



Dances with  
**GARUDA**

Malaysia - Indonesia Bilateral Relations

Ahmad Nizar Yaakub

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2013



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# Preface

In the post-Cold War era, the 'special relationship' between Malaysia and Indonesia appears to have become not as cordial as during the 1970s-80s. In fact, it has been characterized more by conflict and rivalry than cooperation. Many issues have contributed to the tension, namely, clash of personality between leaders, national political transformation, cross-border environmental concerns, illegal migrant workers, separatist movement, territorial disputes, transnational terrorism, and disputes over cultural rights. While examining those specific developments, this book organizes its analysis of Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies, with special reference to their evolving bilateral relations, from a constructivist perspective.

Constructivists believe that culture, ethnicity, leadership, national identity and religious beliefs are among the main factors which should be examined in order to better understand a state's behaviour in relation to other states in the international arena. Those non-material factors, which are ignored or under-studied in the leading international theories which mostly focus on military/economic power and the international system underpinned by balance of power, provide a useful interpretive framework to understand the cases of Malaysia and Indonesia. Deploying this constructivist perspective, this book examines and compares the impact of those factors on Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies in general, and on their conduct of bilateral relations in particular, in the post-Cold War era.

Following a theoretical and background review and an empirical discussion of the foreign policies/relations of Indonesia and Malaysia, other chapters will then present analysis from the prisms of leadership, the *serumpun* tradition, nationalist sentiment, and Islam, before integrating those constructive factors for a final generalized assessment of how the many core facets of foreign policy and bilateral relations of both nations have been socially constructed, and how those non-material factors have inter-

related and influenced each other in causing the actions and reactions taken by both states in the bilateral and international relations.

Apart from aiming at contributing to the study of the two emerging middle powers and leading developing countries, this book also tries to identify the sources of strength and weakness in bilateral relations in order to achieve greater understanding and co-operation between Malaysia and Indonesia.

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The data collection process was not an easy task, and yet it would have been even more difficult without the kind assistance of various library and archival staff. I wish to convey my appreciation especially to the staff of the Scholar Center, UWA Reid Library, University of Malaya Library, the University of Malaya Za'ba Library (special collections), University of Indonesia Library, the Resource Centre at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia, the library at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, National Library of Malaysia, and National Archives in Malaysia and Indonesia. These institutions provided much of the primary and secondary resources used in this research. Many thanks are also due to the staff of the Publication Division, UNIMAS, for their assistance in publishing this book.

My interest in studying Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies and bilateral relations was inspired by the fact that both my maternal and paternal great grandfathers were Indonesian traders from the towns of Bukittinggi and Indragiri respectively, in Sumatra, who used to crisscross the Malacca Straits and finally settled in Selangor, West Malaysia. Naturally,

I still have many relatives in Indonesia, especially the late Pak Diyauddin and family from Bogor, who often visited my family when I was small. I refer to them as my *serumpun* blood relatives.

Over the years I have been researching and publishing on the relevant issues of Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies and regional economic development, mainly in *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malaysian language), including the sole-authored book *Malaysia di Persada Antarabangsa* (Malaysia's role in International Arena) (ISBN: 983-9257-30-7) and co-edited volume *Perkembangan Politik-Ekonomi di Malaysia dan Asia Timur* (Politics and Economic Developments in Malaysia and East Asia) (ISBN: 983-9257-12-9). I have cited some of my works in this research, including my two chapters in the latter book ('Malaysian Foreign Policy: A Critique' and 'Challenges in realizing the ASEAN Free Trade Area'). However, this research gave me a good opportunity to streamline my thoughts and reorganize and integrate the various ideas I have developed over the years. The intellectual satisfaction from this process has been tremendous.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my wife, Dr Siti Zanariah Ahmad Ishak and my children, Razin, Nur Sabrina and Nazmi for their unwavering love and moral support throughout my student years. I am also very grateful to my parents and wife's family for their kindness and generosity.

