

ICH 2019**International Conference on Humanities****EMERGENCY IN MALAYA AND REACTION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1948-1960**

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Abstract

This paper provides an analysis on the United States' (US) reaction towards the Malayan emergency that occurred between 1948 and 1960. From the US' perspective, the emergency in Malaya was a problem that resulted from the communist movement. The core objective of this paper is to explore the United States' reaction and the reasons for this reaction. Apart from that, this paper will also focus on the United States' actions following the reaction they had taken, which can be observed through documents such as the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), the Department of State Bulletin, the Pentagon Papers, reports from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), British documents and memoirs from local and overseas archives. Based on these documents, the reaction towards the Malayan emergency by the United States can be directly and indirectly concluded. The methods used in this paper involved source researching in archives, document analysis, translating files and interpreting resources. The United States' reaction towards the Malayan emergency is closely related to regional communist threats and conflicts in the Far East. This paper will argue that ideological competition and strategic considerations were seen as reasons or factors that affected the United States' reaction towards the emergency. Finally, this paper will further argue that the United States' reaction towards the Malayan emergency from 1948 to 1960 was significant in diminishing communist threats in Southeast Asia and in Malaya.

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1. Introduction

The declaration of emergency in Malaya by the British administration is considered an important subject in the history of the nation from 1948 to 1960 (CO, 1948).¹ This declaration was part of the British war effort against communists who were seen as being actively involved in the guerrilla movement. Even more significant is the focus of this study: the fact that the Malayan emergency from 1948 to 1960 also resulted in gaining a reaction from a major world power, the United States. This eventually rendered the Malayan emergency not solely a subject of domestic conflict but also of regional significance from the American perspective. The United States' reaction emerged from ideological competition and strategic consideration in regards to Malaya itself. This was due to a variety of foreign factors such as the general situation in mainland Southeast Asia and the context of the Cold War during that period.

Several local and foreign researchers have discussed the relationship between the United States and Malaya. The earliest study is by Pamela Sodhy (1991) who included a discussion on US-Malaya relations in her paper. Other notable studies were conducted by Nicholas Tarling (2005), Andrew Mathew Kelly (2016), Sue Thompson (2019) and Wen-Qing Ngoei (2019). In Malaysia, Sah Hadiyatan Ismail (2009) discussed this issue in his doctorate thesis, focusing on the context of the relationship between the US and the Southeast Asian region. However, one aspect missing from these studies is the United States' reaction towards emergency in Malaya and its relation to the Cold War's effects in Asia during the period of 1948-1960. Further, these past papers did not focus on the emergency as the main point of discussion in their studies, and did not scrutinize in detail the communist influence that had emerged as a result of the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC), war in Korean Peninsular and the Indochina crisis. To produce a more in-depth analysis, this paper incorporates notes taken from memoirs of important individuals involved in the issue as evidence to strengthen the discussion

2. Problem Statement

According to the United States, the Malayan emergency was a problem that resulted from the communist movement. The US administration noted that communists influenced the leftist nationalist movement in Malaya and Southeast Asia, especially after the Second World War (Eisenhower, 1963). Problems that emerged from the emergency caused the United States to focus on Malaya, especially in terms of strategic considerations and ideological issues. Malaya's strategic significance derives from its strategic area that covered the Strait of Malacca (Southern of Malaysia today). Furthermore, Malaya also importance in the context of location between the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Asia. In the same time, Malaya also strategic for the sea communications, air bases and naval convenient for defence in these locations. Should communist movement succeed in Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), Thailand and Burma (Myanmar), Malaya would be the last Western foothold on the mainland (FRUS, 1952-1954).² In the context of ideological competition, the United States did not want Malaya to fall under the communist bloc of the PRC, Indochina and Korea (Truman, 1956). Thus, the US administration saw that

¹ CO 717/167, f 302, *Declaration Emergency*, 17 June 1948.

² FRUS, *East Asia and The Pacific*, Vol. XII, Part 1, 1952-1954, Report by the Staff Planners to the Military Representatives to the ANZUS Council, 25 November 1952, p. 246.

Malaya needed to be protected from communist threat by the United States, even though the area was under British responsibility.

3. Research Questions

This paper answers the question of how did the United States react to the Malayan emergency and what were the factors influencing the United States' reaction?

