

Reaction toward formation of malaysia



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REACTIONS TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF MALAYSIA The proposal for the formation of the federation of Malaysia aroused various reactions from various segments within each of the potential Member State as well as neighbouring countries. Within potential member states, the proposal stimulated the sudden rise in political activities. Within the next several month following the Tunku's announcement, several political parties had been formed to cater to various stands that began to emerge. Among the neighbouring countries, Indonesia and Philippines were among those whose reactions were clearly stated and expressed.

There are many reactions from Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Indonesia and Philippines. In Sabah, there are political parties such as UNKO and USNO in Sabah gave a reaction on the issue of Formation of Malaysia. Sabah made several claims as a condition for joining the formation of Malaysia. They want to be joined to the new constitution of Malaysia to protect the rights of Sabah people. At the same time, they want to enter the extra-territorial rights manmade formation of the Constitution of Malaysia such as the national language.

Finally, Sabah agreed to become part of the Malaysia because the leader's solidarity and tolerance attitude had attracted Sabah to be with Malaysia. Next is in Sarawak. SUPP was facing internal division between its moderate wing led by Ong Kee Hui and the more radical wing led by Stephen Yong. Panas supported Malaysia on the basis that Malaysia would provide the security of Sarawak against communists and as a means of attaining independence. Another Malay-dominated party, BERJASA was formed in December 1961. It was led by Datu Tuanku Haji Bujang.

The party declared its opposition to communist but made no clear stand about Malaysia. SNAP opposed to Malaysia and PESAKA supported Malaysia but this support was not unreserved. Among the Chinese, another political party, the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) was formed in July 1962. It was to provide an alternative to SUPP and the leadership was more amenable to the Malaysia idea. The next reaction came from Singapore. Singapore still retained its initial interest in Malaya and was therefore, eager to merge with Malaya when Tunku Abdul Rahman made the proposal in 1961.

The only opposition came from the Communist-dominated party, Barisan Socialis. Despite this, Lee Kuan Yew actively campaigned to support the merger. His efforts paid off and a referendum held on 1 September 1962 indicated that 71.1% of the population of Singapore supported the merger. Singapore was promised autonomy in education, revenue and labour while the central government would be operating in Kuala Lumpur. Its free entreport status would also be maintained. Like Singapore, Brunei was equally keen on the merger, since its ruler, Sultan Ali Saifuddin was hoping to gain protection from a larger country like Malaya.

A. M. Azahari, the leader of the opposition party, Parti Rakyat, however, strongly opposed the merger and led a revolt against the government of Brunei, in which he was defeated. Azahari had an ulterior motive – to merge all the North Borneo territories and place them under the reins of Brunei. Eventually, Brunei changed its mind after the Sultan realized that he wouldn't be given special rights above the other Sultans in Malaya and would have only limited oil reserves if Brunei merged with Malaya. Next is the Philippines.

They opposed the idea of the formation of Malaysia because of several misgiving which is the first one is the Philippines President, Macapagal argued that the British had no right to transfer Sabah over which it had a claim that Sabah is a part of Philippines. This is because Sabah once was a part of Sulu Sultanate. Second, it argued that Malaysia was an artificial and unstable federation that Malaysia cannot protect North Borneo from communism either from China or Indonesia but they can. Third, there was already a plan for MAPHILINDO, a loose confederation of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

MAPHILINDO was described as a regional association that would approach issues of common concern in the spirit of consensus. However, it was also perceived as a tactic on the parts of Jakarta and Manila to delay, or even prevent the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. The last one is the reaction from Indonesia. Indonesia disapproved of the new establishment due to their own ulterior motives. Indonesia, was hoping to merge with Malaya to form "Indonesia Raya" and at the same time, establish an independent North Borneo Federation comprising Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei.

Sukarno at that time declared a Confrontation policy of on Malaysia from January 1963 to August 1966 to voice his objection of the formations of Malaysia. During this period, Indonesia put a halt to all diplomatic relations with Malaysia and launched an attack. Agents were sent to overthrow the Malaysian government and at the same time, create misunderstanding among Malays and Chinese. The confrontation came to an eventual end when Sukarno was replaced by Suharto as the president of Indonesia.

Consequently, a peace treaty was signed between both countries in June 1966. As a conclusion, there are reactions that came from Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Singapore, Philippines and Indonesia about Tunku's idea to form Malaysia. In my opinion, the reaction from these countries did jeopardized Tunku's effort to build a new nation consist of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Singapore and Tanah Melayu and these reactions also threatened Tanah Melayu's security at that time. But after so much efforts and hardworks, Malaysia was finally a reality on 16 September 1963.