreciated, Brunei did

⁹⁷ Irvine Cohen, 'Defending the Abode of Peace', *Defence Minister and Chief of Staff*, No. 1 (1986), p. 21.

⁹⁸ See Dinah Lee, FEER, 2 June 1978, p. 10-12; A.J. Crosbie, 'Brunei: the Constraints on a small state', Southeast Asian Affairs 1978, Singapore: ISEAS, 1978, p. 78 and M. Leifer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', pp. 246-247 and Menon, 'Negara Brunei Darussalam from Protectorate to Statehood', 228-9.

⁹⁹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 April 1978.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 May 1982.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5 June 1982.

¹⁰² £400 million in 1982 was approximately £1,228 million at 2005 prices.

not end or transfer or withdraw or diversify its reserves, although Brunei lost money through this depreciation.¹⁰³

The Shell Company, which had provided the garrison accommodation in Seria, had made it plain that they wished the Gurkha battalion to remain there as they believed the presence of the battalion underwrote the security of their personnel and installations since the oil refinery was under British control in Southeast Asia.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the British Ministry of Defence was aware that the Gurkha presence provided good experience for nearly 200 British officers and NCOs, as Brunei had an excellent jungle training school.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the fact that the Sultanate continued to pay for the upkeep of the battalion in Brunei was another important factor in Britain's decision to allow the Sultan to retain the Gurkha battalion, as that would reduce the cost of deploying the Gurkhas to Hong Kong in times of emergency there.

Nevertheless, the Sultan insisted that the Gurkha battalion should pass under his command on the coming of independence. The British government, however, rejected his request, as it did not want its forces to be used to suppress an insurgency in Brunei or to confront a cross-border incursion without British consent.¹⁰⁶ As a result of Britain's refusal to allow the battalion to come under the Sultan's command, British relations with Brunei became strained. The Sultan, who was disappointed with Britain's decision, forced the departure of the British High Commissioner, Arthur Watson, in April 1983.¹⁰⁷ When the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) world radio service speculated that Arthur Watson had clashed with the Sultan, Radio Television Brunei ceased relaying the BBC.¹⁰⁸ Further to this, in July Brunei suddenly withdrew the management of its huge investment portfolio from Crown Agents.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 3 January 1976.

¹⁰⁴ FCO24/1688, H.J. Blanks to Hickman, 28 December 1973.

¹⁰⁵ 'Who calls the shots?', *FEER*, 5 May 1983, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ Saunders (2nd), *A History of Brunei*, p. 173 & Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast-Asian Islamic Sultanate*, pp. 61 – 62.

¹⁰⁷ Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast Asian Islamic State*, pp. 61 – 62.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61 – 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Brunei 1983 – 4*, Published for and on behalf of the Information Secretary, Department of State Secretariat, Brunei by Media Publishing (m) sdn.bhd. Printed by Grenier Insular sdn.bhd, No 5 Jln 51/201, Off Jln Tandang, Petaling Jaya, 1984.

Although Brunei had begun diversifying the management of its finances in 1978, the sudden withdrawal showed that there was tension between Brunei and the British government.¹¹⁰ The departure of British financial officer Pehin Dato John Lee, a strong supporter of the Crown Agents, also indicated the strained relationship between Brunei and Britain. However, according to V.G. Kulkarni, 'the action appears to have been prompted by nationalistic aspirations as well as desire to further internationalise the handling of its huge foreign reserves'.¹¹¹ Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz, Minister of Education and Health of independent Brunei explained that the move was made simply because Brunei wanted to diversify the handling of its investments and to get banks that would work with young Bruneians.¹¹²

The Brunei government transferred its entire investment portfolio to the newly created Brunei Investment Agency. Two US banks (Morgan Guaranty Trust and Citibank), two Japanese security firms (Nomura and Daiwa), and two British firms had been appointed as advisers to the Brunei Investment Agency.¹¹³ Morgan Guaranty Trust was established in 1846 as New York Guaranty and Indemnity Company¹¹⁴ whereas Citibank was founded in 1812 also in New York.¹¹⁵ The Nomura Securities Company on the other hand was established as a spin-off from Securities Dept. of Osaka Nomura Bank Co., Ltd. on 25 December 1925¹¹⁶ whereas Daiwa began operations as Fujimoto Bill Broker in 1902.¹¹⁷

Eventually, however, the Sultan agreed that the battalion would come under British command and not his own. Subsequently, in September 1983, Britain entered into a defence agreement with Brunei. Under the new agreement the Gurkha battalion would be answerable directly to the British government, not the Sultan. The Sultan would continue to pay for its upkeep in Brunei,¹¹⁸ but it would be withdrawn from Brunei if

¹¹⁰ Saunders (2nd ed.), *A History of Brunei*, p. 173 & Leake, *Brunei: The Modern Southeast-Asian Islamic Sultanate*, p. 62.

¹¹¹ Kulkarni, 'ASEAN's Sixth Member', p. 30.

¹¹² *Evening Post*, 3 January 1984.

¹¹³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 15 September 1984.

¹¹⁴ <http://www.smokershistory.com/MorganGT.html>

¹¹⁵ http://www.citibank.com/hungary/homepage/acitibankrol/tortenet_e.htm

¹¹⁶ <http://www.nomuraholdings.com/company/group/holdings/history.html>

¹¹⁷ http://www.daiwa.jp/ir/english/corporate/corporate_06.cfm

¹¹⁸ *Borneo Bulletin*, 1 October 1983.

hostilities broke out with neighbouring states. The battalion would additionally be called for use in Hong Kong if an emergency broke out there.¹¹⁹ The agreement also covered the continued presence of seconded British officers and NCOs in technical and advisory roles within the RBAF.¹²⁰ It was an open-ended agreement, but the situation could be reviewed after five years if either party so desired.

Apart from strengthening its defence organizations by re-equipping and expanding its forces, Brunei also established military relations with Singapore in order to bolster Brunei's security. When the Malaysian government denied Singapore's use of Malaysia's military in particular,¹²¹ Singapore looked to Brunei. Following visits by Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, to Brunei in the 1960s and 1970s, an agreement in principle was reportedly reached between Brunei and Singapore. Brunei opened its jungle-training facility in Temburong to Singapore in 1977¹²² where the Singaporean troops trained on a regular basis. In the same year, a company of about 110 men carried out basic jungle warfare training in the Temburong District as the first phase. As mentioned before, Temburong is an area crucial to Brunei's security as it is separated by the main part of the Sultanate – Limbang – a territory disputed between Brunei and Malaysia since 1963. In 1983, a new SAF training camp was officially opened at Lakiun, also in Temburong.¹²³

Singapore in return accepted Bruneian officers and soldiers for training in various military establishments.¹²⁴ In September 1983, the SAF began joint signal exercises with the RBMR for the first time¹²⁵ and in November 1983 SAF infantry companies took part in the RBMR battalion exercises.¹²⁶ Singapore additionally supplied Brunei with some of their military ordinance, for example the spares and bombs for the heavy

¹¹⁹ Saunders (2nd ed.), *A History of Brunei*, p. 173.

¹²⁰ M. Cleary, & Shuang Yann Wong, *Oil, Economic Development, and Diversification in Brunei Darussalam*, p. 31.

¹²¹ Leifer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', p. 249.

¹²² *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 October 1983.

¹²³ Lee Kuan Yew stated the significance of Lakiun by saying that 'the jungle training school we have here is the most valuable single facility which will be difficult to duplicate elsewhere' (cited in *Straits Times*, 22 August 1986).