4. Purpose of the Study

This paper analyses the reaction of the United States towards the Malayan emergency between 1948 and 1960. Discussions on this issue involve both direct and indirect reactions by the US towards the emergency. At the same time, another issue that will be discussed is the US' reaction to the relationship between the Malayan emergency and the Cold War conflict in Asia. These external factors are important as without them, it would be virtually impossible to answer the question of the Americans' reaction towards the emergency.

5. Research Methods

In this paper, the evidence for every argument presented was collected by studying documents from archives and libraries. Studies on primary sources were conducted at the National Archives of Malaysia, the National Archives of Singapore, the library of the National University of Singapore and The National Archives (TNA). Moreover, sources were also collected from archives in the United States, especially from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). These sources consisted of files from the Record Group (RG), CIA reports, files from the British government and also online materials such as those retrieved from the FRUS, the Department of State Bulletin and the Pentagon Papers. Primary sources studied were then translated and interpreted before being arranged in an argumentative narrative. Furthermore, documents in the form of memoirs and secondary sources such as books, theses and journals were also used to complete the discussion. This was done to ensure a more objective and authoritative analysis.

6. Findings

6.1. The United States' Early Reaction towards the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960

The United States saw the Malayan emergency from 1948 to 1960 as part of a collision between the blocs of liberal democracy and communism. This situation displayed a form of ideological warfare between two camps that eventually culminated in armed conflicts and strategic considerations. As for the emergency itself, the United States saw it as a situation in which its British allies fought threats from the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). For this reason, the United States' administration in Washington took a stance that the emergency in Malaya was a regional issue due to its relation with the communist

movement in the Far East and in Southeast Asia (Public Papers of the President Harry S. Truman, 1951).³ The United States later showed that it allied with the British in the shared goal of fighting communists in Malaya. The following statement was issued by the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles:

... the United States welcomes Sir Donald's determination to continue pressing toward those goals to which the people of Malaya aspire. We will to continue to follow with the greatest interest further progress toward the creation of a truly united and self-governing nation free from Communist terrorism... (The Straits Times, 1954).

In short, when a state of emergency was declared by the British administration on the 18th of June, 1948, the situation in Malaya was altered in terms of political movement and economic activity (Stockwell, 1994). For example, when the MCP was banned on the 23rd of July that same year (Stockwell, 1995), this situation escalated into the formation of more radical movements from the communists. This included armed assaults on mining and plantation areas, which were the primary economic resources for the British administration.

For the United States, subversive movements by the MCP were considered a threat that needed to be restrained from spreading. The United States then reacted to the communist threat in Malaya by supplying weapons to tin mining areas and rubber estates owned by its investors in Malaya (Yacob, 2008). This was done to ensure that the communist threat in these areas could be suppressed; these efforts indirectly assisted the British in overcoming subversive activities of the MCP. The type and number of equipment supplied to Malaya by the United States were as following: "1082 revolvers and pistols, 207,300 revolver pistol-cartridges, 14 rifles, 32,100 rifle cartridges, 48 submachine guns and 39,300 submachine guns cartridges" (RG59, 1948).⁴

As part of the United States' reaction towards the emergency, the nation also sent special missions to Malaya to survey the situation and the necessities of the emergency itself. The missions consisted of the Jessup Mission (February 1950), the Griffin Mission (March 1950), the Melby Mission (July 1950) and the Judd Mission (November 1952) (Ismail, 2019). In 1950, the United States provided economic assistance to the British administration in Malaya through a funding made after the Griffin Mission's visit. This assistance, which came in US dollars, was used by the British administration to open and construct new roads in Malaya. A total of \$369,950 was provided for the construction of roads on the west coast and other areas in the state of Pahang (Sodhy, 1991). This financial grant was passed for the purpose of developing affected areas to suppress MCP movements (RG84, 1950).⁵ Later, a request for tear gas, suggested through the Griffin Mission, was also passed and this supply reached the American consulate in Kuala Lumpur. Poole quoted the Malayan Police Commissioner as saying that "the equipment was essential in anti-Communist operations and [was] very urgently needed as police stocks were low and old" (RG84, 1951).⁶

It is evident from the actions taken by the United States that Malaya had not been neglected in the great power's foreign policy in terms of anti-communist efforts in Southeast Asia. This was also in line

³ Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, Address at a Dinner of the Civil Defense Conference, 7 May 1951, p. 267.