# Abbreviations

ABIM	<i>Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AMDA	Anglo Malaysian Defense Agreement
ANC	African National Congress
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN+3	ASEAN members (plus China, Japan and South Korea)
BA	<i>Barisan Alternatif</i> (Alternative Front)
BN	<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (National Front)
BPS	<i>Biro Pusat Statistik</i> (Central Bureau of Statistics)
BPUPKI	<i>Badan Penyelidikan Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> (Investigating Body for the Preparation of Indonesia Independence)
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
D8	Developing Eight Muslim Countries
DAP	Democratic Action Party

DDII	<i>Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Council for Islamic Missionary Activity)
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> (People's Representative Assembly)
EAEC	East Asian Economic Caucus
EAEG	East Asian Economic Grouping
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
EU	European Union (formerly known as EEC – European Economic Community)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
G15	Group of 15 Developing Countries
G20	Group of 20 Major Economies
G77	Group of 77 Developing Countries
GAM	<i>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</i> (Free Aceh Movement)
GBC	General Border Committee
Golkar	<i>Golongan Karya</i> (Group of Functionaries)
HMI	<i>Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam</i> (Muslim University Student Association)
ICFM	Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICMI	<i>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia</i> (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals)
IKD	<i>Institut Kajian Dasar</i> (Institute of Policy Study)
ILO	International Labour Organization

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPTN	<i>Industri Pesawat Terbang Nasional</i> (National Aviation Industry)
ISA	Internal Security Act
JI	<i>Jemaah Islamiyah</i>
KAMMI	<i>Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia</i> (Muslim University Student Action Front)
KISDI	<i>Komiti Indonesia Solidaritas Dunia Islam</i> (Indonesian Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World)
KKN	<i>Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotisme</i> (Corruption, Collusion or Cronyism and Nepotism)
KMM	<i>Kesatuan Melayu Muda</i> (Young Malays Union)
KMM	<i>Kumpulan Mujaheedin Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Mujaheedin Group)
RELA	<i>Relawan</i> (Malaysian volunteer security force)
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
Maphilindo	Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia
Masyumi	<i>Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Council)
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MPR	<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People's Consultative Assembly)

MUI	<i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Council of Ulama or Islamic Scholars)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NASAKOM	<i>Nationalisme, Agama, Komunisme</i> (Nationalism, Religion, Communism, or the unity of nationalists, religious people, and communists)
NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operations Council
NU	<i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Resurgence of Islamic Scholars)
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAN	<i>Partai Amanat Nasional</i> (National Mandate Party)
PAS	<i>Parti Islam Se-Malaysia</i> (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party)
PBB	<i>Partai Bulan Bintang</i> (Crescent and Star Party)
PD	<i>Partai Demokrat</i> (Democrat Party)
PDI	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party)
PDI-P	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle)
PETRONAS	<i>Petroleum Nasional</i> (Malaysian National Oil Company)
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PK	<i>Partai Keadilan</i> (Justice Party)

PKB	<i>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa</i> (National Awakening Party)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PNI	<i>Partai Nasionalis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PPKI	<i>Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> (Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence)
PPP	<i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> (United Development Party)
PRRI	<i>Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia</i> (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia)
PRM	<i>Parti Rakyat Malaysia</i> (Malaysian People's Party)
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhyono
SEARCCT	Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism
SIJORI	Singapore-Johore-Riau
SITTDEC	South Investment, the Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre
SOSEK MALINDO	<i>Jawatankuasa Sosial dan Ekonomi Malaysia-Indonesia</i> (Malaysia-Indonesia Social and Economic Committee)
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TIMOR	<i>Teknologi Industri Mobil Rakyat</i> (Indonesian National Car)
UMNO	United Malays National Organization

UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
US	United States
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality

# Glossary

<i>abangan</i>	liberal Muslim Javanese
<i>adat</i>	customary law
<i>ajas</i>	don'ts
<i>azan</i>	the Muslim call for prayer
<i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>	Indonesian language
<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i>	Malaysian language
<i>bangsa</i>	nation; however it also used interchangeably with race
<i>Bangsa Malaysia</i>	Malaysian nation
<i>bangsa Melayu</i>	Malay race
<i>bebas dan aktif</i>	independent and active
<i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i>	Unity in Diversity
<i>budaya Timur</i>	Eastern culture
<i>Budi Oetomo</i>	High or Noble Endeavor
<i>bumiputera</i>	sons of the soil (often refer to ethnic Malays and other 'indigenous' people)
<i>bunga mas</i>	ornamental flowers of gold and silver
<i>daerah istimewa</i>	special province
<i>Daulah Islamiah</i>	Islamic Archipelago
<i>Nusantara</i>	
<i>Darul Islam</i>	Abode of Islam or Islamic state
<i>daulat</i>	spiritual potency
<i>derhaka</i>	disloyal to the sultan or king
<i>ethniKos</i>	tribe or nation

