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Abstract

This article discusses Malaysia's foreign policy towards the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the rule of Tun Abdul Razak, which is from 1970 to 1976. The issue discussed in this article is the foreign policy introduced by Tun Abdul Razak which is seen as different from the foreign policy of Tunku Abdul Rahman who held the reins of government before. Tunku Abdul Rahman is a leader who does not maintain relations with the People's Republic of China and is highly pro-West. During the rule of Tun Abdul Razak, he acted to establish diplomatic relations with the communist People's Republic of China (PRC), even though at that time Malaysia was still facing the communist

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threat which was the country's main threat. The main focus of this article is to analyze the steps taken by Tun Abdul Razak in strengthening the relations between Malaysia and China. Relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Malaysia began to be established during the era of Tun Abdul Razak's rule. In conjunction with the historic event, the Malaysian side has held meetings and visited the communist country several times informally through economic visits and sports events. This development ended when Tun Abdul Razak made an official visit to China in May 1974 at the invitation of the PRC government. At the end of his visit, a Joint Communiqué was issued stating that Malaysia and the PRC had agreed to establish relations between the two countries. The event is a very important historical milestone in the relations between the two countries because on the one hand it symbolizes the end of a phase in Malaysia's foreign policy which is colored by anti-communist, anti-China and highly pro-Western attitudes.

Keywords: Malaysia's foreign policy, People's Republic of China (PRC), Tun Abdul Razak, steps, Joint Communiqué.

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I. Introduction

The relations between Malaysia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) during Tun Abdul Razak's administration can be seen through the establishment of diplomatic, educational, sports and trade relations. The relations between Malaysia and China have actually been established for a long time through the economic era which is based on the trade and socio-cultural sectors but not through formal diplomatic relations. However, during the reign of Tun Abdul Razak, he opened the way for formal relations with China in September 1970. Tun Abdul Razak adopted the Non-Alignment Policy approach, which was anchored on the principle of coexistence. Malaysia's policy is also seen to be more open when establishing relations with various countries regardless of their ideology. According to Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia will continue to follow the policy of neutrality and the policy of friendship with all countries in addition to making its own independent measurements in all matters. Malaysia's foreign policy at this point is trying to find new friends especially with Third World Countries to increase Malaysia's interest in Non-Aligned Countries. Tun Abdul Razak believes that a stable and peaceful situation in addition to establishing relations with all countries regardless of ideology can improve the country's socioeconomic well-being.¹

¹ Ananda Kumaraseri. "Razak's Big, Wide World," *News Strait Times*, May 16, (2014): 12.

According to Tun Abdul Razak in his speech, Malaysia needs to get along with China because China is beginning to emerge as a major power in Southeast Asia.² The act of ostracizing China is an unhealthy act because as a great power, China has always shown its influence in the Southeast Asian region. Tun Abdul Razak assured that efforts to establish good relations with communist countries will not affect the government's policy to oppose communist movements in the country. He also thinks that as a developing country, Malaysia should not involve itself in the international political scene that is monopolized by the big powers, but rather focus more on national security and development.

In making the foreign policy to establish diplomatic relations with China a success, various steps have been taken by Tun Abdul Razak starting from informal steps to holding formal meetings. Steps such as recognizing China, establishing trade relations, Ping Pong Diplomacy, meeting representatives of the United Nations (UN), and negotiations with ASEAN countries until the release of a Joint Communiqué.

II. Methodology

The research methodology in this writing employs a qualitative approach or literature review. This bibliographic study

² "Koleksi Ucapan-ucapan Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971 [Collection of Speeches by Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971]," National Archives of Malaysia, (1972): 276.

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includes the research and interpretation of sources obtained from the National Archives of Malaysia Kuala Lumpur (ANM), the Tun Seri Lanang Library of the National University of Malaysia (PTSL), the Malay World and Civilization Library, the Center for History, Politics and Strategic Studies of the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and the Law Library of UKM. As a scientific study that uses historical writing methods, primary sources are definitely the main source in this study.

Among the archival materials used are original documents, Domestic and Foreign Government files such as Federation of Malaya File, Colonial Office (CO435), Malay Federation Report (DS596.5), Government White Paper (P-PEN-3), Malay Year Book, Post Surrender Task 1970-1976, Report on the First Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya 1955 (CO 273/657/50601), Public Records Office (IOR F/4/1069), The ASEAN Declaration, the texts of leaders' speeches, Hansard of *Dewan Rakyat*, State Legislatives and Parliament debates. In addition, there are also secondary sources that are used such as newspapers issued during the era of Tun Abdul Razak's rule such as The Straits Times, *Utusan Melayu*, and *Utusan Malaysia*. Newspapers also act as an effective channel in delivering information related to government policies.

III. Informal Relations Between Malaysia And The People's Republic Of China (PRC)

From the 1970s, Malaysia showed a clear interest in establishing relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). This is so because, Tun Abdul Razak found that the issue of national security is closely related to the PRC as a power that always casts its shadow on the Southeast Asian region. Having enjoyed Great Britain's direct commitment under the Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement (AMDA) from 1957 to 1971, Malaysia knowingly or unknowingly needed a water-tight guarantee to replace it because Britain was no longer willing to guarantee Malaysia's security.³ Malaysia must believe and stand on its own feet because in the end national defense is Malaysia's duty and responsibility. In view of the world turmoil that occurred especially in Vietnam where the United States failed to defend South Vietnam and Cambodia from North Vietnam's power, a military agreement with the great powers is no longer attractive to Malaysia because it has been proven that the great powers themselves are not capable of guaranteeing the security of a country.⁴ The proposed idea of non-alignment as a long-term security measure requires blessings from the PRC. Therefore, the PRC began to be mentioned by the top leaders of Malaysia with a

³ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat. First Session*, Vol. 1. No. 1-10. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing of Malaysia, (1971): 223.

⁴ Ismail Abdul Rahman. "A New Era of Regional, Cooperation," Information Department, (1970): 142.

