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## The Concept of Security and Development: Malaysia's Successful Approach Towards Bringing Down Insurgency in the 1970 – 1980's

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**Abstract:** Malaysia faced two major security set back after its formation on 16 September 1963. First, the 'Confrontation' launched by Indonesia from 1965 to 1966. Second, the armed struggle by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) from 1968 to 1989. The new government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman managed both situations by utilizing the Military, Police and Civil administration. The concept of 'Security and Development' was introduced, as a joint effort between Internal Security operations by the Security Forces (SF) and Internal Development Programs under the Development Plan. The main argument presented in this article is that the concept of 'security and development' have brought important changes to both the political and social landscapes. The rate of development moved to a faster phase allowing little space for the CPM's insurgent to manoeuvre. The Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) transformed jungle areas into cultivated areas by bringing hundreds of thousands of people into these new agricultural schemes. New infrastructure of road network, bridges and dams were built connecting remote areas bringing along hydro-power and water supplies. The National Security Council (NSC) coordinated all the security and development efforts from the federal level to the state and down to the district level. The concept of Security and Development brought to an end of CPM's Arms struggle by cutting off their traditional routes into their hide outs in Southern Thailand by cutting off their support from the people in their 'illegitimate' fight. The outcome of the study demonstrated that the concept of security and development have played an important role in bringing down the Second Insurgency to an end in a more fashionable way. The study also found out that the concept used will remain to be relevant to the present day scenario in the Malaysian environment.

**Keywords:** Security and Development, Malaysia's Security, Communist Insurgency, Security Forces, Internal Security, Internal Developments, Tactical Operations.

### Introduction

In the Malaysian environment, Security and Development is seen to be a 'marriage of convenience' or a close cooperation between 'internal security operations' and 'internal development plans' with activities being coordinated at the highest national level. Malaysia being one the newly independent nations in the Southeast Asian region were never free from internal or external challenges in their

struggle towards achieving development. Malaysia went through a rough years in its early formative years to achieve the level of development and state of security today. The moment it became a Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, Indonesia objected to its formation. Sukarno launched an offensive by declaring a confrontation against Malaysia. However the confrontation only affected some areas in states of Selangor and Johor facing the Straits of Malacca. By 1966 the Confrontation ended through great diplomatic efforts by both countries.

Malaysia's security became tense again when the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) launched its second armed struggle against the government of Malaysia on 17 June 1968. The CPM conducted a bloody ambush on the Royal Malaysian Police Field Force (PFF) convoy at the Kroh – Betong road in North Perak. This ambush resulted in a tragic death of 16 PFF personnel and injuring another 17 personnel (National Archive Portal, 2020). The Second Insurgency brought significant effect towards Malaysia security as it entered into the 1970's. However, being an independent nation Malaysia is more prepared to face the Second Insurgency. Malaysia began to realise that in order to fight against the insurgent it need to formulate a strategy at the highest level. The most important effort was on the participation of the people and the society not to recognize the CPM's armed struggle. The fight against the insurgent cannot depend entirely on Security Forces operations. The experience from the First Emergency (1948 - 1960) have demonstrated that cutting off the insurgents support from the people was one of the major factor towards success.

The application of Security and Development have been in practice and taking place in other parts of the world. However its practical application will differ from states to states and different period of its application also matters. For instance the National Security Strategy of the United States describe security and development as "Development reinforces diplomacy and defence, reducing long term threat to our national security by helping to build stable, prosperous and peaceful societies" (Spears & Williams, 2012). This article seek to examine how far the concept of security and development being applied in the Malaysian environment during the entire period of the 1970's and 1980's facing the Second Insurgency.