¹²⁴ *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 June 1981. See also *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 October 1983.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24 September 1983.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24 September 1983.

mortars used by the RBMR in place of the British 81-mm Mortar.¹²⁷ Singapore also built fast patrol craft for the Sultanate.¹²⁸ In the 1970s, Singapore's Vosper Yard supplied the RBMR with fast attack and coastal patrol craft.¹²⁹

As a result of Singapore's close relationship with Brunei, Malaysia became suspicious of Singapore. Indeed a number of Malaysian organizations, for example United Malays National Organization (UMNO), had been publicly critical of Singapore's arrangement with Brunei to allow the SAF to carry out its training in Temburong.¹³⁰ Welcoming Brunei as the sixth member of ASEAN, the *New Straits Times*, which regularly reflects Malaysian government opinion, warned in its editorial on 9 January 1984:

Nonetheless a word of caution is in order. It would not do for any of the pre-existing ASEAN members to try to persuade the new member that its interests are specifically closer to one particular state. All ASEAN states are in it together. Centrifugal tendencies at this stage of its (ASEAN's) life will be detrimental.¹³¹

Here it was all too clear that the warning was aimed primarily at Singapore because of its close ties with the Sultanate. Indeed, Singapore's trading success with Brunei and Singapore's Prime Minister's friendly terms with the Sultan and Sir Omar had caused Malaysia to envy Singapore which also attempted to get 'a slice of the cake'.¹³²

Singapore's close relationship with Brunei did not cause suspicion only to Malaysia, but also among the Bruneians. Awang Haji Badaruddin bin Pengarah Haji Othman, the Director of Information, said the reason given for the existence of the Singapore Armed Forces warfare training camp in Brunei was that the troops did not have the necessary facilities in their own country.¹³³ According to Tim Huxley, although there was no publicised formal defence agreement between Brunei and Singapore, the close military co-operation between the two countries 'may be intended

¹²⁷ Lim Joo-Jock, 'Brunei: Prospects for Protectorate', p. 162.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 162.

¹²⁹ Tim Huxley, *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore*, St. Leonards, N.S.W., 2000, p. 219.

¹³⁰ *Straits Times*, 4, 6 & 10 September 1975.

¹³¹ *New Straits Times*, 9 January 1984.

¹³² Kulkarni, 'ASEAN's Sixth Member', p. 29.

¹³³ *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 October 1983.

at least partially as notice to Malaysia that Brunei can expect military support from Singapore if its security is seriously threatened. If conflict erupted between Singapore and Malaysia, Brunei's military links with Singapore could raise fears in Kuala Lumpur over the potential for a second front in East Malaysia.'¹³⁴

With the government already committed to spending heavily on adding steel to its defence, the Legislative Council passed an enactment to crush any internal peace threat. The government brought into force a tough Internal Security Enactment (ISE) whereby it granted much wider and clearer cover for dealing with threats to the peace of the state. It provided a wide-range measure for dealing with internal security and public order threats, including preventing detention for renewable two-year periods and subversion methods, curfews and restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles.¹³⁵

The police was also given more power of search and arrest¹³⁶ and they could order the destruction of unoccupied buildings to prevent them being used by enemies. They could additionally close roads and waterways and arrest suspects without warrants. The Chief Minister, with the approval of the Sultan, could declare any zone within this security district as a 'danger area' or a 'controlled area'.¹³⁷ The police and any other security forces would be authorised to kill if necessary to prevent anybody from entering a danger zone. Those caught trying to deliver any form of supplies to the enemy would be jailed for life.¹³⁸

The Chief Minister, with the Sultan's approval, could detain anybody regarded as a security threat for up to two years in order to restrict his movements. This preventive detention was renewable for further periods of up to two years at a time. Advisory boards appointed by the Sultan would enquire into the grounds for detention and make recommendations to him. The final decision, however, as to whether a person should be

¹³⁴Huxley, *Defending the Lion City*, p. 62. According to J.N. Mak Brunei's 'close economic and military ties with Singapore may be regarded as a similar attempt to counter Malaysian influence.' (cited in J.N. Mak, *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1975 – 1992: The Dynamics of Modernisation and Structural Change*, Canberra, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1993, p. 118).

¹³⁵ *Borneo Bulletin*, 18 June 1983.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1983.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1983.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1983.

released or detained was his alone and could not be subject to appeal in any court. The authorities would not be obliged to disclose facts or produce documents relating to preventive detention which were considered to be against the national interests.¹³⁹

The ISE, however, had not replaced the emergency laws passed at the time of the 1962 Rebellion.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the Department of Security and Intelligence (DSI) established in 1975 was disbanded and instead there was a Special Branch Section of the Royal Brunei Police Force, a section that existed before the DSI was formed.¹⁴¹ In 1975, it was reorganised into the security and intelligence service. This was as part of the defence mechanism against external interference in Brunei affairs. In November 1979, however, the Service was disbanded as relations between Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia improved and as both Malaysia and Indonesia had given their assurances that they would not support the PRB.¹⁴²

8.5. Social programmes and security

Furthermore, the Sultan bolstered Brunei's internal security by improving the social welfare of the people of Brunei. The Sultan's efforts in this domain, however, had started during the reign of his father Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III. The implementation of the National Development Plans between 1953 and 1984 was a clear reflection of the Sultan's efforts to improve the socio-economic welfare of the people of Brunei.

In the First Five-Year Development Plan (1953 – 8), the Brunei government spent \$100 million, targeted specifically on the development of education, health and infrastructure. This was indeed a departure from the spending policy of the British Residents, who were too cautious to spend from the oil revenue. Before 1950, most of the revenue from oil was put in the oil reserve fund, which in 1938 stood at

¹³⁹ Ibid., 18 June 1983.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 18 June 1983 & 16 January 1982. Also in *Asia Yearbook 1983*, Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1983, p. 120.

¹⁴¹ *Borneo Bulletin*, 27 October 1979.

¹⁴² Crosbie, 'Brunei: The Constraints of Small State', pp. 89 – 90.

\$704,428.¹⁴³ For ordinary expenditure, the government did not use revenues from oil royalty but from other sources.¹⁴⁴

For the British officials, the reserve fund was essential to back up Brunei's economy in times of emergency.¹⁴⁵ R.E. Turnbull, for example, who was the British Resident from 1934 to 1937, hardly approved any expenditure other than for the running of the country's basic administration. He was hesitant to spend for public services such as medical and health services as well as education and infrastructure which were necessary to attract commercial investment in Brunei.¹⁴⁶ The slow progress in education, for example, had a major impact on political development in Brunei, especially when the latter resumed its internal self-government in 1959 where there was a lack of local skilled workers to run the country's administration. Consequently, the Brunei government had to recruit considerable numbers of skilled workers from Malaya and Britain. This in turn had caused resentment among the locals who did mostly unskilled jobs.

The lack of social and economic development in Brunei according to Muhammad Hadi Abdullah was also one of the factors 'which encouraged the people to take up their arms against the authority whether it be the Sultan, the British or the monarchist-aristocratic group' in the 1962 Rebellion.¹⁴⁷ This was because of the people's dissatisfaction with the government's policy which could not provide social services and economic opportunities to improve their standard of living, especially in the countryside.¹⁴⁸ Consequently, in the Second Five-Year Development Plan (1962 – 6), the government specifically targeted education, housing and infrastructure and planned

¹⁴³ CO717/110(51535), Memorandum by R.E. Turnbull, 22 January 1935, para. 8. Cited in A.V.M. Horton, 'The Development of Brunei during the British Residential Era, 1906 – 1959: A Sultanate Regenerated', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1985, p. 275.

¹⁴⁴ Horton, *The British Residency in Brunei, 1906 – 1959*, Hull, University of Hull, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 6, 1984, p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ CO717/117(5153), Minute by Edward Gent, 16 March 1936 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 36).

¹⁴⁶ Between 1932 and 1952, only about 10 per cent of the Sultanate's income was spent on health, education and agriculture (cited in *ibid.*, p. 61).