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tone of amicability and not antagonism. Therefore, Malaysia took the first step by recognizing the PRC as a single government in Mainland China.⁵ Malaysia does not recognize Taiwan as a country in Mainland China. However, Malaysia wants Taiwan to be put forward with the principle of self-determination where through this principle, the people of Taiwan are given the opportunity to make their own provisions in choosing the government. This means that Malaysia does not recognize the Two China policy. According to Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia has made major changes to its policy towards China and expects the PRC to pay attention to the attitude shown by Malaysia.⁶ Tun Abdul Razak started to introduce the Neutrality Policy which was not anti-communist but at the same time not pro-communist. This means that Malaysia will reject all doctrines of communism that are not compatible with life in Malaysia. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations between Malaysia and communist countries will be preserved.⁷

Tun Abdul Razak began to change and was interested in establishing diplomatic relations with China when China supported the idea of Southeast Asian neutrality. Tun Abdul Razak explained Malaysia's new policy towards China as a logical policy. Meanwhile, Tun Dr. Ismail expressed Malaysia's

⁵ Official Statement of Parliament. *Third House of Representatives*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia National Printing, (1974): 301.

⁶ "Koleksi Ucapan-ucapan Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971," 316.

⁷ "Koleksi Ucapan-ucapan Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971," 320.

position that it would establish relations with China if it guaranteed the neutrality policy in Southeast Asia.⁸ On the other hand, he insisted that Malaysia cannot ask China to guarantee the Southeast Asian neutrality policy when Malaysia does not recognize it. Malaysia was the first ASEAN country to voice its desire to establish diplomatic relations with China. Malaysia in an effort to establish diplomatic relations with China, this country has withdrawn from the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC) Organization.⁹ ASPAC is an organization founded to oppose communist influence in Southeast Asia. Because Malaysia does not want to be hostile to China and this move is believed to reduce China's threat to the Southeast Asian region. All the efforts made by Malaysia are to show China that Malaysia is no longer anti-China but wants to have friendly relations.

The implementation of the Neutrality Policy has also successfully expanded diplomatic relations with the outside world such as Africa and Asia, Latin America, the South Pacific and the Middle East. Likewise, the relations with China and Vietnam are communist. Although initially these relations are seen as informal relations, the Malaysian government under the leadership of Tun Abdul Razak managed to attract the attention of Communist China when the country acted as the first country to support the

⁸ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat, First Session*, 225

⁹ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1971* [Official Year Book of Malaysia 1971], Volume 6. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Department, (1972): 519.

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Neutrality Policy by Southeast Asia. Therefore, step by step has been taken by Tun Abdul Razak in his efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC.

IV. The Beijing Regime Won a Seat in The United Nations (UN)

The initial step taken in establishing this relation is to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a major power in the region that has a major role to play in the international political arena. Malaysia does not hesitate to mention the importance of the PRC getting a place in the United Nations (UN). Malaysia wants the PRC to be given the same status as the United States and Soviet Russia as superpowers.¹⁰ Malaysia's decision is based on Malaysia's interests and security.¹¹ According to a newspaper report, Malaysia's decision to support the PRC's membership in the UN implies the realization that without China's participation, the plan of Southeast Asian neutrality will not succeed. Malaysia's eagerness to establish relations with the PRC was so evident that Tun Abdul Razak said: "If I receive a formal invitation from the PRC for the purpose of visiting, of

¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia. *Malaysia Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol 4. No.3. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (1970): 42.

¹¹ Azlizan Mat Enh. "Malaysia's Foreign Policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995," *JSSH Pertanika: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 18, no. 2, (2010): 311-320.

course I will consider it.”¹² In relation to the PRC question, Tun Abdul Razak explained in *Dewan Rakyat*:

*“On the bilateral level, our relations with China at present will be at the informal level dealing with trade matters. The question of establishing diplomatic relations will have to be considered as a separate matter at a later date. It is our policy to have diplomatic relations with all countries on the basis of peaceful co existence , respect for our sovereignty and with pon territorial integrity and scrupulous non-interference in our internal affairs or principles which, I need hardly add guider our own action. This is the basis for eventual diplomatic relations which we trust propaganda Pro Ceill in due course be clearly manifested. Let me remind the House that in formula Revolution and exciting our foreign policy we cannot take a theoretical view of things. We can only proceed by accepting the world pens as it is not as we would like it to be by so managing our affairs as to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of our country.”*¹³

¹² Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat, First Session*, 321.

¹³ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat, First Session*, 423.

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Tan Sri Ghazali also thinks that China has its own role which is no less important at the international level.¹⁴ Therefore, the recognition of China is a step that should be taken. As such, Malaysia has started to recognize China and then took action to end its relations with Taiwan. Malaysia has also supported China's entry into the UN when explaining the meaning of Southeast Asian neutrality in 1971, Tun Abdul Razak said that his government would seek support from China, the Soviet Union and the United States and also stated that not including the PRC into the UN was an unhealthy and unrealistic act. This was clearly seen it was again debated, Malaysian representatives no longer insisted that when Taiwan's seat be defended and Malaysia also thought that the problem of the two Chinas is a problem between two Chinese regimes and needed to be solved by them themselves.¹⁵ Tun Abdul Razak stated that Malaysia will vote for China according to Malaysia's stance on China's admission as a member of the United Nations. In 1971, Malaysia was among 76 countries that voted for Albania's motion to restore China's rights in the UN. After the Albanian motion was carried out, the result was 76 votes in favor, 35 against and 17 abstentions. Malaysia's permanent representative to the UN, Mr. Zakaria Ali stated that

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. *Malaysia Foreign Policy*, Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol. 1, No.3. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, (1966): 12.

¹⁵ Ramlan Hamzah. "Communist Party of Malaya: Establishment, Role and Implications," *JEBAT* 3, (1975): 57-70.

Malaysia only recognized one China and there was only one seat for China at the UN after the motion was carried out.

This initial step shows a positive effect when China shows a reaction in its propaganda and this is because of the positive attitude shown by Malaysia. China also began to reduce its propaganda attacks even when the propaganda really attacked Malaysia, the tone was not too harsh. A more interesting development is seen when the news office also refers to the Malaysian government as a “local reactionary ruler” and no longer uses insulting words such as “puppets” or “minions”. Because of that, the use of better labels is closely related to China’s calculation to find the possibility of restoring good relations with Malaysia.¹⁶ The informal recognition shows that China considers Malaysia as an independent and sovereign country. Before that, in February 1971, the PRC had given more than US \$300,00 worth of food and other equipment to Malaysian flood victims.¹⁷ In short, by the end of 1971, the road to normalization of relations between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing was wide open.

¹⁶ Roger Irvine. “The formative years of ASEAN 1967-1975,” in *Understanding ASEAN*, ed. Alison Broinovsky, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, (1982): 74.