<i>fatwa</i>	Islamic legal opinion
<i>Front Kedaulatan Maluku</i>	Maluku Sovereignty Front
<i>Ganyang Malaysia</i>	Crush Malaysia
<i>glasnost</i>	openness
<i>hajj</i>	Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>halal</i>	Muslim dietary law
<i>Hamengkubuwono</i>	Controller of the Universe
<i>hudud</i>	Islamic criminal laws
<i>Indon</i>	derogatory terms used to refer to Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia
<i>Indonesia Raya</i>	Greater Indonesia
<i>Islam Hadhari</i>	Progressive Islam
<i>jihad</i>	holy war
<i>jilbab</i>	Muslim headgear
<i>kabupaten</i>	regency or district
<i>kaum muda</i>	youth group
<i>kaum tua</i>	elder group
<i>KeAdilan</i>	Justice Party (later known as <i>KeAdilan Rakyat</i> or People Justice Party)
<i>Kedubes</i>	short name for Indonesian Embassy
<i>kesaktian</i>	supernatural power
<i>kejawen</i>	traditional Javanese beliefs
<i>kyai</i>	venerated Islamic scholar
<i>Komiti Pemuda Nasional Indonesia</i>	The Indonesian Youth National Committee
<i>Konfrontasi</i>	Confrontation

<i>kraton</i>	a Javanese palace
<i>Laskar Merah Putih</i>	Red and White Paramilitary troops
<i>Malingsia</i>	derogatory terms used to refer to Malaysia for allege stealing Indonesian culture
<i>Majlis Belia Malaysia</i>	Malaysian Youth Council
<i>Malaysia Boleh</i>	Malaysia Can Do
<i>Mangkubumi</i>	Holder of the Universe
<i>masuk Melayu</i>	enter Malayness or to become a Malay
<i>Melayu Baru</i>	New Malays
<i>memberi aib</i>	to shame someone
<i>memperlekeh</i>	the act of 'looked down' on someone or country
<i>Mendajung Antara Dua Karang</i>	Rowing Between Two Coral Reefs
<i>muafakat</i>	consensus
<i>mufti</i>	Islamic cleric
<i>musyawarah</i>	consultation or deliberation
<i>Nanyang</i>	Southern Seas
<i>otonomi daerah</i>	regional autonomy
<i>Paku Alam</i>	The Nail of the Universe
<i>Pancasila</i>	the five basic principles of the Republic of Indonesia
<i>Parti Perikatan</i>	Alliance Party
<i>patuh</i>	follow order
<i>pendatang haram</i>	illegal immigrants
<i>pendatang tanpa izin</i>	people who entered a country without permission
<i>perestroika</i>	restructuring
<i>Piagam Jakarta</i>	Jakarta Charter
<i>Poros Tengah</i>	Central Axis

<i>pesantren</i>	Javanese Islamic boarding institution
<i>pribumi</i>	indigenous Indonesians or 'son of the soil'
<i>priyayi</i>	Javanese aristocracy
<i>Rabitatul Mujahidin</i>	Mujahidin Coalition
<i>Raja or Maharaja</i>	ruler
<i>reformasi</i>	reformation
<i>ringgit</i>	Malaysian currency
<i>Rukunegara</i>	Articles of Faith of the State
<i>rumpun</i>	means cluster, clumps, family, group, stock or race
<i>rupiah</i>	Indonesian currency
<i>santri</i>	strict follower of Islam (devout Muslim Javanese)
<i>saudara</i>	relatives
<i>Sejarah Melayu</i>	Malay Annals
<i>Semangat 46</i>	Spirit of 46
<i>serumpun</i>	similar stock or race; blood brotherhood
<i>syariah or sharia</i>	Islamic law
<i>ulama</i>	Islamic scholar or teacher
<i>ummah</i>	Muslim community
<i>wahyu</i>	a mandate from heaven or the 'light' (inspiration or virtue)
<i>wali</i>	approximating a saint
<i>Wawasan 2020</i>	Vision 2020
<i>Wawasan Nusantara</i>	Archipelagic Outlook
<i>weltanschauung</i>	world view
<i>Yavadvipa</i>	Golden Islands