¹⁴⁷ C.O. 1030/1457, Brunei Future Policy 'The Brunei Administration' (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's Political Development', p. 104).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

to achieve greater equity in income distribution as well as a national health service.¹⁴⁹ During his address to the budget session of the Legislative Council on 16 December 1963, the Sultan spoke at length on the need to improve the economic well-being of the state:

My Government has always placed in the forefront the economic development of the State and its resources, and this is a subject to which constant and unremitting attention will be given. It is the aim of my government to examine with great care every project that will conduce to the welfare of my people, and Honourable members can rest assured that no effort will be spared to translate these plans into action. Not surprisingly, this is not an easy task, as there are many problems concerning technical and professional staff, equipment and so forth, and consequently results cannot be expected overnight. There is, however, every reason to hope that continued progress will be made in implementing the development plans.¹⁵⁰

Consequently, as mentioned earlier, the Sultan narrowed the gap between the rich and the urban population and the remote villagers, as well as between the government and the people. From 1965 onwards, the people were well off and were generally satisfied with their steadily improving conditions; because of that Sir Omar felt that there should be no need for drastic reform in the political aspects of the country.¹⁵¹

According to A.R. Adair, the British High Commissioner to Brunei:

Yet it would be wrong to suggest this autocracy represents any defiance of the popular will...people by and large are happy with conditions. The regime is working for the good of the people as a whole. Certainly it is paternalistic but it is so in the best sense of the word.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ M. Cleary & Shuang Yann Wong, *Oil, Economic Development, and Diversification in Brunei Darussalam*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1994, pp. 81 – 82.

¹⁵⁰ BA/13853/1978 (SUK Series 1), Sultan's Draft Speech for 16 December 1963, approved at the Executive Council Meeting, 12 December 1963 (cited in Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain*, p. 347).

¹⁵¹ FCO15/289, Assessment of the likely political and security situation in Brunei up until the end of 1971, 'Economic Prospect' (cited in Muhammad Hadi Abdullah, 'Brunei's political Development', p. 243).

¹⁵² *Straits Times*, 8 August 1968.

Adair was convinced that the continuance of the present autocratic regime was more likely to be conducive to stability than handing over power to somewhat irresponsible politicians who might be expected to replace the present regime.¹⁵³

Royle in his correspondence to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stated that 'despite the lack of democratic institutions, the regime has spent a lot of money on development and welfare and is actively working on a further five-year development plan designed to provide further opportunities for employment'.¹⁵⁴ With the Third National Development Plan (1975 – 9) and the Fourth National Development Plan (1980 – 4), the Brunei government expanded the employment base and planned to maintain a high level of employment. It attempted to reduce income disparities, expanded education at high levels and constructed a number of rural clinics.¹⁵⁵

8.6. Conclusion

This study has shown that after the signing of the 1979 Agreement, Brunei made significant efforts in re-establishing and strengthening its relations with its neighbouring countries, Malaysia and Indonesia. This was done in order to boost its confidence before and after its independence in 1984. Its efforts in re-establishing and strengthening its relations with both countries were made easier as Malaysia and Indonesia had changed their aggressive policy towards Brunei to a friendly one. The re-establishment and strengthening of relationships via both official and unofficial visits between Brunei and the two countries were significant as they brought Brunei closer to them. Despite the personal squabbles between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Sir Omar about the latter's refusal to enter Malaysia in 1963, Brunei's efforts to re-establish its relations with Malaysia continued.

This study has also shown that Brunei made efforts to secure itself externally by entering ASEAN and the UN. Both ASEAN and the UN, which uphold peace and stability in the region and in the international arena, were the main driving force for Brunei's entry into the organisations. This study has also demonstrated that to further

¹⁵³ FCO24/429/1, Adair to Aires, 4 January 1969.

¹⁵⁴ FCO24/1684, Royle to FCO, 2 October 1973.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 85 – 6.

enhance its security Brunei strengthened and expanded its RBMR, established a Gurkha Reserve Unit and retained the Gurkha battalion, although not under the Sultan's command after its independence. It has also demonstrated that to bolster Brunei's security, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah continued to enforce the Emergency Laws and formed a tough Internal Security Enactment (ISE) to ensure the internal security of the Sultanate and the monarch. The enactment reinforced the government's powers to detain without trial, to restrict movement and to impose curfew, which had all previously been provided for in the 1962 emergency decrees following the rebellion. Additionally, the Sultan improved the socio-economic status of the people of Brunei in order to ensure continuous peace and stability in the Sultanate by introducing the National Development Plans whereby various aspects of social and economic development were outlined and implemented for the benefits of the people of Brunei.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

This study has shown that the challenges and difficulties faced by the Sultanate over its security and survival between 1950 and 1966 were as a result of Britain's long-term policy to decolonise Brunei. In the 1950s, when the British decided to merge Brunei with its Northern Borneo territories Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah), Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III showed no interest in the plan as he was apprehensive that Brunei's wealth would be invested for the development of Sarawak and North Borneo and that Brunei's status would be reduced from a protectorate to a colony. He was also apprehensive that the British plan would have an affect on his status, the Malay race and the Islamic religion. Subsequently, the Sultan promulgated a constitution which in many ways safeguarded the monarch, the monarchy, the Malay race and the Islamic religion. Since the Sultan was not interested in the British plan, it met with failure.

In 1960 however, the Malayan Prime Minister proposed the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, which would consist of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei. The Sultan, who was cautious towards the plan, preferred to study its pros and cons first before a final decision was made in July 1963. Azahari, the leader of the PRB, however, was against the Malaysian proposal from the beginning as it was contrary to his party's desire to form the NKKU, which would consist of Brunei and its former territories Sarawak and Sabah with the Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III, as constitutional monarch. As pressure for the formation of Malaysia was escalating, in December 1962 a rebellion led by the PRB broke out.

The rebellion was considered by the Sultan as a challenge to the security of the monarch and the monarchy. It came to an end when the British government, which was responsible for Brunei's defence and internal security, sent its Gurkha battalion to Brunei to defeat the rebels. The Sultan however, who failed to reach a consensus with the Malayan government over the Malaysian terms eventually decided not to join Malaysia. The Sultan refused to join Malaysia because he could not accept Malaysia's terms regarding the issues of the status of the Sultan, Brunei's revenue and the Sultan's

contribution to the federal government. There is also a suggestion that Brunei did not wish to join Malaysia as the Sultan was reluctant to relinquish Brunei's identity as a separate kingdom which the previous Sultans had striven to maintain since 1800. Another suggestion is that the Sultan might never really have wanted to join Malaysia even if the Malayan government had accepted the Sultan's terms.

Following the 1962 Rebellion and Brunei's rejection of Malaysia, the Sultan sought continued British protection to ensure the security and survival of the monarchy. This study however has shown that after Brunei's rejection of Malaysia, Britain continued its efforts to bring Brunei within the federation at least by 1965. These efforts, however, were unsuccessful as the Sultan refused to employ the Malaysian officers whom the British proposed and hoped would bring Brunei closer to Malaysia and eventually influence Brunei to enter Malaysia.

Britain's decision in 1966 to end its 1959 Agreement with Brunei posed further problems and difficulties for Brunei over its security and survival, as the British put increased pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The Sultan did not want to implement the system as it would have reduced the power of the monarch from an absolute to a constitutional one. From the beginning of his rule, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III had been too protective over his position as an absolute monarch. When the British government proposed the merger of Brunei with its former territories, Sarawak and Sabah in the 1950s, the Sultan rejected it, as he feared that if the population of Sarawak and Sabah inundated the Bruneians, his power might be taken over by the rule of the majority.

Moreover, the Sultan was well aware that the implementation of a democratic system of government would only bring Brunei into Malaysia. The Malaysian government wanted to see the implementation of a democratic system of government in Brunei as it believed that a bid to join the federation was much more likely to succeed if Brunei was ruled by an elected government than by the Sultan. Because of Britain's persistent call on the Sultan to implement the system and Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan abdicated the throne in October 1967. Nevertheless, the British contention that Brunei should implement a democratic system of government continued after Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien's abdication.

However, since the new Sultan and Sir Omar constantly rejected the implementation of the system, in 1968 Britain abandoned its attempt to urge them to do so. At the same time, the British also gave up its plan to see Brunei within the federation, as not only the Sultan was against the admission of Brunei into the federation but also the people of Brunei. Although the Sultan and Sir Omar were pleased with Britain's decision to cease urging them to implement a democratic system of government, they were not gratified by Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei in November 1970.

This study has shown that the Sultan could not accept Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, as the end of the 1959 Agreement with the Sultanate would have left the latter inadequately defended against any internal and external threats. At this time the Sultan was concerned not only over Malaysia's hostile attitude towards Brunei, but also that of Indonesia. This was because since the end of the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation in 1966, Indonesia had not indicated its policy towards Brunei. Moreover Azahari, the leader of the 1962 rebellion, was still in Indonesia where in the past he had been supported by the Indonesian government in his struggle to establish the NKKU. In addition, the Sultan was aware that Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei would cause suffering in terms of its administration, as the people of Brunei could not provide sufficient qualified officials to run the administration of the state.