¹⁷ Malaysian Treasury. “Malaysia. Anggaran Belanjawan 1970-1976 [Malaysia Budget 1970-1976],” Kuala Lumpur National Archives, (1976): 611.

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**V. Trade Relations Between Malaysia And The People's
Republic Of China (PRC)**

The next step taken by Tun Abdul Razak is through trade between Malaysia and China, it started through rubber export activities which in this way the process of economic cooperation between Malaysia and China can be further expanded. In addition to rubber, Malaysia also exports tin, desiccated coconut and sawn timber to China in its efforts to further expand the market for these goods. In addition, Malaysia also imports a lot of foodstuffs, consumer goods, silk fabrics, machinery tools and medicinal herbs from China. In May 1971, a trade delegation from Malaysia visited the PRC. Chairman of Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PERNAS), Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has led a Malaysian trade delegation to participate in the Trade Expo in Guangzhou. The Premier of China at that time, Chou Enlai and Vice Premier, Li Xiannian held a meeting with members of the Malaysian delegation and Abdullah Majid was also present. In the meeting, Chou Enlai conveyed a message to Tun Abdul Razak that China strongly supports Malaysia's adhering to the principle of independence and the principle of peaceful coexistence. Chou Enlai also emphasized that China adheres to the principle of not interfering in Malaysia's domestic affairs for the benefit of rebels, immigrants and other groups.¹⁸

¹⁸ Malaysian Treasury. "Malaysia. Anggaran Belanjawan 1970-1976," 640

Tun Abdul Razak considered the message as a gesture of friendship from China. Furthermore, when the surprise announcement in July 1971 that President Nixon would pay a visit to China in early 1972 was released, the event further encouraged China and Malaysia to consider more the possibility of better relations. Since then, various cultural, trade and sports missions have been sent from China to Malaysia and vice versa.¹⁹ The PRC sent the first delegation to Malaysia on 27 August 1971 with a total of 13 people who aimed to conduct the Malaysia-Perking trade. This indicates that China has changed its old position and recognized Malaysia's position as a sovereign nation. In the UN assembly in October 1971, Malaysia supported the restoration of the PRC's seat in the UN.²⁰ Through this visit, Tun Abdul Razak had two main motives to place PERNAS in trade relations with China, namely as Malaysia's direct agent in trade matters with China to replace the function of a middleman in Singapore. While the second motive is as an intermediary agent of this country which is responsible for exploring new markets in marketing Malaysian goods in China.

In addition, PERNAS is also responsible for controlling and monitoring matters related to goods traded between the two countries on behalf of Malaysia. As a result, Malaysia's trade

¹⁹ Irvine, "The formative years of ASEAN," 75

²⁰ "Laporan Ekonomi, Jabatan Perangkaan 1970-1975 [Economic Report by the Department of Statistics 1970-1975]," Finance Ministry Malaysia, (1975): 438

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volume with China is increasing. This can be proven when immediately 5,000 tons of palm oil and 50,000 cubic meters of logs were exported from Malaysia to China.²¹ PERNAS, which is the sole representative of Malaysia's trade with China, has ordered goods worth \$9,535,663 from China.²² Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak described the visit of Communist China's informal trade delegation as the beginning of direct trade between Malaysia and China where the benefits benefit both countries. Many more exchanges of trade delegations were held thereafter by both sides.

²¹ "Laporan Ekonomi, Jabatan Perangkaan 1970-1975," 440

²² "Laporan Ekonomi, Jabatan Perangkaan 1970-1975," 447

Table 1: Increase in Trade between Malaysia and China 1971-1975

Year	Exports	Imports	Trade balance
1970	66.7%	228.5%	-161.8%
1971	55.7%	201.7%	-146.0%
1972	76.5%	194.6%	-181.1%
1973	199.5%	365.4%	-165.9%
1974	201.6%	492.9%	-282.3%
1975	127.8%	356.1%	-228.3%

Source: Economic Report, Department of Statistics, 1970-1975. National Archives of Malaysia

Table 1 shows the trade value for China and Malaysia. It can be seen that starting in 1970, the value of exports from Malaysia as much as 66.7% has increased dramatically to 127.8% in 1975. This increase is a large amount which is more than 1 billion Malaysian Ringgit. This achievement is the highest trade value ever achieved by Malaysia since independence. The value of imports is also seen to have increased from 22.8% in 1970 to 356.15 in 1975. In addition, this increase also applies to the trade balance when the trade balance in 1970 of -161.8% increased to

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-228.3% in 1975. However, it was also seen that there was a sharp decrease in certain years such as the decrease in imports in 1972 which was a decrease of 7.1% from the previous year. Likewise in 1975 which experienced a decrease in exports by 73.8% and a decrease in imports by 136.8% from the previous year. Nevertheless, in the 5 years of trade between China and Malaysia, the number of imports and export is still seen to increase.²³ This situation proves that the step to make China a market for merchandise is the right step taken by Tun Abdul Razak.

According to Cheng Ruisheng, who is the former Deputy Director General of the Asia Department in the Chinese Foreign Ministry in his interview, during the visit of the Chinese delegation, the two sides signed many bilateral trade agreements. This greatly encourages the process of establishing China-Malaysia diplomatic relations. The increase in trade between Malaysia and China is becoming more and more significant. This increase is also due to the diversion of China's trade direction which no longer uses Singapore as a middleman in the context of rubber production transactions from Malaysia. As such, it can be seen here that the change in the form and policy of foreign policy as well as the interweaving of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China which was successfully utilized because of Tun Abdul Razak's visit to China during 1974 was the first step in the initiation of an interweaving of diplomatic and

²³ "Laporan Ekonomi. Jabatan Perangkaan 1970-1975," 526

trade cooperation between both countries. When seen through the context of economic cooperation, the trade sector is seen to benefit a lot from the relations at the initial stage, followed by the investment sector, especially on the Malaysian side.

VI. Ping Pong Diplomacy and Malaysia's Official Relations with The People's Republic of China (PRC)

The Afro-Asian Table Tennis Open Tournament would be held in Beijing in November of that same year, a Tables Tennis Organization of Malaysia stated in early 1971. The test would be held to decide who players would compete in that tournament. Since China later struggled to engage with other countries due to its communist ideology, this meeting served as its way of opening up to the globe. It offered Soong, a 21-year-old student studying a Bachelor of Science at the *University of Malaya*, the chance to take a trip to the Mainland.²⁴

“We are excited to compete in China and visit the country for the first time. We didn’t really understand the main purpose of the tournament at that time because we thought too much about the importance of the tournament, said the 64-year-old Soong on 18 October 2014. But we soon realized that it was China’s way of opening its doors to the world, making connections with

²⁴ Haresh Deol. “Interview with former national ping pong player 1917 Soong Poh Wah.” (2014) <https://www.malaymail.com/>.