### **The Concept of Security and Development**

As a newly independent nation Malaysia have to move forward to become a developed country. With substantial amount of natural resources Malaysia saw its ability to move on with a faster rate of development. The National Economic Policy (NEP) was launched in association with the Second Malaysian Plan for 1971 -1975 with Tun Abdul Razak by second Malaysia Prime Minister. The Malaysian parliament approved the New Economic Policy in July 1971 (Cheah, 2012). The outcome of the NEP have been able to transform the urbanization of the Malaysian society. In 1957, 90 per cent of Malaya's population lived in rural areas. By 2010, only 37 per cent of the Malaysian population lived in the country side. The period from 1970's to late 1980's was the period where the active development took as the outcome of the introduction of the NEP. Bringing impact towards the development in the 1970 to 1980's was the involvement of Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA). FELDA being the leading land development agency throughout the period of 1961 – 1990 managed to develop 872,636 hectares of land into cultivation, out of which 470,000 were distributed to settlers (Selvarajan, 2020). The Malaysian development continue to move on from The First Malaysia Plan of 1966 to the Fifth Malaysia Plan ending 1990. The government was committed with

its move to make Malaysia into a developing nation with in line other nations in the Southeast Asian region.

Follow on to the Racial Riot of 13 May 1969, the Malaysian Government have activated the National Operation Council (NOC). The NOC was disbanded paving way for the formation of National Security Council (NSC) on July 1971 enacted under Law of Malaysia, Act 776 was chaired by the Prime Minister. The core function of NSC is 'defending national sovereignty and strategic importance.' The NSC have been playing a significant role in coordination aspect of both the Security and Development implementation programs of Malaysia during the period of the 1970's and 1980's as the highest coordinating body. Internal Security (IS) have been instrumental towards supporting the success of Internal Development programs with the commitment of providing security in all major areas such as FELDA Schemes, Orang Asli Settlement, safe-guarding vital targets such as highways and hydro-power stations. Other focus of the Security Forces under Internal Security were denial of supplies to Communist Party of Malaya's Assault Units and checking of smuggling of control items. The focus of security under the Internal Security and Internal Development were the establishing of intelligence networking, resources and populace control, military tactical operations and psychological operations and psychological war.

In the Malaysian environment Security and Development (SECDEV) or 'Keselamatan dan Pembangunan (KESBAN)' is being understood as 'the sum total of all measures undertaken by the Government Agencies to protect the Society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency'. Therefore, the Concept of Security and Development that was put in practice covering two grand aspects, first, security and development was a 'two pronged approach strategy to defeat the insurgents movement as well as to develop the country socio-economic, second, it was planned at national level and organised with an hierarchical structure and chain of command that goes down from national to state, district and village level with the ultimate aim to win over the people. This is where the National Security Council played its role since its formation in 1971.

### **Malaysian Second Counter Insurgency of 1968 -1989**

The Second Malaysian Counter Insurgency was significant to the internal and external environment as it brought about great challenges to Malaysia's effort towards becoming a developing nation. The Second Counter Insurgency began on the 17 June 1968 with CPM's offensive by the ambushing Security Forces convoy at the vicinity of Kroh –Betong road in North Perak. The Insurgency ended on 2 December 1989 after more than 20 years of counter insurgency struggle with the signing of the Haadyai Peace Accord (Chin, 1994). The CPM launched post-1968 armed struggle came with a great planning after almost 8 years of absence from the Malaysian security scenario. After their great loss in the First Emergency they went back into their 'hide out' in South Thailand. The post-1968 CPM came up with a Three Phase strategy; First phase, infiltration and movement of CPM into Peninsular Malaysia and the re-establishment of an underground mass support and supply infrastructure from 1968 – 1973. Second Phase, was in 1974, this was a watershed year that witnessed increased armed violence as all three CPM groups tried to outdo each other. Third Phase, was from 1975 to the end of the CPM's armed struggle in 1989 with the signing of the Haadyai Peace Accords. However, only the 1975 – 1981 period, that is the third phase of the strategy was the most active period (Weichong, 2014). These three strategies were very instrumental to CPM's armed struggle in the Second

Insurgency. Along with this strategy the CPM came up with some new strength, new directives and modes operandi. Most prominence were their move towards creating sabotage works towards the government development projects such as the East West Highway and the hydro work at Temengor Dam. They went to the extent of attacking military and police installations at the urban areas. On 26 August 1975, they attacked the Royal Malaysian Police Field Force Camp at Jalan Perkeliling (now Jalan Tun Abdul Razak) in Kuala Lumpur, killing 2 Police personnel and injuring 41 others. On the same day, they attacked the National Monument causing substantial damage. They also attacked the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base in Kuala Lumpur resulting in minor damages without loss of lives (National Archive Portal, 2020).