# 1 |

## **Introduction**

Despite recent setbacks, Malaysia and Indonesia have emerged as successful new industrializing countries owing to their rapid economic growth and political stability compared to most states in the developing world. They have adopted new approaches in their foreign policies in the post-Cold War period, in view of the new international environment and their own nation-building accomplishment. In this period, Malaysia took a more assertive and active role in international affairs, and Indonesia also began to renew its interest in foreign policy after two decades of passivity as an expression of new national identity and consciousness with an emphasis on gaining international prominence and regional primacy. With both Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta increasing their participation in international affairs, the two emerging middle powers have often clashed with each other. Indeed, problems have emerged in the supposedly “special relationship”. For example, international media has noticed the tension caused by the clash of leadership personalities, the haze from forest fire and open burning, migrant workers, separatist movements, territorial disputes, transnational terrorism, and disputes over cultural rights. In short, in contrast to the 1970s and 80s, the post-Cold War relationship seems to have been defined more by conflict and rivalry, rather than amicable co-operation and traditional sentiment.

This book investigates Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies from a constructivist perspective which investigates the non-material factors specific to particular states which exert considerable influences on their international behaviour. Constructivists believe that culture, ethnicity, elite beliefs, identity, leadership, nationalism and religion should be critically examined to better understand the behaviour of a nation-state in the international arena. These ideational factors or “non-material factors”, under-studied by leading theories in



international relations which mostly focus on material factors such as economic size and military power, provide a useful but rarely utilized interpretive framework for the study of Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies. Using this constructivist framework, the book offers a comparative analysis of the impact of those non-material factors on Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies in general, and on their conduct of bilateral relations in particular, with the focus being on the post-Cold War era. Specifically, this book aims to answer the following questions:

1. What impact did national political leaders have on foreign policies and bilateral relations of the two countries, which have seen long serving leaders and systemically deeply entrenched foreign policy elite?
2. To what extent have similarities in culture and ethnicity, based on the concept of 'similar stock or race' (*serumpun*), influenced the 'special relationship' between Malaysia and Indonesia?
3. What role has nationalism played in foreign policy of the two countries which have forged common international outlook because of historical bond and shared anti-colonial sentiment but also experienced tension in bilateral relations occasionally heightened by differences in colonial legacies and independence paths?
4. How has Islam influenced the foreign policies of Malaysia, where Islam is constitutionally designated the official religion, and Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country? What are the implications of Malaysia's and Indonesia's diverging roles in championing the global Muslim cause? How did the radical Muslim groups influence foreign policies and bilateral relations?



This introductory chapter describes the context in which these questions have arisen, reviews the constructivist approach, highlights the niche contribution of the study, and outlines the organisation of the book.

Constructivist approach centrally frames the discussions in this book, not only because of its theoretical contributions to foreign policy studies, but also because of its unique utility in the context of Southeast Asia. In the post-Cold War era, many international relations theorists have concluded that theories such as realism/neo-realism, liberalism/neo-liberalism and neo-Marxism have failed to provide sufficient explanations to the affairs of states in international relations (Walt, 1998, p. 30). These leading theories have also been unable to elucidate the intricate nature of the international system and, most tellingly, failed to anticipate and explain the end of the Cold War. Some of the mainstream theorists counter this critique by arguing that inherent limitations and destabilizing changes in the international system of states and balance of power were the main reasons for the end of the Cold War. However, without going into details of such defences, the discursive tension remains because they often ignore an important variable, that is, ideational factors (Sullivan, 2002). Constructivism is a new approach to the study of international relations and presents a way out of this tension by arguing that ideational factors such as social norms can define and redefine actors' interests, thus influencing their policies and causing transformations in international relations at large (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Katsumata, 2004; Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999). Unlike the well established paradigms such as realist balance of power theory, the neo-Marxist dependency theory or the liberal regime and democratic peace theories, constructivism is not a mature theory. Rather, it offers an alternative approach which demonstrates how many core facets of international relations are socially constructed. While acknowledging the importance of the state in international relations, constructivism broadens the probe by incorporating actors and factors that realism/neo-realism, liberalism/