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many parties. Countries inside and outside the region, including Malaysia."²⁵

Soong stated, "ping-pong diplomacy", as the occasion is understood, is playing the part in modernizing Beijing. Soong performed in Beijing once more in another competition the subsequent year and went to the nation at different times since then. The three-time National Champion (1969-1971) acknowledged that he and his partners did not realize the significance of the 1971 meeting as long as Malaysia and China finally created diplomatic relations with the first ASEAN country with do so on May 31, 1974. The national table tennis team at the time thought this was all about athletic endeavors. However, soon realized it had been not just a different competition. Soong, who represented Malaysia from 1966 to 1975, claimed that the competition helped pave the way for better things for both China and Malaysia.²⁶ The establishment of close relations between the public and corporate sectors with China has undoubtedly helped Malaysia.

Due to its crucial role in forging diplomatic ties not just between China and the United States but also between China and Malaysia, the practice known as "ping-pong diplomacy" is highly well-known. This ping-pong diplomacy plays an important role in building diplomatic relations because this is the starting point for

²⁵ Deol. "Interview with former national ping pong player 1971."

²⁶ Haresh Deol. "Ping-pong diplomacy goes a long way," *The Malay Mail*. Saturday, May 31, (2014): 2

direct contact between Tun Abdul Razak's true intention to establish relations with the PRC. Tan Sri Michael Chen Wing Sum, the Chairman of the Malaysian Table Tennis Association and a close friend to Tun Abdul Razak, led the Malaysian table tennis team to compete in the Asian-African-Latin American Table Tennis Invitational Tournament held in Beijing in 1971, according to Mr. Cheng Ruisheng, the Deputy Director General of the Asian Department in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁷ In the meantime, Tan Sri Michael Chen was assigned to deliver Tun Abdul Razak's letter written in the name of the Chairman of the Malaysian Olympic Committee to Premier Chou Enlai who is the President of the PRC.²⁸ Chou Enlai was pleased with the letter's explicit declaration of the Malaysian government's aim to establish diplomatic ties with the PRC. As soon as he received the letter, Chou Enlai immediately directed the then Foreign Minister, Ji Pengfei to hold a meeting with Tan Sri Michael Chen and a Malaysian diplomatic officer, Raja Tun Mohar who is Tun Abdul Razak's Economic Advisor also participated as a member of the ping-pong delegation to discuss more clearly about Tun Abdul Razak's intentions.

To continue this relation, in 1972 Tun Abdul Razak ordered the Malaysian ping-pong delegation to visit China again as a sign

²⁷ "Interview with the Former Deputy Director General of the Asia Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Mr. Cheng Ruisheng," CRI Online, (2009), <https://malay.cri.cn/>.

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. *Malaysia Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol.4, No.3, 36

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that Malaysia was interested in friendship with China and that there were no issues between the two countries. The Chinese table tennis delegation traveled to Malaysia in 1973 in response to the visit. The chairman of the delegation was the famous Chinese table tennis player, Zhuang Zedong. Mr. Cheng who at that time held the position of Deputy Director-General of the Asia Department in the Foreign Ministry also joined the delegation as vice-chairman of the table tennis delegation.²⁹ This development demonstrates that ping-pong diplomacy not only strengthens ties between the two peoples but also advances the development of diplomatic ties between China and Malaysia. Negotiations to improve diplomatic ties between China and Malaysia began in June of that year in New York. An agreement was achieved because of the meeting.

This statement was supported by Tan Sri Michael Chen after being interviewed in an interview with the *Bernama* newspaper stating that diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China began with a letter which was sent by Tun Abdul Razak to the Chinese Premier Chou Enlai.³⁰ The letter was sent through Tan Sri Michael Chen to Premier Chou Enlai. Chen said to *Bernama*, “I delivered to Chou Enlai the letter written by Tun Abdul Razak, on his position as president of OCM (Olympic Council of

²⁹ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1972* [Official Year Book of Malaysia 1972], Vol 5. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Department, (1974): 496

³⁰ Santha Oorjitham. “Interview with Tan Sri Micheal Chen,” *Bernama*, (2014): 11.

Malaysia).”³¹ Therefore, this situation clearly shows that participating in this ping-pong tournament is one of the wise steps used by Tun Abdul Razak in achieving his intention of conducting diplomatic relations with China.

As a result of this development, Tun Abdul Razak emphasized that Malaysians need to establish relations with all countries regardless of national ideology. This statement was confirmed in his speech:

*“...I stressed out that our foreign policy’s primary aim is to be friendly with all countries who are friendly with us regardless of ideology and social system.”*³²

Five months after that, when announcing Malaysia’s foreign policy under his administration, he expressed his support for the move to recognize the PRC government fully. This development directly led to the end of the “Two China” policy practiced before. The Two China policy refers to the recognition of Taiwan and the PRC as two different countries. Malaysia also later supported and voted *pro* to the resolution proposed by Albania to allow the PRC to attain a seat at the United Nations (UN) in 1971.³³ Therefore, with the recognition of the PRC, the steps to establish formal

³¹ Oorjitham. “Interview with Tan Sri Micheal Chen,” 12.

³² National Archives of Malaysia. “Koleksi Ucapan-ucapan Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971,” 142.

³³ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1971*, 87.

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relations between the Malaysian government and the PRC government began.

**VII. Meeting Between Un Permanent Representatives
Malaysia-China and Discussions with ASEAN Countries**

The next step can be seen when again the two representatives of the country held a meeting in 1972 and at this point the discussion was more formal. Huang Hua is China's Permanent Representative and adviser to Chou Enlai held a meeting with Zakaria bin Haji Mohamed Ali who is the Head Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the UN. The meeting of senior leaders of the two governments twice in a short period of time reflects that China is serious about establishing formal relations with Malaysia. However, Kuala Lumpur set four conditions for Beijing before formal relations were established.³⁴

1. Regarding China's support to the CPM.
2. Cease Chinese electronic media criticism of the government.
3. Pertaining to the whereabouts of Malaysia's 220,000 Chinese residents who are stateless.
4. China needs to provide a clear status of the Chinese community abroad after diplomatic relations are realized.