This study has also shown that since Britain wanted to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan persistently tried to persuade the British government to agree to the proposals to be jointly responsible over Brunei's defence and to accept Brunei's agreement to finance the consequences of the proposals. However, none of the proposals was agreeable to the British government, as the latter was committed to ending its agreement with Brunei in 1970. The study has also shown that the Sultan was relentless in rejecting the British offer for the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Brunei as it did not involve any permanent defence commitments over the Sultanate. When Britain planned to bring Brunei within the Five-Power conference (so that the defence of Brunei could be discussed within the context of the Five-Power nations' defence of the region), Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore were

not interested in bringing Brunei into the discussion. The study has nevertheless shown that Sir Omar was actually never interested in associating with the Five-Power nations over the defence of the region, as he distrusted Malaysia.

When the Conservative Party came to power in June 1970, the Sultan and Sir Omar were content as it overturned the Labour government's decision to end its agreement with Brunei. The Conservative government was willing to continue its responsibility for Brunei's external affairs and to be consultatively responsible over the defence of the Sultanate. The Conservative government permitted the preservation of the Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate and did not insist on the implementation of a democratic system of government. Moreover, it ceased its responsibilities in advising the Sultan on the internal affairs of the state.

The BAKER party, however, was not pleased with the Conservative government's decision to overturn the Labour government's decision to end its agreement with Brunei. Subsequently, the BAKER party sought the UN's sponsorship of Brunei's independence and continued to call upon the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. This study has shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar, who refused to bring about independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei, ended the BAKER party political activities by suspending elections to the District Councils and by continuing the state of emergency in Brunei. In so doing, the Sultan and Sir Omar did not only stop the political activities of the BAKER party but also ended the plan for democracy in Brunei. This study has also demonstrated that the end of plans for democracy in Brunei were the result of Britain's inability to influence the Sultan to implement the system, the people's lack of interest in relation to democracy following the fruitless end of the 1962 Rebellion in Brunei and the lack of integrity of the party leaders in arranging their parties.

Although the Sultan and Sir Omar successfully ended the BAKER party's political activities and ceased plans for democracy in Brunei, the Sultan and Sir Omar continued to face challenges and problems over its security from Malaysia. Malaysia's involvement in the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels to Limbang caused the relationship between Brunei and Malaysia to deteriorate. In 1973, the Malaysian authorities used Azahari and the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels to divert the Sultan's attention away from

the Limbang issue and to redirect it to Brunei's independence and constitutional development in Brunei. In this study it has also been shown that the Malaysian authorities used Azahari and the escaped Bruneian ex-rebels to put pressure on the British to grant Brunei independence and implement a democratic system of government in the Sultanate. Azahari on the other hand used this opportunity to continue his struggle, which had been restrained by the Indonesian government when Suharto came to power in 1966.

The PRB's political activities in west Malaysia caused the Sultan and Sir Omar to be apprehensive as the Malaysian government did not control their activities in west Malaysia (although it had stated that it would not allow them to be involved in any political activities). This study has indicated that since the Malaysian government did not control the activities of the PRB, the Brunei government recalled its students studying in west Malaysia to Brunei for fear that the ex-rebels would influence them to oppose the Brunei government.

This study has also shown that the PRB's political activities in Limbang had the strong support of the Chief Minister of Sarawak who was aiming to push the British to grant Brunei independence and to destabilise Brunei. Although in June and July 1974 the British warned Malaysia about the activities of the PRB in Limbang, the Malaysian government did not put an end to these activities. Moreover, the PRB's political activities were supported not only by Malaysia, but also by other countries and international organizations and it was their support which eventually led the PRB to present its case at the UN in November 1975. At the UN, the PRB called upon the British to grant Brunei full independence and to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei.

The PRB's call at the UN coincided with the Labour government's decision in October 1974 to revive its 1966 policy to end its agreement with Brunei. In November 1974, following the Labour party's return to power in Britain in October 1974, it gave one year's notice for Britain's withdrawal from Brunei, which would come into effect in November 1975. The Sultan and Sir Omar could not agree to Britain's decision as they were still not confident over Brunei's security without British protection. This study has shown that Indonesia's annexation of East Timor in December 1975, Malaysia's

support of this annexation and its comparison of Brunei's situation with East Timor made the Sultan and Sir Omar apprehensive concerning the security of Brunei without British military protection.

However, the change of policy of the Malaysian government from an antagonistic to a friendly one in 1976 and the spelling out of a friendly policy by the Indonesian government towards Brunei as well as the fall of the PRB reduced the Sultan and Sir Omar's tension over the country's security and created a conducive atmosphere for the conclusion of the 1979 Agreement between the Brunei and British governments.

This study has shown that Malaysia changed its policy towards Brunei because the new prime minister of Malaysia thought that its adventurist policy towards Brunei would not make it simpler for the British to leave Brunei. The change of policy was also a consequence of British pressure and persuasion. Moreover, Malaysia wanted to defend the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord which were signed by the ASEAN countries in January 1976. Furthermore, Brunei no longer denoted a source of wealth to Malaysia, whose oil and natural resources had been verified and were being exploited. Besides, the federal government no longer faced conflict with leaders in Sarawak and Sabah who since 1963 had been leaning towards autonomy and separatism.

Indonesia on the other hand spelled out its friendly policy towards Brunei as it was apprehensive over the prospect of any kind of radical regime emerging in Brunei which sequentially would affect the stability of the region. Moreover, after the incursion of East Timor in 1975, Indonesia wanted to regain confidence from the world's communities that it was not an expansionist country.

As a result of Malaysia's change of policy towards Brunei, the PRB lost the support of the Malaysian government. After having championed the interests of democracy in Brunei and having given protection and encouragement to the PRB leaders, the Malaysian government then chose to drop the issue and seek cordial relationships with the Sultan. The Indonesian government also chose to end its support of Azahari as it had stated that there would be no recurrence of past policies. The loss of support of the Malaysian government was one of the factors which led to the demise of the PRB. The split in the PRB leadership, that is between Azahari and Zaini, was another factor

which led to the downfall of the PRB. The division in the leadership of the PRB caused its members to break up. Many also no longer supported the leaders as they thought that there was a lack of positive action in connection with their struggle. Once the Malaysian government was no longer supporting them, many returned to Brunei. The release of political detainees by the Brunei government also played an important role in undermining the PRB. Their condemnation of the PRB leaders' activities in west Malaysia and in the past also undermined the PRB.

The change of policy of Malaysia and Indonesia towards Brunei and the demise of the PRB lessened the Sultan and Sir Omar's anxiety over the security of Brunei and created a favourable atmosphere for the signing of the 1979 Agreement between Britain and Brunei. Under this agreement, Brunei would attain full independence at the end of 1983. The five-year shifting period set in the agreement allowed Brunei to step up its security both internally and externally. Brunei restored and toughened its relations with Malaysia and Indonesia and secured itself externally by joining ASEAN and the UN after it became independent in 1984. It also fortified its internal and external security by expanding and re-equipping the RBMR and by retaining the Gurkha battalion in the Sultanate. Apart from that, Brunei also improved the social-welfare of the people through the implementation of several national development plans.

Therefore in this study, Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984 is delineated; the study highlights the challenges and problems faced by the Sultans with regard to the Sultanate's security and survival as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei. As stated in the literature review, the previous authors of Brunei's history have either not mentioned this issue or only mentioned it in passing. There is therefore a significant gap in the study and analysis of Brunei's history. This study however has discussed in detail the problems and challenges that the Sultans were facing with regard to the Sultanate's security and survival between those periods of time.