⁴ RG59, Lot File, Malaya, Box 14, Darby to Landon, 30 July 1948.

⁵ RG84, Folder 500, Poole to Gurney, 27 December 1950.

⁶ RG84, Folder 500, Telegram by Poole to Secretary of State, 6 January 1951.

with a statement made by the Jessup Mission in Malaya (4-7 February), a month before the arrival of the Griffin Mission. In the Mission's final report on the 3rd of April 1950, Jessup emphasized to the US Department of State that action to prevent communist expansion in the mainland Southeast Asia (Foreign Relations of the US [FRUS], 1950).⁷ He also claimed that "Indo-China is the key to the situation" and that "Southeast Asia is in balance" (FRUS, 1950).⁸ As for Malaya, Jessup stressed that "Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia are to be considered less critical spots but are not to be neglected... actual war existing in many areas in Korea, Indo-China, Malaya, and Burma, there was a hot war" (FRUS, 1950).⁹ In this context, the special American missions observed that communist movement in Malaya was not merely a domestic issue, but it was also interrelated with other issues in Southeast Asia. In the long run, this issue would surely threaten US' interests in the region, be it in terms of the ideology of liberal democracy or of geostrategic considerations.

As for the British administration's role on this issue, the United States' ally had executed various strategies to eliminate communist movement during the emergency. In July 1950, for example, the Briggs' Plan was devised under the administration of the British High Commissioner in Malaya, Sir Henry Gurney, to ensure the suppression of communist movement (Stockwell, 1995). The Briggs' Plan aimed for the improved effectiveness of public administration and the police force as well as to increase cooperation among defence forces for the security of the Malayan people. This strategy was then extended to involve the relocation of Chinese squatter settlements to new areas for the purpose of separating the members of the MCP from their sources of information, food and money. These new settlement areas were expanded gradually in the state of Johor in June 1950 and then were also formed in other Malayan states in 1951. Regarding the condition of radical communist movements in Malaya, Lieutenant-Colonel Briggs claimed that "clearing Malaya of terrorists was like clearing a Malaria-ridden country of mosquitoes" (The Straits Times, 1951).

In the first four years of the Malayan emergency, the United States saw the Briggs' Plan as a capable strategy by the British administration to restrain communist movement. This is made evident by a statement made by the Melby Mission, which characterized the Briggs' Plan as effective. The leader of the Melby Mission, John F. Melby concluded that the Briggs Plan was a 'success'; the experiment of resettling the squatters had been 'extremely good' (FRUS, 1950).¹⁰ The Secretary-General of the MCP, Chin Peng, also remarked on the effectiveness of the Briggs' Plan in his memoir:

... the Briggs' resettlement plan was the communists' Achilles heel, as it isolated the guerrillas from the squatters, who were their main sources of food and intelligence (Chin, 2003).

⁷ FRUS, *East Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. VI, 1950, Oral Report by Ambassador-At-Large Philip C. Jessup Upon His Return From The East, 3 April 1950, p. 69.

⁸ FRUS, *East Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. VI, 1950, Oral Report by Ambassador-At-Large Philip C. Jessup Upon His Return From The East, 3 April 1950, p. 69.

⁹ FRUS, *East Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. VI, 1950, Oral Report by Ambassador-At-Large Philip C. Jessup Upon His Return From The East, 3 April 1950, p. 69.

¹⁰ FRUS, *East Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. VI, 1950, Oral Report by Ambassador-At-Large Philip C. Jessup Upon His Return From The East, 3 April 1950, p. 156.