³⁴ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1968-1973* [Official Year Book of Malaysia 1968-1973], Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Department (1976): 721.

The Chinese government was not prepared to tackle other topics at the time since it was more concerned with bilateral diplomatic ties. Further discussion of the formal ties between the two nations was therefore put on hold until the Chinese government could respond to Malaysia's questions regarding the four points. This action of Tun Abdul Razak clearly proves that despite Malaysia being a small nation and needs the Chinese market, it has never compromised on security and national interests with any party. China gave an answer in October 1973 which is a year after the meeting with Zakaria Ali. The Chinese government gave a clear answer on all four demands from Malaysia where Chinese authorities are prepared to accept the conditions that have been presented by Malaysia. This decision by the Chinese government was made after examining the need to expand the market and to find friends in the continent of Southeast Asia.³⁵ The answers to the four conditions are as follows:

1. The first issue regarding the CPM: China insists that the country's government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will not have relations with the CPM.
2. Second, the Chinese media that condemns the leader and the country; China will stop all forms of

³⁵ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1968-1973*, 655

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propaganda that criticized the Malaysian government or leaders.

3. Thirdly, regarding the migrant Chinese: Beijing gives full autonomy to the Malaysian government to manage the issue either repatriating them to their country of origin or granting citizenship rights.
4. Fourth, the Chinese community without citizenship: China gave full rights to the Malaysian government to manage the Chinese community in Malaysia.³⁶

However, there are three factors that caused China to take a year to give the final word to Malaysia. First, China is still vague in establishing diplomatic relations with Malaysia. Second, maintaining the CCP's relations with the CPM because the CCP did not want the Soviet Union to influence the CPM as happened in Vietnam. Thirdly, the great power's economic problems due to the slowdown and financial deficit that worry about the effects of the Closed-Door Policy worsened when the United States carried out economic sanctions against China. All these factors cause China to find new trading partners such as Malaysia.³⁷ However,

³⁶ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1968-1973*, 472

³⁷ Ghazali Shafie. "Keselamatan Antarabangsa, perlucutan senjata dan wilayah-wilayah damai [International security, disarmament and regions of peace]," in *Malaysia: Nilai Politik dan Budaya* [Malaysia: Political and Cultural Values], Yahya Ismail, eds. Kuala Lumpur: Dinamik Kreatif, (1978): 154

Malaysia accepted China's decision and the two countries finally formally endorsed establishing diplomatic ties. This situation makes Malaysia the first country among ASEAN members to establish normalized relations with China, the 94th country to recognize China as a sovereign country and the 18th country to conduct diplomatic relations with Beijing. While Tun Abdul Razak was the first leader among Asian member countries to receive a special invitation from Chou Enlai to China. The scenario is the highest honor given by China to Malaysia even though normalized relations have not been realized.³⁸

In addition, Mao Zedong, the founder of the Communist Party of China and the man who oversaw the Chinese communist revolution, gave Malaysia the assurance that the CCP would not have any contact with the CPM in terms of providing financial aid, military support, or moral support during Tun Abdul Razak's trip to China.³⁹ This situation clearly shows that, in addition to Malaysia's success in establishing normalized relations with China, the country also succeeded in establishing party-to-party relations in a short period of time. The arguments explain that Tun Abdul Razak has applied a strategy of adapting to the current situation compared to Tunku who applied a strategy of isolation. The diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China are the

³⁸ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat. Fourteenth Session*. Kuala Lumpur, National Printing of Malaysia, (1974): 271.

³⁹ Ministry of Communication, Malaysia. *Buku Rasmi Tahunan Malaysia 1968-1973*, 479

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greatest success achieved by Tun Abdul Razak in his efforts to establish the concept of Southeast Asian neutrality and build a strong security and defense system in the region. This diplomatic relation has indirectly encouraged China to recognize the concept suggested by Malaysia and ensure the Southeast Asian region is safe from the threats of other world powers.

Besides, up until 1974, the development of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and China was successfully negotiated. The progress achieved allowed Malaysia to make the expectation that the two countries would establish diplomatic relations. Negotiations took place in early 1974 between Tun Abdul Razak and President Suharto of Indonesia to enable Tun Abdul Razak to tell when Malaysia would recognize Peking. Other ASEAN member countries namely Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines have been notified earlier. Indonesia and Singapore are the only ones who want to see Malaysia not immediately establish relations with the PRC.⁴⁰ Indonesia, which has severed relations with China following China's intervention gave support to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to seize power on September 30, 1965.⁴¹ Indonesia has been suspicious of the PRC

⁴⁰ Rohani Hj. Ab Ghani, Mat Zin Mat Kib, and Azlizan Mat Eah.

"Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation and the Peace Talks for Restoration of Relationship." *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 23, no. 3, (2020): 103-142.

⁴¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia. *Dua Puluh Lima Tahun Departemen Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia* [Twenty-five Years of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia]. Jakarta: Deplu Employee Welfare Foundation, (1994): 76.

since the incident. Singapore, on the other hand, sees the progress made between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing with concern because the development will create pressure from Singapore's Chinese community to follow Malaysia's steps. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his cabinet did not agree to get closer to China. Singapore does not want to be considered a country that leans towards the PRC that understands communism because most of the Singapore's population is Chinese.⁴² Nevertheless, negotiations with the Philippines and Thailand showed a positive effect when the Philippines and Thailand did not behave like Indonesia and Singapore. The two countries are also preparing to establish relations with China. However, the Philippines wants to act to recognize Moscow and Peking at the same time, which are two hostile communist powers. Thus, the Philippines does not show favoritism to either Moscow or Beijing. Malaysia wants to continue its ambitions because the situation has changed now and Malaysia is very safe to start a relationship with China. This is because, China also started to show interest in Malaysia by reducing its propaganda attacks even when the propaganda really attacks Malaysia, the tone is not too harsh. A more interesting development was seen when the news office also referred to the

⁴² Evelyn Goh. "Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies," East-West Center Washington Policy Studies 16, Jan 1, (2005): 34.

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/meeting-china-challenge-us-south-east-asian-regional-security-strategies>.