The study has shown that as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultan's status was in jeopardy. This was because as a result of the decision, Britain put more pressure on the Sultan to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei. The Commonwealth Office's assertion to Sultan Omar Ali

Saifuddien and later to Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to implement a democratic system of government in Brunei posed a problem for both of them as the system could have reduced the power of the monarch. Moreover, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien considered that the faster Brunei moved towards a democratic system of government, the more likely it was to become part of Malaysia. As mentioned previously, it was not only the British who insisted that the Sultan should implement the system but also the PRB, the Malaysian government and the BAKER party. As stated earlier, the previous authors only mentioned the formation of the BAKER party without explaining its political activities, but this study has explained in detail its activities as well as the challenges and difficulties it posed to Brunei's security. As the BAKER party's political activities could have led Britain to end its remaining responsibilities towards Brunei, the Sultan and Sir Omar put an end to the BAKER party's political activities. This study has shown that the Sultan and Sir Omar's actions in suspending the Legislative and District Council elections in 1970 and 1971 respectively did not only stop the BAKER party's political activities, but also ended the plan for a democratic system of government in Brunei and delayed Brunei's independence.

This study has also shown that as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei, the Sultans faced threats over the security of the monarchy (if Britain were no longer protecting Brunei). In this regard, the Sultan and Sir Omar were concerned over Malaysia's continuous attempts to bring Brunei within the federation. As demonstrated before, the previous authors have not studied this issue and because of that there is a significant gap in the study and analysis of Brunei's history. This study however has discussed in detail Malaysia's plan to bring Brunei within the federation. It has shown that Malaysia supported the local Bruneian politicians so that they would insist on the Sultan implementing the system. This was because the Malaysian government believed that a proposal to join Malaysia was more likely to be made by an elected government in Brunei than by the Sultan. This study has also explained why the Malaysian government was conniving for the escape of Brunei's ex-rebels from the Berakas Detention Camp and the threats these ex-rebels posed to the security of the Sultanate which the previous authors have not mentioned in their studies. In addition, this study has examined in detail Brunei's claim over Limbang between 1970 and 1974

which the previous authors have only studied briefly. The study has also looked into why Brunei's claim over Limbang became an urgent matter for the Sultanate in 1973; the main reason for this was its concern over Brunei's national security.

Furthermore, the study has continued from where Muhammad Hadi and B.A. Hussainmiya left off. Both authors have studied Brunei's political development between 1950 and 1966; this study has analysed Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984, which specifically covered the problems and challenges faced by the Sultanate over its security and survival. This study has shown that the difficulties and challenges faced by the Sultanate between those periods of time were as a result of Britain's decision to end its agreement with Brunei whereby the Sultan's position as an absolute monarch came under threat, as did Brunei's security. In this regard, the Sultan and Sir Omar were concerned not only over Malaysia, which still wanted to bring Brunei within the federation, but also over Indonesia, which had not indicated its policy towards Brunei after the end of the Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation in 1966.

In addition, this study has also touched on the reign of the new Sultan – that is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah – whose rule began in October 1967. As pointed out in the literature review, no detailed studies about him (between 1967 and 1984) have been written before. However, this thesis has studied his rule in detail by highlighting the difficulties and challenges faced by Brunei between 1967 and 1984 over its security and survival. This study has made full use of the documents relevant to Brunei-British relations from the Public Record Office in London between 1966 and 1975 (which the previous authors of Brunei's history have not used). The use of these documents has raised issues which have not been stated or explained in detail by the previously mentioned authors, namely those concerning Brunei's political development between 1966 and 1984 as well as the challenges and difficulties over its security and survival.

APPENDIX I**THE PROTECTION TREATY OF 1888****BRUNEI, 1888****AGREEMENT WITH THE SULTAN OF BRUNEI: SIGNED AT BRUNEI.****SEPTEMBER 17TH 1888.**

Whereas, Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamadin, Sultan and lawful Ruler of the State of Brunei, in the Island of Borneo, has represented to Her Britannica Majesty's Government the desire of the State to be placed under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen, under the conditions hereinafter mentioned; it hereby agreed and declared as follows:

ARTICLE I

The State of Brunei shall continue to be governed and administered by the said Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamadin and his successors as an independent State, under the protection of Great Britain; but such protection shall confer no right on Her Majesty's Government to interfere with the internal administration of the State further than is herein provided.

ARTICLE II

In case any question should hereafter arise respecting the right of succession to the present or any future Ruler of Brunei, such questions shall be referred to Her Majesty's Government for decision.

ARTICLE III

The relations between the State of Brunei and all foreign States, including the States of Sarawak and North Borneo shall be conducted by Her Majesty's Government, and all communications shall be carried on exclusively through Her Majesty's Government, or in accordance with its directions; and if any indifference should arise between the Sultan of Brunei and the Government of any other State, the Sultan of Brunei agrees to abide by the decision of Her Majesty's Government, and to take all necessary measures to give effect thereto.

ARTICLE IV

Her Majesty's Government shall have the right to establish British Consular Officers in any part of the State of Brunei, who shall receive exequaturus in the name of the Sultan of Brunei. They shall enjoy what ever privileges are usually granted to Consular Officers, and they shall be entitled to hoist the British flag over their residences and public offices.

ARTICLE V

British subjects, commerce, and shipping shall, in addition to the rights, privileges, and advantages now secured to them by Treaty, be entitled to participate in any other rights, privileges and advantages, which may be enjoyed by the Subjects, commerce, and shipping of the State of Brunei.

ARTICLE VI

No cession or other alienation of any part of the territory of the State of Brunei shall be made by the Sultan to any foreign State, or the subjects or citizens thereof, without the consent of Her Majesty's Government, but this restriction shall not apply to ordinary grants or leases of land or houses to private individuals for purposes of residence, agriculture, commerce or other business.

ARTICLE VII

It is agreed that full exclusive jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over British subjects and their property in the State of Brunei, is reserved to Her Britannic Majesty, to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as Her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose.

The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the State of Brunei over foreign subjects enjoying British protection; and the said jurisdiction may likewise be exercised in cases between British or British protected subjects and the subjects of a third power, with the consent of their respective Governments.

In mixed civil cases arising between British and British protected subjects and the subjects of the Sultan, the trial shall take place in the Court of the defendant's nationality; but an officer appointed by the Government of the plaintiff's nationality shall be entitled to be present at, and to take part in, the proceedings, but shall have no voice in the decision.

ARTICLE VIII

All the provisions of existing Treaties, Conventions, and Declarations between Her Majesty the Queen and the Sultan of Brunei are hereby confirmed and maintained except in so far as any of them may conflict with the present Agreement.

In witness whereof, His Highness the said Sultan of Brunei hath hereunto attached his seal at the Palace, in the city of Brunei, on the 17th day of September, in the year of Our Lord 1888, being the 11th day of the month of Moharram, in the year 1306 of the Mohammedan era; and Sir Hugh Low, K.C.M.G., British Resident at Perak, in charge of a special Mission to His Highness the Sultan, hath, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, signed this Agreement in the presence of witnesses.

(Seal of His Highness the Sultan of Brunei.)

HUGH LOW.

Witness to the seal of His Highness the Sultan of Brunei,
(Signed in Chinese by the Datoh Temenggong Kim Swee.)

Witness to the signature of Sir Hugh Low, K.C.M.G.,

L.H. Wise,

September 17th, 1888.

APPENDIX II**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND
BRUNEI ON DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 29 DECEMBER 1959**

Whereas Agreements subsist between Her Majesty and His Highness:

And whereas His Highness has with the advice and consent of His traditional advisers and the State Council provided by Proclamation for the constitutional development of the State of Brunei, the succession to the Sultanate and for various matters connected herewith:

And whereas the aforesaid Proclamation providing for the constitution development of the State of Brunei will commence to operate on a day to be appointed by His Highness, hereinafter referred to as 'the first appointed day':

And whereas Her Majesty has heretofore had jurisdiction to make for the State of Brunei laws relating to defence and external affairs:

And whereas Her Majesty, in token of the friendship which She bears towards His highness, the subjects of His Highness and the inhabitants of the State of Brunei, has at the request of His Highness agreed that as from the first appointed day fresh arrangements shall have effect for the protection and defence of the State of Brunei:

Now, therefore, it is agreed and declared as follows:

1. This Agreement may be cited as the Brunei Agreement, 1959, and shall come into operation on the first appointed day.

2. In this Agreement- 'High Commissioner' means Her Majesty's High Commissioner in the State of Brunei, and references to the High Commissioner include any person for the time being discharging the functions of High Commissioner;

'His Highness' includes His Highness's Successors;

'Secretary of State' means one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State;

and

'the State' means the State of Brunei, Darul-Salam.