The Malaysian government initiated its own counter measures by going offensive towards the CPM's renewed armed struggle of 1968. The government Counter measure took into considerations some of the experiences from the First Emergency of 1948 – 1960 which put emphasis into five principles: first, the government clear political aim, second, function in according to law, third, overall plan, fourth, priority to defeat the political subversion first, not the guerrillas, fifth, government to secure its base areas first (Thompson, 1966). Lessons learnt from the First Emergency enabled the Government to come up with a more promising strategy. One of the principle mentioned by Robert Thompson earliest was 'to defeat the political subversion' first seem to be an important consideration. Although the situation in the First Emergency was far different but the insurgent will continue to rely their support from the people. In this aspect, to go against the CPM's armed struggle is not mainly to use force. Cutting the insurgent from their support and undermining their illegitimate struggle should become the government initiatives. Although the security, social, economic and political environment in the Second Insurgency have moved far from the First Emergency but the country was facing the same insurgent who wanted their 'illegitimate' struggle to be recognised by the people. The counter measures taken by the Malaysian Government in the Second Insurgency directed towards the CPM's armed struggle were done in a more coordinated manner by applying the concept of Security and Development.

In the Second Counter Insurgency, Malaysian government move one step forward that is enhancing its diplomatic relations. Two important efforts were initiated in the foreign relations. The CPM's did not anticipated such measures which gave a serious blow to their offensive strategy. First, the establishment of diplomatic relations with China in 1974. Second, the initiation of Regional Border Committee (RBC) with Thailand. Malaysia and China opened up Diplomatic Relations on May 1974 through the serious effort by the Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak (Abdul Majid, 2018). The diplomatic relations served as a set back to the CPM in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made a stand of not interfering into the internal affair of Malaysia in line with the formalization of diplomatic relations. The diplomatic relations caused the CPM to receive a gradually reduced support from CCP (Chin, 1994). Adding to another injury to the CPM quest for external support was the establishment of the Regional Border Committee (RBC) between Malaysia and Thailand in 1977. (Declassified Release of Agreement Between Government of Malaysia and Thailand on Border Cooperation). The Regional Border Committee provide platform for enhancement of security co-operations between Thailand and Malaysia on common issues related to the border security. The RBC facilitated Malaysia to launch Joint Border Operation with its Thai's conter part. The Joint Border Operations was conducted by both the Malaysian Armed Forces and Royal Thailand Army (RTA) in the areas Betong

Salient, Sadao and Weng in Southern Thailand. Series of Joint Operations were conducted from 1977 to 1981. The targets were specifically on suspected CPM camps and training grounds. Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) and Malaysia Army Artillery Regiments were involved directing fire on suspected CPM hide-outs. Hence, the CPM was losing its external support especially from the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and brought into jeopardy the locations of its 'hide outs' and 'safe sanctuary' in South Thailand. CPM were deprived of their 'free acces' in out of the border areas. They were also losing out their support from the locals in terms of information, food supplies and new recruitments.