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Malaysian government as a “local reactionary ruler” and no longer used insulting words such as “puppets” or “minions.”⁴³

Besides, China is an important segment of Tun Abdul Razak’s larger dream of a neutral and peaceful Southeast Asia. In addition, Malaysia's move is in line with the emergence of Malaysia's new foreign policy, which is to not take sides and maintain an “equidistance” position between the major powers. Malaysia’s far more important ambition remains the concept of neutrality for Southeast Asia:

“... our relations with China will contribute towards realizing that objective (neutralization) as without China's participation and support, no neutrality system in Southeast Asia can work because China is an important power in Southeast Asia.”⁴⁴

The result of the following developments shows that on May 28, 1974, Tun Abdul Razak received a formal invitation from the PRC government through a letter by Premier Chou Enlai. Through Tun Abdul Razak’s visit to China, formal relations between the Malaysian government and the PRC government began. The six-day visit from May 28 to June 2, 1974 saw the two governments negotiate to establish diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China. At the end of this long discussion, a joint

⁴³ Irvine, “The formative years of ASEAN 1967-1975,” 53.

⁴⁴ “Koleksi Ucapan-ucapan Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein 1971,” 144

communique was issued between the Malaysian government and the PRC government.

VIII. Joint Statement Of The Government Of Malaysia And The People'S Republic Of China

In the framework of the visit, Tun Abdul Razak, Premier Chou En-Lai, Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien held a wide-ranging exchange of ideas covering various matters related to the relations between the two parties, regionally and internationally. The two premiers concurred that Southeast Asia has undergone significant changes recently that are beneficial to people in all nations and consistent with the interests of the people of China and Malaysia to forge links between the two nations.⁴⁵ The two premiers have chosen to issue a joint statement to proclaim the relations between the two nations in order to achieve this goal. The Joint Communique on 31 May 1974 officially established diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China. The discussion touched on several principles regarding Malaysia-China friendly relations.

The principles discussed are very meaningful to Malaysia's security and peace in the future when the Chinese government stated that it strongly supports the concept of a neutral country introduced by Tun Abdul Razak. Among them, in Tun Abdul Razak's discussion with Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, Premier Chou En-lai and Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien and other Chinese leaders,

⁴⁵ William Shaw. *Tun Abdul Razak: His Life and Times*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malaysia Sdn. Bhd, (1976): 85.

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Tun Abdul Razak was given firm confidence that China described the remaining terrorists as exists in the country as a problem within the state of Malaysia itself and it is up to Malaysia to take reasonable action.⁴⁶ The Government of the People's Republic of China will also stop all forms of aid or support to the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM).

This statement is explained through the agreement of the five principles of living that have been agreed upon by both parties, namely:

- i. Mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereign states.
- ii. Mutual restraint.
- iii. Respecting each other's privacy and internal concerns.
- iv. Equality and mutual benefit.
- v. Coexistence in peace.

In addition, the Chinese government together with Malaysia has firmly stated opposition to invasion, intervention, conquest and subversive activities by foreign powers that is prohibited and acknowledges that a nation's citizens have the unalienable freedom to choose and determine the social order that exists there. They oppose any effort made by a nation or group of nations to forge a sphere of influence or establish a territory under its control

⁴⁶ Parliamentary Hansard. *Fourth House of Representatives*, 2nd term. bil 31-40. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing of Malaysia, (1976): 150.

anywhere in the world. All this is a fact that the communist terrorists had to accept at that time. The social system in Malaysia was chosen freely by the people themselves.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the terrorists tried to impose a system and national ideology of Malaysia in the pattern of the Communist Government. The terrorists are also trying to use violent means to overthrow the legitimate government that was democratically elected by the people, which is recognized by all countries in the world including the Chinese government itself.

Tun Abdul Razak in the Parliamentary debate has insisted that these communist terrorists must face reality and realize that their struggle is futile and fruitless. They have no reason to continue the struggle and commit brutal murders of innocent people. Through Tun Abdul Razak's statements since returning from Peking, Tun has been interested in these matters and urged the communist terrorists to lay down their arms, cease the struggle and return to the community. Next, during Tun Abdul Razak's visit to Peking, he also touched on the Taiwan problem. In this statement, Malaysia stated its stance and reaffirmed its government's acceptance of the Chinese government as the only legitimate ruler of the People's Republic of China. It also recognized the Chinese government's stance that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. However, this has been Malaysia's position before. Although Malaysia has had consular

⁴⁷ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat. Fourth Session*. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing of Malaysia, (1974): 261.

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relations with Taiwan since 1965, Malaysia clarified that this was not interpreted as Malaysia's recognition of the Government of Taiwan.⁴⁸ So, here in line with Malaysia's new standards that establish friendly relations with China, the Malaysian Consulate Office in Taiwan and the Taiwan Consulate General Office and other Taiwanese Government agencies in Kuala Lumpur have been closed.

Before the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China, Malaysia and Taiwan had relations at the consulate general level. At that time, the two countries had a good relationship, especially in the field of business. Taiwan also gives places to Malaysian students in its universities. Most of them are students of Chinese descent. Taiwan also gives them scholarships. Many Malaysian farmers are sent to Taiwan to study agriculture in Taiwan. However, after the official establishment of diplomatic relations, Malaysia's relations with Taiwan were limited to people-to-people relations and on the basis of local conditions.⁴⁹ This means that there is no obstacle for Malaysians individually to visit Taiwan, carry out private business, trade and so on or conduct other normal business affairs. Malaysia Airlines (MAS) will continue its service to Taipei as this is included in the category of people-to-people connections.

⁴⁸ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat. Fourteenth Session*, 186.

⁴⁹ Parliamentary Hansard, *Third Dewan Rakyat. First Session*, 194.

Another important thing for Malaysians because of Tun Abdul Razak's visits to Peking, China is the position of people of Chinese descent in Malaysia. Tun Abdul Razak explained to the Chinese leaders about the multi-racial people living in Malaysia and the efforts of the Malaysian government to create a united Malaysian nation from the multi-racial people. Here, the Chinese leaders have shown sympathy and understanding towards Malaysia's goal of creating a united Malaysian nation and have firmly emphasized their view that the future position of the overseas Chinese is determined by the government and people of the country they inhabited. They must obey the laws, adhere to the customs of their own country, the country they live in, and they must consider themselves part of the local community and not separate from it.