The United States saw Britain's efforts as resulting in a "checkmate" to the MCP movement; these efforts were essential in ensuring the liberation of Malaya from communist threats (FRUS, 1952).¹¹ Even though there were positive signs in regards to Britain's capacity to handle the communist threat during that period, the United States was still attentive to possible infiltration by foreign communist threats to Malaya. In a report issued on the 25th of November 1952, the US once again expressed their stance that:

The loss to the Communists of the Tonkin Delta in Indochina, which is presently the area most directly threatened, would greatly simplify continued Communist expansion in Southeast Asia while compounding the difficulties of friendly forces. It would probably lead to the collapse of Burma and Thailand, and to a dangerous weakening of internal security in Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines... (FRUS, 1952).¹²

At the end of 1952, British administration in Malaya under the leadership of Sir Gerald Templer introduced the 'hearts and minds' strategy to ensure the end of the communist movement in Malaya. Templer saw this strategy as a psychological tactic that would attract the attention and win the hearts of the people. From Templer's perspective, this effort was important as it represented a 'war of nerves' to gain the support of the Malayan people be it in the urban or in the rural areas. In terms of military strategy, Templer believed that Britain's military capacity had to be improved to include a more effective intelligence and investigation system. On top of that, there was also a need to improve the Home Guard service throughout the emergency.

American president, Dwight D. Eisenhower approved of the strategy implemented by Templer in his correspondence dated October 1953, expressing his "admiration... for the magnificent job" (We-Qing, 2019). Further, US Vice President Richard Nixon visited Malaya in 1953 and noted Templer's efforts against the communists in his memoir:

In Kuala Lumpur I met with the High Commissioner, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, a wiry, tough, emotional leader... Both Templer and his wife worked closely with the local leaders and treated them with respect and dignity... (Nixon, 1978).

A Judd Mission 1954 report, however, showed the US' continued concern towards the communist threat in the Far East that endangered the domestic situation in Malaya. This Judd Mission report was produced to identify the strength and capacity of the communist movement in Asia from 9 November to 17 December 1953. The report described the wave of communist threat as follows: "The moment is quickly approaching when the rising tide of Communism could engulf Asia" (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1954).¹³ Moreover, the Judd Mission's statement implied that any communist threat in Asia and its surrounding region could jeopardize the interests of Americans and the free world bloc in the area. The Judd Mission's report emphasized that:

¹¹ FRUS, *East Asia and The Pacific*, Vol. XII, Part 1, 1952-1954, Report by the Staff Planners to the Military Representatives to the ANZUS Council, 25 November 1952, p. 246.

¹² FRUS, *East Asia and The Pacific*, Vol. XII, Part 1, 1952-1954, Report by the Staff Planners to the Military Representatives to the ANZUS Council, 25 November 1952, p. 245.

¹³ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Special Study Mission to Southeast Asia and The Pacific*, 29 January 1954, p. 100.

... a free Asia is vital to the security of the free world and, therefore, to the security of the United States. The Communist danger cannot be overestimated. Delay and indecision operate to the advantage of the Communists (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1954).¹⁴

In this matter, the Judd Mission saw issues regarding the communist threat in Southeast Asia as being interconnected and this stance was consistent with notes from previous missions. In a way, the assistance supplied through the Judd Mission's visit provided an added value to the British and also showed that the British was not alone in its struggle against the communists in Malaya. The Judd Mission saw that the foreign threats to Malaya, that were involved with the communist movement at a domestic level, were closely related to the situation in the Far East and wider Southeast Asia. For this reason, military assistance was provided to Malaya in the US' attempt to help the British administration during the emergency. Thanks to the Judd Mission, 1000 carbines were supplied, in addition to a loan of 1000 helicopters, to be employed by the British in Malaya (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1954).¹⁵ Even though this assistance was considered to be small in scale, it showed that the United States did not neglect Malaya in its fight against the communists and had also supported the British in overcoming the MCP.

6.2. The Cold War and its Relation with the United States' Reaction towards the Malayan Emergency

The US' reaction towards the Malayan emergency was clearly connected to the Cold War conflict at the time. It began with the formation of the PRC (1 October 1949), followed by the war in Korean Peninsular (25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953) and crisis in Indochina. Regarding the volatile situation in the Indochina, Burma, Thailand and Malaya and the Eastern Asia in the early 1950s, the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, saw the need for 'a New Day' in terms of the 'American-Asian' relation based on 'mutual respect and helpfulness' (The Department of State Bulletin, 1950).¹⁶ In this case, the emphasis made by Acheson finds its foundation when viewing the Cold War situation as being related to the communist threat in the Far East and Southeast Asia. This issue indirectly involved Malaya, an area threatened by the communist movement from the inside, as shown by a note in a CIA report dated 27 January 1950:

Indochina, at present under increasing Soviet and Chinese Communist propaganda attack, is the Southeast Asian target of highest priority... Indonesia is also under propaganda fire by both the Peiping regime and the USSR and, though less immediately exploitable, is now the target of second priority...Malaya, which next to Indochina is the most exploitable area in Southeast Asia, will probably replace Indonesia as the second priority target (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 1950).¹⁷

The connection between the communist movement in Mainland China and the emergency in Malaya began in the 1920s through the founding of the MCP, which had been greatly influenced by

¹⁴ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Special Study Mission to Southeast Asia and The Pacific*, 29 January 1954, p. 100.

¹⁵ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Special Study Mission to Southeast Asia and The Pacific*, 29 January 1954, p. 73.

¹⁶ The Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XXII, "The New Day for Asia," in *Crisis in Asia—An Examination of U.S. Policy*, 23 January 1950, p. 118.

¹⁷ CIA, *Japan, Korea, And The Security Of Asia, 1946- 1976, Most Probable Communist Propaganda Targets in Southeast Asia*, 27 January 1950.

communist ideas from Mainland China. This had been admitted by active members of the MCP who also claimed that they had received an abundance of inspirational printed materials from the PRC (Abdullah, 2006). Examples of printed materials received from the PRC included propaganda pamphlets and a book that was influential to the communist movement in many parts of Southeast Asia, '*Red Star over China*' (Snow, 1968). In 1948, support from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to the communist guerrilla in Malaya was evident from a CIA report dated 17 November:

At that time, twenty members of the CCP arrived in Singapore to assist the MCP in the work of reorganization. Another report, possibly referring to the same development, stated that the South China Bureau of the CCP planned to send sixty reinforcements to the MCP and that some if not all of them left Hong Kong for Malaya in September 1948 (CIA, 1948).¹⁸

This document shows that there was a connection between the Malayan communists and the CCP in the form of cooperation to execute their subversive activities. This was also noted by Sir Oliver Franks as the British Ambassador to Washington through a correspondence with the US Department of State (FRUS, 1949).¹⁹ At the time, information about Mainland China and the news of the country's success in forming a communist republic were disseminated through two Chinese Consulate offices that were opened in Singapore and Malaya (Dahana, 2002). The opening of these offices can be related to efforts by the British government to recognize the PRC on 6 January 1950 (Qiang, 1994). It was from this point that the relationship between Mainland China and the Chinese diaspora in Malaya and Singapore became closer in terms of revolutionary ideas. A few members of the MCP were even appointed by the CCP to be spokespeople for the communist propaganda (Abdullah, 2006). These events slowly strengthened the Americans' belief in a special relationship between the CCP and the MCP. The American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, was recorded as saying that there is some evidence which shows that Chinese communists may be joining in the conflict not only in Korean Peninsular but in other parts of Asia, with obvious and serious implications for the special positions of the British in Malaya and Hong Kong (FRUS, 1950).²⁰

Acheson also provided reasons for the United States' decision to not recognize the PRC government in Peiping in the following document:

We have not recognized Peiping because there was little indication that Peiping genuinely desired the establishment of normal relations with others... it has recognized Ho Chi Minh and is actively interfering in the situation in Indo-China... it is lending encouragement and support to Communist insurgents in the Philippines, Malaya, Burma and elsewhere...(FRUS, 1950).²¹

Other than that, the United States also believed that the Korean situation, especially after the outbreak of war on 25 June 1950, had influenced the Malayan emergency. President Harry S. Truman

¹⁸ CIA-RDP78-01617A003500050003-5, Current Situation in Malaya, 17 November 1948.

¹⁹ FRUS, *The Far East: China*, Vol. IX, 1949, Continuation of Paper on China Attached to Sir Oliver Franks' Letter to Mr. Lovett, 5 January 1949, p. 7.

²⁰ FRUS, *Korea*, Vol. VII, 1950, The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 10 July 1950, p. 348.