3. (1) Her Majesty shall have complete control of the external affairs of the State; and His Highness agrees that without the knowledge and consent of Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom he will not make any Treaty, enter into any

engagement, deal in or correspond on political matters with, or send envoys to, any other State. His Highness further agrees that he will ensure that such legislative and executive action as in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government shall be necessary for the purpose of Her Majesty's exercise of Her control of the external affairs of the State shall be taken within the State.

(2) Her Majesty shall have complete control of the defence of the State, and agrees at all times to protect the State and the Government thereof and to the utmost of her power to take whatever measures may be necessary for the defence of the State; and His Highness agrees that for these purposes he will ensure that such legislative and executive action as in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government shall be necessary for the purposes of the defence of the State and the Government thereof (which expression in this Article includes defence against any grave menace to the peace or tranquility of the State) shall be taken within the State; and His Highness further agrees that for the aforesaid Her Majesty's Forces and persons authorized on behalf of Her Majesty shall at all times allowed to have free access to the State.

(3) Subject as aforesaid, His Highness agrees that Her Majesty shall continue to enjoy jurisdiction to make for the State laws relating to defence and external affairs.

(4) Her Majesty agrees that She will keep His Highness informed of any action taken or proposed to be taken by Her in pursuance of this Article.

(5)(a) For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Article relating to defence against any grave internal menace to the peace or tranquility of the State, Her Majesty and His Highness agree to constitute a Standing Advisory Council, consisting of representatives of Her Majesty and of the Government of the State, which shall consult as necessary on matters regarding such defence. Her Majesty agrees that no measures in exercise of the right of access to the State given by paragraph (2) of this Article shall be taken for the purposes of such defence without prior consultation with the Standing Advisory Council except when there exists a state of emergency of such a nature as to make such prior consultation clearly impracticable, in which case, the Standing Advisory Council shall be consulted as soon as possible after the measures have been taken.

(b) For the purpose of this paragraph, the expression 'state of emergency' means situation in which there is compelling evidence of a grave internal menace to the peace or tranquility of the State.

4. (1) His Highness agrees to receive, and provide a suitable residence for, a High Commissioner to advise on all matters connected with the government of the State other than matters relating to the Muslim religion and the Custom of the Malays as practised in the State, and agrees to accept the advice of the High Commissioner.
 (2) Nothing in this Article shall in any way prejudice the right of His Highness to address Her Majesty through a Secretary of State if His Highness so desires.
 (3) The High Commissioner shall have such other functions (if any) as may be conferred on him by any law in force in the State.
5. The cost of the High Commissioner and his establishment as from time to time agreed between His Highness and the Secretary of State shall be borne by the State and shall be a charge on the revenues of the State.
6. His Highness shall be consulted before any person whom it is proposed to send as High Commissioner is appointed.
7. All persons of whatever race in the same grade in the service of the State shall, subject to the terms and conditions of their employment, be treated impartially.
8. His Highness desires and Her Majesty agrees that it shall be a particular charge upon the Governor of the State to provide for and to encourage the education and training of the local inhabitants of the State so as to fit them to take a full share in the economic progress, social welfare and government of the State.
9. (1) The Agreement signed in Brunei on the 3rd day of December, 1905, and the 2nd day of January, 1906, between His Majesty's Government within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Highness Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamuddin ibni Almarhum Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, the Sultan of the State of Brunei for Himself, His Heirs and Successors, is hereby revoked.
 (2) All other Treaties and Agreements subsisting immediately before the commencement of this Agreement shall continue in force save in so far as they are inconsistent with this Agreement or in so far as they contain provisions relating to the succession to the Sultanate of Brunei.

10. This Agreement is made and expressed in both the English and the Malay languages; but, for the purposes of interpretation, regard shall be had only to the English version.

In witness whereof His Excellency Sir Robert Heatlie Scott, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Commissioner General for the United Kingdom in South East Asia, has hereunder set his hand and seal for and on behalf of Her Majesty and His Highness Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddin, Sovereign and Head of the Most Esteemed Family Order, the Most Honourable Order of the Crown of Brunei, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, ibni Almarhum Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam, Sultan of the State of Brunei, has hereunto set His hand and seal.

[Here follow the signatures and seals]

APPENDIX III

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND HIS HIGHNESS THE SULTAN OF BRUNEI AMENDING THE AGREEMENT OF 29 SEPTEMBER 1959

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, (hereinafter referred to as “Her Majesty”), represented by Mr, Anthony Henry Fanshawe Royle, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and His Highness Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu’izzaddin Waddaullah, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Esteemed Family Order, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Illustrious Order of Laila Jasa Keberanian Laila Terbilang , Sovereign and Chief of the Most Gallant Order of Pahlawan Negara Brunei Sovereign and Chief of the Most Blessed Order of Paduka Setia Negara Brunei, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Distinguished Order of Paduka Setia Negara Brunei, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Distinguished Order of Paduka Seri Laila Jasa, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Honourable Order of the Crown of Brunei, Sovereign and Chief of the Most Faithful Order of Perwira Negara Brunei, Honorary Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, the Most Esteemed Family Order (Kelantan), The Most Esteemed Family Order (Johore), Ibni Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa’adul Khairi Waddin, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of the State and Territory of Brunei Darul Salam, and All Its Dependencies, (hereinafter referred to as “His Highness”);

Having regard to the Agreements which subsist between Her Majesty and His Highness and in particular the Agreement signed at Bandar Seri Begawan on 29th of September, 1959 (hereafter referred to as “the 1959 Agreement”);

Considering it appropriate that the existing close and special relationship between the United Kingdom and the State of Brunei, Darul-Salam (hereinafter referred to as “the State”) should be amended so as to reflect developments that have taken place since 1959;

Having decided to this end that Her Majesty should continue to be responsible for the external affairs of the State, and that, subject to consultation, provision for the defence and security of the State should be a task to be shared between Her Majesty and His Highness, and that the State should enjoy full internal self-government, and that the necessary amendments to the 1959 Agreement should be made;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

Article 2 of the 1959 Agreement shall be deleted and replaced by the following:

Article 2

In this Agreement-

‘British High Commissioner’ means the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in the State of Brunei and references to the British High Commissioner include any person for the time being discharging the functions of British High Commissioner;

‘His Highness’ includes His Highness’s Successors.’

ARTICLE II

At the end of the second sentence of paragraph (1) of Article 3 of the 1959 Agreement the full-stop shall be deleted and the following words added:

“and that Her Majesty shall continue to enjoy jurisdiction to make for the State laws relating to external affairs. Her Majesty agrees that She will keep His Highness informed of any action taken or proposed to be taken by Her in pursuance of this Article.”

ARTICLE III

Paragraph (2), (3), (4) and (5) of Article 3 of the 1959 shall be deleted and replaced by the following paragraphs:

“(2) To meet the essential requirements of the defence of the State:

(a) His Highness shall

(i) raise, equip and maintain forces sufficient for the preservation of internal public order and to be the first line of external defence;

(ii) provide facilities necessary for any of Her Majesty’s forces stationed in the State or training or exercising in the State with the agreement of His Highness;

(iii) enter into arrangements with Her Majesty’s Government in relation to the status and jurisdiction of Her Majesty’s forces present in the State.