It is clear here that both the Malaysian and Chinese Governments do not recognize dual citizenship. This means that people of Chinese descent who have taken or obtained Malaysian citizenship automatically lose their Chinese citizenship and the PRC government does not have any rights towards them. For other people of Chinese descent who have resided in Malaysia, who are not citizens of Malaysia or a third country and voluntarily wish to hold Chinese citizenship, the Chinese government in accordance with its unchanged policy, will oblige them to comply with the laws of the Government Malaysia, respect the customs and habits of its people and live in harmony with them. Their reasonable rights and interests will be protected by the Chinese

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Government and will be respected by the Malaysian Government. Malaysia has agreed that if they wish to continue to be considered as citizens of the PRC, Malaysia will recognize them as citizens of the PRC, provided they have documents from the PRC government showing that they are citizens of that country.⁵⁰

The Joint Communique among others has also decided to mutually recognize their respective governments and establish diplomatic relations starting from the date this Joint Communique was announced. The Chinese Government recognizes the Malaysian Government and respects Malaysia's independence and sovereignty. The two premiers also agreed that the two Governments, in accordance with international practice, will provide each other with all assistance deemed necessary to establish and carry out the duties of embassies in their respective capitals and that their respective Ambassadors will take their place as soon as possible. Another result following the meeting of the heads of state of the two countries is China's support in principle for the neutrality plan for Southeast Asia. By that time, the concept of ZOPFAN had attracted the interest of China because it could be used as a way to reduce or fight Soviet Russia's efforts to encircle China. This became more important with Saigon and South Vietnam surrendering to the Viet Cong on 30 April 1975.⁵¹ As a result, the leaders of ASEAN have followed the steps of Tun Abdul Razak to make peace with the

⁵⁰ Parliamentary Hansard. *Third Dewan Rakyat. Fourth Session*, 311

⁵¹ Shaw, *Tun Abdul Razak: His Life and Times*, 127

communist regime, especially China. The discussion and agreement between the two governments of Malaysia and China is stated as follows:

1. The Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia, with a view to promoting the traditional friendship of the two peoples, have decided upon mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations as of the date this Communiqué is published.
2. The two Governments hold that although the social systems of the People's Republic of China and Malaysia are different, this should not constitute an obstacle to the two Governments and peoples in establishing and developing peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. The two Governments consider all foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion to be impermissible. They hold that the social system of a country should only be chosen and decided by its own people. They are

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- opposed to any attempt by any country or group of countries to establish hegemony or create spheres of influence in any part of the world.
3. The Government of Malaysia recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China and acknowledges the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Malaysian Government decides to close down its consulate in Taipei.
 4. The Government of the People's Republic of China recognizes the Government of Malaysia and respects the independence and sovereignty of Malaysia.
 5. The Government of the People's Republic of China takes note of the fact that Malaysia is a multi-racial country with people of Malay, Chinese and other ethnic origins. Both the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia declare that they do not recognize dual nationality. Proceeding from this principle, the Chinese Government considers anyone of Chinese origin who has taken up his own will or acquired Malaysian nationality as automatically

forfeiting Chinese nationality. As for those residents who retain Chinese nationality of their own will, the Chinese Government, acting in accordance with its consistent policy, will enjoin them to abide by the law of the Government of Malaysia, respect the customs and habits of the people there and live in amity with them. And their proper rights and interests will be protected by the Government of China and respected by the Government of Malaysia.

6. Premier Chou En-lai and Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak agree that the two Governments, in conformity with international practice, will provide each other with all necessary assistance for the establishment and performance of the functions of embassies in their respective capitals and that ambassadors will be exchanged as soon as practicable.⁵²

All these developments clearly show that Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak's official visit to China is the wisest move and has successfully covered the principles of neutrality and friendship that can guide Malaysia's foreign policy and Malaysia's efforts to create a new relationship between Malaysia

⁵² "Kenyataan Bersama Malaysia dan kerajaan Republik Rakyat China [Joint Communique of Malaysia and the Government of the People's Republic of China]," National Archives of Malaysia, (1974): 4.

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and China. The step taken by Tun Abdul Razak is important and very meaningful because this visit not only benefits Malaysia's international relations but also the security of the Southeast Asian region. With the establishment of this relation, it becomes an example for other Southeast Asian countries to also establish diplomatic relations with China.

IX. The Impact of The Establishment of Bilateral Diplomatic Relations Between Malaysia and China

The decline in the price of rubber and the economic slowdown in the United States caused Tun Abdul Razak to find new trading partners. At the same time, there was a change in China's economy when the great power was involved in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in 1970.⁵³ As a new superpower, China has not only managed to attract the attention of Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries to establish diplomatic relations, but major world countries such as the United States are also interested in establishing relations with China. Looking at this situation, Tun Abdul Razak began to formulate a strategy to make China a new trading partner. Therefore, Malaysia took the opportunity of the Chinese market when a delegation of 19 people led by Tengku Razaleigh was sent to China in May 1971. The main mission of the delegation was to find market opportunities, business and increase cooperation in the rubber industry. As a

⁵³ Takayoshi Kusago and Zafiris Tzannatos. "Export processing zones: a review in need of update," Social Protection Discussion Papers and Notes 20046, The World Bank, (1998): 13

result of the delegation, China has agreed to buy 200,000 tons of rubber from Malaysia in the same year. This rubber export is seen to be in high demand from previous years. The amount increased significantly to 350,000 tons of rubber in 1975. The result of this development has brought an implication that China is a new economic power. David Shambaugh claims:

*“China will only grow stronger, and its central geographic position in Asia will dictate (dictate?) that it has an interest and role to play in almost every regional issue. If present trends continue, by the early twenty-first century, China will join the United States, Japan and the EEC as one of the world's four leading economic powers.”*⁵⁴

Tun Abdul Razak's willingness to establish wider relations, especially in terms of diplomatic relations, has caused a great impact⁵⁵ on the trade sector. Trade delegations began to make visits and assess the prospects for establishing trade relations. These visits include the one made by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah

⁵⁴ David Shambaugh. “China's Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era.” *Survival* 34, no. 2, (1992):75.

⁵⁵ Sasirekha Kandasamy, Tan Kim Hua, and Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan. “The Impact of a Debriefing Strategy in Online ESL Classrooms,” *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21, no. 2, (2022): 247-262. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.3.13>.

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as Chairman of PERNAS.⁵⁶ In the following years, Malaysia's trade with China increased drastically. Even when the country's rubber market was facing its dark ages, China had promised an annual purchase involving a total of 150 000 to 200 000 tons per year.⁵⁷ This increase is also due to the diversion of China's trade direction which no longer uses Singapore as a middleman. The direct effect of this trade caused a high increase in the total amount of trade between the two countries. This situation can be seen when in 1971, China was Malaysia's second largest economic partner. Imports from China amounted to RM 44.7 million while exports amounted to RM 7.4 million.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Parliamentary Debate. *Third Dewan Rakyat, First Session, Part II*. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing of Malaysia, (July 27, 1971): 260.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Debate. *Third Dewan Rakyat, First Session, Part II.*, 267.