### **What Make the Concept of Security and Development Matters?**

The application of the security and development concept is not practised in Malaysia alone. It is a worldwide concept given attention by other countries in the world. In one of the literature 'Peace, Security and development edited by G. Molier and E. Nieuwenhuys, conceives of development as an essential element of an "integrated security approach" for dealing with regime change and post-conflict reconstruction. In this approach development is seen as an essential instrument of security (Spears and Williams, 2012). Although there is no direct link blending both security and development but it provided a link between both arenas. In the Second Counter Insurgency period Malaysia have just gone through two major conflicts, the First Emergency and Confrontation. Thus, the period during the Second Insurgency could be seen as a post-conflict reconstruction. Malaysia have gone into its development program with the introduction of Development Plan or locally called as 'Rancangan Pembangunan' since achieving its independent in 1957. In another literature, the discussion of "Development and Security: inextricably intervene?" took place. Stewart (2004) approaches security and development from a different perspective. She identifies three possible connections between, broadly defined, security and developments: first, the immediate impact of security/insecurity on well-being and consequently development achievements (or the ways in which security forms part of the definition of development) – i.e. security's role as part of our objective. Second, the way that insecurity affects (non-security) elements of development and economic growth, or the security instrumental role. Third, the way development affect security, or the development instrumental role (Beswick & Jackson, 2013). Although the connection between development and security is more related to the western environment but it give an indicator the importance between both cannot be denied. Therefore, when the CPM launched its second armed struggle in 1968, Malaysia did not stop or delay the implementation of its development program, neither it give a full attention towards security. Malaysia went on with the firm commitment to execute its development program with a more compromising and a balance approach.

### **Application of Development and Security's Principles.**

In one of his address, Malaysia Second Prime Minister Tuan Abdul Razak indicated that "The primary task of the Armed Forces is to fight the communist, but at the same time they must also help implement the government development plan. This is part of the fight against the communist. Defence and development go hand in hand." Malaysia was committed to go all out against the second CPM's armed offensive on its own. Malaysia's approach in meeting the threat posed by the CPM's armed struggle was formalised at the National level. It came through the National Security Council (NSC) Directive No. 11 dated 5 February 1980. Keselamatan dan Pembangunan (translation of Security and Development to Bahasa Malaysia) acronym KESBAN. The Malaysian government strategy rested on a two-pronged approach; the disruption and arrest of the infiltration process by

conventional military and police machine and by a combination of economic development and hearts and minds activity to neutralize the breeding grounds which the communists hope to harvest support (Weichong, 2014). KESBAN principles or guidelines were set in line with NSC Directive No. 11. Five principles to be adhered to ensure the successful implementation of KESBAN. First, Supremacy of the democratic civilian control of the operations. Second, The unity of the chain of command. Third, Comprehensive or total involvement. Fourth, People centric approach, and Fifth, Winning the 'heart and minds' of the population.

The KESBAN principles or guidelines being well-received and applied by all parties during the entire period of the Second Counter Insurgency without contention. On the first principle, the fight against the insurgency was led by the civilian government. In this respect, The Prime Minister assisted by his Cabinet was in charge. The situation was different in the First Emergency where the High Commissioner took charge assisted by the Director of Operations when the country was under the British Malaya Administration (BMA) and Persekutuan Tanah Malayu (PTM). The second guidelines, the chain of command works from the top to the bottom with all relevant parties involved at all level. The National Security Council (NSC) was chaired by the Prime Minister, The State Security Council (SSEC) chaired by the Chief Minister and District Security Council (DSC) was chaired by the District Officer. Regular meetings were held with all parties were kept informed on the progress of Security operations and Development projects. It allow the flow of information without much interruptions. The third guidelines, all parties were committed to their jobs. The Security Forces (SF) were involved in Security operations and related civilian agencies on the Development aspects. The Fourth, on the people centric approach, the enforcement of control areas to determine the level of support of the people. This was a rather difficult guidelines to execute as it was a new kind of enforcement activities. Finally, guidelines on winning the heart and minds of the population. It became the duty of Security Forces and other agencies to do 'volunteer works' to assist the various civilian agencies. It was about trying to win over the people to come close to the government, not to support the insurgents. The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) main function was to deter any form of external aggression either by land, sea or air. However, under KESBAN, MAF were concentrated towards "Tactical Operations' that is by conducting Framework Operations and Search and Destroy Operations. Concentration was the CPM's infiltration routes in and out of the South Thailand borders and the activities of the respective Assault Units (AU) especially in the areas of Perak and Pahang where the 5<sup>TH</sup> Assault Unit and 6<sup>TH</sup> Assault Unit were very active against the Security Forces. For instance, the launching of Operation KOTA was concentrated along the entire length of the Malaysia-Thailand border areas from Perlis to Kelantan. Operations INDERA was organised in Pahang monitoring the 6<sup>TH</sup> Assault Unit active activities. Special operations were organised regularly to curb the insurgents activities. Joint-Military-Police Operations were also conducted occasionally such as Operation Bamboo and Pagar. Under the Regional Border Cooperation (RBC), Joint Border Operations were conducted intensively. Military units from both countries gave their utmost cooperation to curb down the CPM activities. Operations Daoyai Musnah and Cahaya Bena were important joint being conducted. A very special consideration under this Joint Border Operations was the agreement given by the government of Thailand to allow the conduct of 'hot pursuit' by Malaysian Security Forces into the Thai territory of maximum distance of 7 kilometres for a period of 72 hours. The Joint Border Operations also allowed the artillery fire on targets in the Thai territory, including bombing by Malaysian Army Artillery units and Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) aircrafts on specific CPM hide-outs.