(b) Her Majesty shall continue to assist His Highness within the capability of the United Kingdom, by:

(i) the loan of personnel to assist in the staffing, administration and training of the Armed Forces of His Highness;

(ii) providing expert advice on the organization of those Forces;

(iii) providing advice and assistance in connection with maintenance of the equipment of those Forces;

(iv) providing assistance for training those Forces;

(v) providing assistance in recruitment of persons for service in police and military posts in the State;

(vi) providing expert advice and training for the Police Force of the State

(3) For the purpose of the defence of the State, Her Majesty's Forces and persons authorized on behalf of Her Majesty shall at all times be allowed to have free access to the State;

(4) There shall be established a joint standing consultative body, to be called the Brunei Defence Council, which shall meet quarterly, or more frequently if occasion demands. This Council shall consist of representatives of both Her Majesty and His Highness. Her Majesty's representatives will be the British High Commissioner and, as his adviser, a British officer who will normally be the senior officer of such of Her Majesty's Forces as are stationed in the State. His Highness's representatives will be appointed at His Highness's discretion. The representatives of Her Majesty and of His Highness shall make recommendations as to the defence and security of the State to their respective governments. Twelve months from the entry into force of this Agreement the Governments of Her Majesty and of His Highness shall examine the working of the Brunei Defence Council in order to determine what changes, if any, are required to improve its effectiveness.

(5) (a) Situations which are essentially of an internal public order nature are a matter of concern only to the public security forces of His Highness.

(b) Her Majesty's Government and His Highness's Government shall consult together to determine what measures should, separately or jointly, be taken in relation to an external attack, or threat of such attack, on the State.

(c) In a situation which does not clearly fall under sub-paragraphs (a) or (b) of this paragraph there shall be consultation between the two Governments to determine to what extent the threat is externally organized or supported.

(6) Her Majesty and His Highness shall take legislative and executive action necessary for carrying out their tasks under the provisions of paragraphs (2), (3), (4), and (5) of this Article.”

ARTICLE IV

Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the 1959 Agreement shall be deleted and replaced by the following:

“Article 4

(1) Her Majesty shall appoint and His Highness shall receive a representative of Her Majesty designated as British High Commissioner. Her Majesty’s Government will propose to His Highness the name of the British High Commissioner whose appointment shall be subject to His Highness’s agreement.

(2) His Highness shall have the right to address Her Majesty through Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if His Highness so desires.”

ARTICLE V

Articles 7 and 8 of the 1959 Agreement shall be deleted.

ARTICLE VI

Subject to amendments made by the present Agreement, the 1959 Agreement shall continue in force and as amended by this Agreement, the two shall be read together as one document.

ARTICLE VII

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the signature.

ARTICLE VIII

At the request of either High Contracting Party, and after the expiry of one year from the making of the request, this Agreement shall be reviewed by the High Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE IX

This Agreement is made and expressed in both the English and Malay languages, but, for the purposes of interpretation, regard shall be had only to the English text.

APPENDIX IV
SULTAN ABDUL MOMIN'S 'WILL'
Translation

This is a Decree of His Highness the Sultan. After having consulted with the Pangeran Tumonggong and Pangeran Bendahara and Pangeran di Gadong, together with his Ministers and Officers, and with the whole of the population of Brunei, who agree to sanction the Arrangement arrived at herein, and thereby peace may come on the whole of the country.

Now concerning Limbang and other countries which still remain under the government of Brunei, they cannot be leased or given away to any other nation, but must remain under our rule and that our ancestors who may be elected Rajahs of Brunei, cannot on any account take rivers, or slaves, or private property, and in the same manner the slaves appertaining to the Sovereign cannot be made private slaves. After us to whomsoever property may belong it will remain him, rivers, followers, 'tulin' and hereditary property. And the customs of our ancestors shall be followed by those who come after us. They can on no account be changed while there is a sun and moon, in order that there shall be no complication in the country.

Written on the 6th Jamal-ah-Ahwal, 1302, in the city of Brunei.

APPENDIX V
LETTER OF CHIEF MINISTER OF BRUNEI TO THE MINISTER
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA
REGARDING LIMBANG

Your Excellency,

LIMBANG

From correspondence which has passed between His Highness the Sultan and Her Majesty's former Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, it is understood that His Highness's letters to the Secretary of State on the above subject dated 27th July and 18th August 1963 were passed on to your Government. Her Majesty's Government taking the view that the question of Limbang had become a matter with which Her Majesty's Government had no further concern. Neither His Highness nor His Highness's Government have received any communication from your Government relating to these letters, but it is quite understood that your Government has been occupied with many weighty problems connected with the establishment of Malaysia and its consequence, and further that the historical investigation of the title to Limbang is of itself a protracted matter which your officials have no doubt been undertaking.

It is, of course, Brunei's constant desire to strengthen the friendly relations between Brunei and the Government of Malaysia as it is only proper in view of the close historical association between the two territories and their common profession of the Religion of Islam and the following of Islamic principles. It is with this in mind that Brunei feels impelled to put forward a claim to an area which should properly be within its own boundaries.

His Highness's Government has ascertained that Her Majesty's Government have no objection to the question of Limbang being directly raised by His Highness's Government with your Government. It is therefore felt that it would not be inappropriate at this stage to suggest that Limbang should form a subject for confidential discussion between our two governments.

As I think you are aware, the Limbang district was seized by force by then Rajah of Sarawak's officers from Brunei in the year 1890 and despite protests by Her Majesty's

Government from time to time, the Rajahs of Sarawak refused to return the territory. Brunei has, however, at no time acquiesced in this seizure and from time to time endeavoured to respond the matter with Her Majesty's Government without success. His Highness's Government is, however, certain that your Government's attitude to this question will not be governed by the name considerations as affected Her Majesty's Government in declining to discuss the problem.

Quite apart from the question of Legal title, there are, of course, obvious geographical and administrative factors which strangely support Brunei's claim that Limbang should be returned to its parent state.

I hasten, however, to ensure your Government that His Highness's Government has no thought of pressing for a return to the territory contrary to the wishes of the inhabitants, but we are equally confident that your Government would not desire to retain a territory, the title to which is so questionable, against the wishes of its inhabitants.

I think you will agree that the existence of this unsolved question is not only a factor which obstructs and will continue to obstruct the furtherance and extension of good relations between our respective countries, but is also one which unfriendly States can use to our mutual disturbance and disadvantage.

I am sure that you will agree that nothing but benefit can come of full and frank discussion between the representatives of our respective Governments on the Limbang question, and I am confident that your government will see its way to entering into discussions. It is obvious to me that agreement to hold such discussion should be a matter of strict confidence between our two Governments and you may be assured that every possible precaution will be taken to avoid publicity being given to the fact that such discussions have been sought for, and I trust arranged.

Brunei would be particularly concerned in ensuring that no opportunity would be given to those who are ill-disposed towards Malaysia to use this subject as propaganda and it is considered helpful, the Brunei Government would be happy to discuss this matter at any place outside Malaysia or Brunei which your Government might consider suitable.

I have the honour to be, Your Excellency's obedient servant,
(Marsal bin Maun)

Mentri Besar

His Excellency,
The Minister for External Affairs,
Federation of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

APPENDIX VI**LETTER OF GEORGE THOMSON TO SULTAN HASSANAL BOLKIAH
ABOUT THE RELINQUISHMENT OF 1959 AGREEMENT**

18 October 1968

My Dear Friend,

I was very sorry to hear through Mr. Lawson this morning that Your Highness does not feel able to agree to a document summarising the discussions we have had over the past weeks. For my part I feel I must set down for the record certain essential features of these discussions.

I explained that against the background of the major changes in British defence policy including the withdrawal of British forces from Southeast Asia by the end of 1971 it was necessary to review the relationship between Britain and Brunei.

I gave Your Highness notice, which I now take the opportunity of repeating, that Her Majesty's powers and responsibilities under the Brunei Agreement 1959 and the other Treaties and Agreements referred to in Article 9(2) of that Agreement will be relinquished on 30 November 1970.

In view of the impending relinquishment of Her Majesty's powers and responsibilities we discussed the possibility of opening negotiations from a new Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Brunei and the United Kingdom which would set out the ways in which Britain would be glad to continue to assist Brunei thereafter. A draft which could form the basis of such a Treaty, as tabled by me during our discussions, is annexed to this letter. Your Highness indicated that for your part you wished to defer any decision about a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation for the time being.

Your Highness expressed concern about the implications for the State of Brunei of the withdrawal of British protection and enquired about the possibility of continuing defence safeguards being available to Brunei.