²¹ FRUS, *Korea*, Vol. VII, 1950, The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 10 July 1950, p. 348.

said the following in Washington during a meeting with high officials of the British government on 4th of December 1950 that they (Chinese communist) are satellites of Soviet Union and would be satellites as long as the regime of Peiping is in power. Furthermore, after Korean Peninsular, it would be threaten the others area such as Hong Kong, Indochina and Malaya (FRUS, 1950).²²

In this context, the United States believed that the Cold War was capable of influencing Malaya with communist ideology. Even though the United States had successfully united its allies under the United Nations (Tarling, 2005) during the war, threats from the communist bloc were not to be taken lightly. According to a CIA report on 24 September 1951, Southeast Asia was expected to face a rise in communism in the next two years if there was no assistance from foreign anti-communist parties. The report stated that areas in Southeast Asia, which included Indochina, Burma, Thailand and Malaya, were completely vulnerable to communist threats from the Korean Peninsula as the movement was strengthened by support from the Chinese Communist Party (CIA, 1951).²³ It appeared that the CCP would use all means necessary to ensure that Southeast Asian countries were under its influence.

This situation worsened when local subversive communist cohorts were willing to cooperate with Asian communist powers. In this situation, it was apparent that Malaya was seen as the most vulnerable to fall into the communists' grip after Vietnam. Even though the British were still in power in Malaya, the MCP continued to be active (Tarling, 2007). From 1950 to 1953, the Malayan communist movement not only launched guerrilla assaults on the British, but also used trade unions to form subversive movements to propagate its revolutionary ideas (Leong, 1999).

In a statement dated 2 February 1953, the United States' administration asserted that the Cold War was a serious conflict, characterizing it as the most painful phase both for the United States and the free world bloc (The Pentagon Papers, 1953).²⁴ The Cold War was seen as capable of jeopardizing the stability of regions from the Pacific to Southeast Asia as it involved the geostrategic positions of Formosa, Indochina and Malaya. As had been previously explained, the United States was consistent with their conviction that any conflict in a mainland Southeast Asian country could affect others in the region in a chain reaction. Other than that, the crisis in Indochina also had its influence on the United States' reaction towards the emergency in Malaya. Dwight D. Eisenhower as the US' President alluded to that crisis in speech on 7th of April 1954 about the domino analogy:

You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So, you could have the beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences (Public Papers of the President Eisenhower, 1954).²⁵

Eisenhower also wrote in his memoir about the domino theory, which saw that the fall of Indochina would eventually lead to the fall of other areas including Malaya to the communists

²² FRUS, *Western Europe*, Vol. III, 1950, United States Minutes, Truman–Attlee Conversations, First Meeting, The White House, Washington, 4 December 1950, p. 1714.

²³ CIA, *Japan, Korea, and the Security of Asia, 1946-1976*, Probable Developments in the World Situation through Mid-1953, 24 September 1951.

²⁴ The Pentagon Papers, Defence Department History of United States Decision Making on Vietnam, 1: 1953-1960, President Eisenhower Links Korea, Malaya, and Indochina State of The Union Message, 2 February 1953, p. 5.

²⁵ Public Papers of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Domino Theory Principle, 1 January to 31 December 1954, p. 381-90.

(Eisenhower, 1963). Eisenhower's words are evidence of a belief about the spread of communist threats, especially strengthened by previous reports from special missions and the CIA. Southeast Asia was seen as a chain of areas connected by a growing threat of communism. In the long run, it was apparent that the growth of communism would threaten the American geostrategic interests in the area. As for the emergency itself, it was seen as a chain of conflicts connected with the Indochina crisis; this crisis had not been overlooked by the United States as two plans of assistance were devised for Southeast Asia through the National Security Council (NSC) such as NSC 5405 and NSC 5429/2.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the reaction of the United States towards the Malayan emergency was significant when considering its regional policy towards Southeast Asia. This reaction emerged at the Cold War era between the American-led liberal democracy bloc and the communist bloc led from the Soviet Union and PRC. This eventually made the emergency not simply a domestic matter but it also connected Malaya with other regional communist movements, according to the Americans. In this case, the US' reaction towards the emergency resulted in assistance to the British and complemented Britain's efforts in fighting radical communist movements, in addition to minimising the impact of foreign communist influences. For this reason, the British were not alone in their fight as the United States also joined in their struggle against the communist movement in Malaya; this cooperation resulted in Malaya being spared from falling into communist hands. Malaya emerged as a nation free from the threat of communism and became the democratic nation it is today.

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