The application of the Internal Development (IDEV) in KESBAN could be seen in the form of infrastructural development, upgrading agricultural productivity, education development, housing for rural poor and construction of dams and hydro-electric plants. The creation of KESBAN Belt which covered 358 Square Miles in an area 15 miles south of the Malaysia-Thailand border covering from Perlis to Kelantan. Among the area that came under the KESBAN Belt were the Pedu, Muda and Ahning Dams, Temengor Dam and The East West Highway. The creation of the KESBAN Belt enabled the Government to secure the population from becoming the target of the insurgents (Weichong, 2014). Identification of the KESBAN Belt was a smart move. Development projects under the KESBAN Belt were construction of Banding Lake, construction East-West Highway and socio-economic projects such as FELDA and FELCRA schemes. There were also Quick Impact Projects designed to uplift the socio-economic standards and welfare of the rural communities. These projects will help to improve and promote production of rubber, paddy and palm oil. The development project brought changes to the rural people including the Aborigines where it create jobs opportunities. New infrastructure for the rural people such as schools, roads, pipe water and electricity managed to reach them. The concept of cutting the insurgents from the masses done during the First Emergency by creation of 'New villages' took a different form in the Second Insurgency. The significant different were that the insurgent were cut off from their support bases at the same time the government managed to carry on with their development agenda. However, the development projects were not free from the CPM's insurgent harassment. The CPM launched a set back by conducting a massive sabotage by damaging earth-moving equipment (about 55 tractors and bulldozers) on construction work along the East West Highway in on 23 May 1974. About 100 CPM insurgents were involved in planting the explosives (Cheah, 2002). The Security Forces launched massive hunt to track down the insurgents towards the border areas. Follow on to the destruction of equipment, a more coordinated security measures were planned to avoid further CPM harassment to delay the highway project and work on nearby dams. Follow on to that security harassment, the Malaysian Army initiated move to mobile Territorial Army (TA) personnel to conduct Internal Security job manning post along the East West Highway. In that way the regular army have more flexibility with other core duties especially on Joint Border Operations towards the defence of the country.