I explained that it was not possible for Her Majesty's Government at the present time to forecast what arrangements for defence co-operation might come to be agreed for the

area. I said however that if we were able to reach agreement on how to proceed Her Majesty's Government would be willing to report the concerned expressed by Your Highness to the Commonwealth Governments in the area and to discuss with them the possibility of associating Brunei with any arrangements for defence co-operation which may emerge from current consultations on this subject.

During the discussions I informed your Highness that it would be necessary to settle the period of which a battalion of the Brigade of Gurkhas could remain in Brunei. I am glad to inform Your Highness that the Defence Secretary has agreed that a battalion may remain in Brunei until 30 November 1970. This date is related to the military rundown plans, both of Brigade of Gurkhas and on our other forces in South East Asia, and could not be postponed. I hope that Your Highness will accept the fact that a Gurkha battalion will be present in Brunei for a much longer period than was originally envisaged as an earnest for the desire of Her Majesty's Government that the close friendship and understanding between our two countries should continue.

I should be grateful if Your Highness would acknowledge receipt of this letter.

(George Thomson)

APPENDIX VII**LETTER OF SULTAN HASSANAL BOLKIAH TO GEORGE THOMSON
ABOUT THE RELINQUISHMENT OF 1959 AGREEMENT**

21 October 1968

My Dear Friend,

I thank you for your letter of 18 October to which I have given careful consideration.

For reasons which have been mentioned in our discussions, and which I am sure that you understand, I am unable to agree to the relinquishment on 30 November 1970 of Her Majesty's powers and responsibilities under the Brunei agreement of 1959 and the earlier treaties and agreements referred to in the 1959 Agreement.

As I hope it has been made plain, I have not been and am not unwilling to discuss revision of the 1959 agreement. Yet it seems now to me that it would be appropriate to postpone discussion of such revision until it becomes clear what continuing defence safeguards can be made available to Brunei. In such a situation I believe we should be able to reach agreement whereas at the present time and in the present circumstances discussion of the detailed terms of revision would lack reality.

I have to thank you for obtaining the Defence Secretary's agreement that a Gurkha battalion shall remain in Brunei until 30 November 1970. I note, of course, what is said upon this matter. I hope, however, that, as that date approaches, the position of the battalion will be considered in the light of the circumstances then prevailing.

In conclusion I would like to say that, although, greatly to my sorrow, we have been unable to reach agreement I am not unappreciative of the friendship which you have never failed to demonstrate towards myself and my advisers and of the concern which I know you entertain for the future of Brunei and its people.

Hassanal Bolkiah

APPENDIX VIII**LETTER OF SULTAN HASSANAL BOLKIAH TO MICHAEL STEWART**

Translation

29 January 1970

Whilst I should like to record my sincere thanks to you for the friendly reception which you have accorded to myself and my advisers and for the frankness with which Lord Shepherd had conducted our discussions, I cannot refrain from expressing my bitter disappointment that our recent talks in London have produced no acceptable solutions so that the future of my country and its people remain uncertain.

I am as concerned as you are, to find a position from which we can hopefully consider again the pattern of the future relationships between our two countries. So as to reinforce the mutual friendship and co-operation which has lasted for over a century. There is a possible legal approach to this matter, for Her Majesty's Government contends that the 1959 agreement can be brought to an end by a unilateral act, whereas Brunei contends otherwise. There is clearly a legal issue between us. My adviser, Dato Lawson, made a suggestion as to how that issue might be resolved without delay so that upon its resolution we could negotiate about future relationships from a common legal basis. I do not complain that Her Majesty's Government have been unable to accept this suggestion, and if you were to say that important political decisions ought not to be made by lawyers, however, distinguished, I do not think that I would quarrel with that, although I still feel that an agreed basis for discussions would have been better than a disputed one.

Subject to your views then, it does not seem at the moment profitable to treat the question as a legal one. I would therefore suggest that a practical approach is not out of the question. Let me assume that the 1959 agreement in fact comes to an end on the date proposed by Her Majesty's Government (as you know, I do not accept this.) As from that date I understand that Her Majesty's Government will have remaining commitments in Eastern Asia, that there will be substantial British interests subsisting in Brunei, and that Her Majesty's Government is prepared to make a new arrangement with Brunei containing responsibilities in relation to our armed and police forces and other matters. This new arrangement will clearly involve a special relationship between our two countries of a closer and more intimate kind than subsists between Her Majesty's

Government and the Governments of other Commonwealth countries. If Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to go further than so far suggested by entering into a new agreement for the defence and protection of Brunei – and I know that you will accept that I should be falling short of my responsibilities if I did not hold the view that such a new agreement was necessary – this could be for two reasons:-

Firstly, it has been said that Her Majesty's Government's policy does not permit the undertaking of absolute commitments in the area with which we are concerned

Secondly, it has been said that the economic burden of such a commitment would be unduly heavy.

As to the first of these points, at our last meeting I understood you to say that the military withdrawal in 1971 would not preclude British troops from being sent back to the area but that Her Majesty's Government alone would decide whether or not such assistance was appropriate. It seems to me this provides a basis upon which we could reach an agreement on the lines I contemplate because I can assure you that Brunei would be content to accept a commitment that Her Majesty's Government would use its best endeavours to protect Brunei – Brunei does not desire to seek an absolute commitment in that respect – and further, I would suggest that in the context of shared responsibility for defence any decision as to whether or not a situation had arisen in which any and what form of assistance was required could be a matter for consultation between our respective governments.

As to the second point, finance, I can assure you that Brunei is prepared to accept the financial consequences of the above proposal.

I ask you, again, to consider the future relationship of our two countries in the realisation that Brunei does not contemplate or intend to enter into any arrangements, political or military, with other states. Her Majesty's Government need, then, have no anxiety that a qualified commitment for the defence and protection of Brunei would become entangled with problems arising from Brunei's undertaking obligations in other directions. There will be no other commitments on Brunei's part.

I do not believe that you would wish me to cite evidence of the loyalty of Brunei towards Her Majesty or the support which Brunei has given to Her Majesty's Government on many occasions in many directions. This loyalty and support is not only prompted by

gratitude, but also by the conviction that the continued friendship and co-operation between our two countries is important not only for the welfare and progress of Brunei, but also for the maintenance of peace in the world. It was a consideration of this last factor in particular which led to the Brunei proposal not only for an acceptance of joint responsibility with Her Majesty's Government for the purpose of defence and protection but also to offer that Brunei's facilities would be made available without cost to enable Her Majesty's Government to fulfill their other commitments in the region.

I beseech you to give your most earnest consideration to my suggestion. Dato Neil Lawson enjoys my confidence, and should you wish to discuss any matter with him before replying to me he is of course, at your disposal.

Of course I shall in the meantime consider the points which you made in the course of our last meeting, with the greatest care.

Your sincerely,

Signed:

Hassanal Bolkiah

APPENDIX IX**LIST OF BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONERS, 1966 – 1983**

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. F.D. Webber
(Webber was transferred to Canberra, Australia,
In October 1967 but returned to Brunei to resume
His duties in February 1968) | July 1965 – May 1968 |
| 2. A.R. Adair | May 1968 - January 1972 |
| 3. P. Gautrey | January 1972 - January 1975 |
| 4. J.A. Davidson | January 1975 - November 1978 |
| 5. A.C. Watson | November 1978 – April 1983 |
| 6. Tom Malcolmson | April 1983 – August 1983 |
| 7. Francis Cornish | August 1983 |

APPENDIX X

DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES ADOPTED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1514 (XV) OF 14 DECEMBER 1960

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the determination proclaimed by the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence,

Aware of the increasing conflicts resulting from the denial of or impediments in the way of the freedom of such peoples, which constitute a serious threat to world peace,

Considering the important role of the United Nations in assisting the movement for independence in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Recognizing that the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations,

Convinced that the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic co-operation, impedes the social, cultural and economic

development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace,

Affirming that peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law,

Believing that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith,

Welcoming the emergence in recent years of a large number of dependent territories into freedom and independence, and recognizing the increasingly powerful trends towards freedom in such territories which have not yet attained independence,

Convinced that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory,

Solemnly proclaims the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations;

And to this end Declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.
2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.

4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.
5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.
6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
7. All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all States, and respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

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