### **Lessons Learnt From the Application of the KESBAN Concept and Conduct**

In the 'Little Red Book, Mao's Theory stated that "where the enemy was the weakest, the guerrillas would strike, when the enemy masses in strength, the guerrillas would withdraw to the jungle terrain they had long mastered." The Malaysian Second Counter Insurgency took a duration of 21 years 6 months to end which reflect a longer time compared to the First Emergency which took only 12 years. There are certain lessons that can be derived from Insurgency and the KESBAN concept throughout the period of the Second Counter Insurgency. First, the factor on Time. For the Insurgents, time is used to their advantage. They did not set a specific time frame to achieve victory. For the Security Forces time is essential. Every movement and activities are guided and controlled according to duration and time. Fighting a long protracted insurgency war will be very demoralizing affair to the Security Forces. Second, The issue on 'isolation' of the insurgents from their supporters. In both the First and Second and Emergency scenario, the isolation process took place successfully. It was very a costly affair in the First Emergency. Whereas in the Second Emergency, the process of isolation became more complex. To isolate insurgent from the masses require proper planning. The ability to execute the isolation process contributed towards the successful end of the Second Insurgency. Third,



the importance of intelligence networking in Counter Insurgency operations. In the First Emergency, High Commissioner Sir Templer put up a serious emphasis towards intelligence. In the Second Insurgency, the CPM movement and activities covered a wide areas. He went to an extent to increase the capacity and strength of the Police Special Branch. The setting up of diplomatic relations with China and formalising Regional Border Agreement with Thailand enable further access towards CPM's activities and external support. Fourth. The conduct of Tactical Operations by the Armed Forces personnel in support of civilian development project. Development projects are subjected to insurgents sabotage activities. Once that occur it will slow down the implementation process. Proper ratio of Internal Security effort to ensure uninterrupted to the completion of development project. The Malaysian Armed Forces have got a wider role to play. They cannot be tight down towards a particular task. Combining the Armed Forces and Royal Malaysian Police to be the Security Forces (SF) in implementation of KESBAN have been a successful venture to place two entities into a common job. Fifth. The Unity In the Chain of Command with the National Security Council (NSC) was a smart move putting things together into collective responsibility. The post-Counter Insurgency period saw the National Security Council being re-organised into a National Security Department (NSD) under the Prime Minister Office. Each state have its own State Security Department. Future security and development effort could take place with organization already located at the State level. Finally, the Regional Border Cooperation (RBC) between Malaysia and Thailand facilitated Joint Border Operations to be conducted. It created a serious blow to the CPM as they have lost their safe sanctuary in the areas in South Thailand. These safe sanctuary in the areas of Betong Salient and Sadoa District served as their training camps and hide-outs since the First Emergency in 1948.

### Conclusion

In the word of *Walter Lippmann*, 'A nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war. and is able, if challenged. To maintain them by victory in such a war' (Barry, 1991). Over a period of 21 years Malaysia went through fighting the Second Insurgency against the CPM's armed struggle. Throughout that period of counter insurgency Malaysia managed bring down the insurgent's struggle to take over the government and at the same time to maintain its national interest and safe guard its core values. The period counter insurgency against the CPM's armed struggle did not hold on Malaysia's growth. Despite having to face counter insurgency threat at its door step Malaysia was able to move on with it development program and play its role at regional and international level.

Security and Development with the commonly known as KESBAN found its concept and principles effective, workable and acceptable to go through the long period of counter insurgency against the same group of CPM's insurgent who have failed in their first attempt. The firm stand by the national leadership and the strong support from the population allowed the KESBAN concept and principles to be implemented and executed. Along the way, there were bounds to be certain shortcomings and shortfalls. Nevertheless, it met it ends with successful implementation. The CPM's armed struggle is a form of *intra war*. In war there will death, casualties, injuries, damage, and destructions. If was not a war between the Security Forces and the CPM's armed insurgents alone, it was a war that involved the society and the people.

Over a period after the Japanese Occupation of 1945 to the Haadyai Peace Accord of 1989, the country went through two separate armed insurgency launched by the CPM. From the lessons learnt, there are good values that from the concept and principles implemented throughout the period of the Second Counter Insurgency of 1968 to 1989. In the Malaysian environment the concept of Security and development seem practicable and acceptable. For the future, it will still have place in the society as Security and development have been able to assist the nation to go through the difficult times of the Second Insurgency.

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