⁵⁸ R. K. Jain. *China and Malaysia, 1949-1983*. New Delhi. Radiant Press, (1984): 32.

Table 2: Malaysia's Trade with China 1970-1976 (in \$ million)

Year	Imports from China	Exports to China
1970	32.62	0.22
1971	26.72	1.08
1972	40.67	3.70
1973	124.93	1.28
1974	155.26	3.91
1975	108.57	51.04
1976	87.38	49.03
Total	576.15	110.26

Source: China, State Statistical Bureau, Statistical Yearbook of China 1981

However, according to Datuk Haji Hamzah, the Minister of Trade and Industry stated that the trade balance between Malaysia and the People's Republic of China is still excessive on the Chinese side. Malaysia imports more than it exports to China. In 1974, Malaysia's exports to China amounted to \$3.9 million and imported goods amounted to \$155.26 million.⁵⁹ China is Malaysia's main food supplier due to China's proximity to Malaysia. Malaysia imports approximately 50 types of materials from China.⁶⁰ Among the main ingredients include rice, paper, vegetables, dried fruits, seed oils, tea and cloth. Malaysia's main exports to China are rubber, *kayan* wood and palm oil. Considering the industrialization plan in China, China has

⁵⁹ Parliamentary Hansard, *Fourth House of Representatives, 2nd term*. bil 31-40, Kuala Lumpur, National Printing of Malaysia, (July 30, 1976): 225.

⁶⁰ Parliamentary Hansard, *Fourth House of Representatives, 2nd term*. bil 31-40, Kuala Lumpur, National Printing of Malaysia, (Julai 30 1976): 231.

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increased the purchase of raw materials, especially rubber from Malaysia for its tire and shoe companies. In Malaysia's efforts to encourage China to buy more raw materials, Malaysia has invited missions from China to visit Malaysia to study and understand Malaysian products more deeply. Until July 1976, two missions from China had visited Malaysia, the last of which was the rubber mission which arrived in June 1976.

Table 3: Malaysian Rubber Imports to China, 1970-1976 (in thousands of tons)

Year	Malaysian rubber exports to China	Export of other raw materials to China
1970	101.86	199.00
1971	104.45	205.8
1972	131.17	221.4
Total	337.48	626.2

Sources: Malayan Rubber Statistics Handbook, Federation of Malaya Department of Statistics, International Rubber Study Group, Rubber Statistical Bulletin, London 1981

In addition, Malaysia has also sent a trade delegation to China. a delegation from the Malaysian Rubber Exchange and Licensing Board visited China in 1975. The results of the visit were very encouraging. China has promised to buy as many as 40 000 metric tons of Malaysian rubber in addition to giving an account to increase the import of timber, cocoa and palm oil from

Malaysia.⁶¹ In addition, the future of timber trade has improved because China needs these materials for its construction industries and also for the construction of railway tracks.⁶²

X. CONCLUSION

The study of Malaysia's foreign policy towards the People's Republic of China during the administration of Tun Abdul Razak is an assessment of Tun Abdul Razak's contribution to implementing and strengthening Malaysia's foreign policy from 1970 to 1976. The foreign policy for a sovereign country like Malaysia is to maintain the integrity of borders, political freedom, and economic development including achieving a good standard of living for the people of a country. A country that has just achieved independence needs to find many friends so that the enemy of a country does not dare to invade the country. Therefore, there are several important things that Tun Abdul Razak is trying to apply to build a dynamic, relevant and strong form of foreign policy for Malaysia. Tun Abdul Razak tried to organize a Malaysian foreign policy that was neutral and did not favor any party or bloc. This concept supported by Tun Abdul Razak has allowed Malaysia to be accepted in the Non-Aligned Movement. He has also proposed the concept of excluding Southeast Asia

⁶¹ Parliamentary Hansard, *Fourth House of Representatives, 2nd term. bil 31-40*, 117.

⁶² Statement of Parliamentary Debates. *Fourth House of Representatives, Term 2, Volume 1. Number 11*. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Malaysia, (October 28, 1975): 194.

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which was originally inspired by Tun Dr. Ishmael. Based on these two factors, Tun Abdul Razak has succeeded in building a concept of Malaysian Foreign Policy that is pragmatic, robust and superior in Southeast Asia.

Therefore, in Malaysia's view, the emergence of China as an economic and military superpower is a fact that needs to be accepted and considered a development that can bring positive implications, both to the country and the regional community. In the economic sphere, China's economic well-being acts as an effective 'engine' of regional economic growth, in addition to bringing spillover effects to economic partner countries that have a high degree of economic complementarity with it. In fact, China's economic leadership in East Asia can help realize the goal of regional economic integration. In the early stages of Malaysia-China relations, cooperation between Malaysia and China was limited to trade only. Indeed, the emergence of China as a superpower with a moderate attitude and responsibility toward the international community will bring an element of stability to the regional security scenario.

In such a context, a more comprehensive Malaysia-China bilateral relationship that includes cooperation in security aspects can certainly be realized for mutual interests and benefits. Of course, establishing a good relationship is not something that is easily achieved. In addition to the constraints that have been

imposed through their respective colonial⁶³ experiences, the relationship between the two countries has also been disrupted by the existence of the cold war.⁶⁴ So, when we look back, we cannot ignore, rather we should appreciate the tenacity and efforts of the leaders especially Tun Abdul Razak, Chairman Mao Tze Tung and Prime Minister Chao En Lai who had the goal and passion to re-establish relations between the two countries in 1974.

⁶³ Koh Kuan Wei, Zubaidah V.P. Hamzah, and Azlizan Mat Enh. "Perkembangan Teknologi Komunikasi dan Sumbangannya kepada Pentadbiran British dan Masyarakat di Negeri-Negeri Selat 1902-1938 [The Development of the Communication Technology and its Contributions to the British Administration and Society in Straits Settlements 1902-1938]," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 37, No. 9, (2021): 107-125. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2021-3701-07>.

⁶⁴ Azlizan Mat Enh. "World War 1: Who Was to Blame?" *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 13, no. 3, (2010): 45–88. <https://doi.org/10.6185/TJIA.V.13.N3.P45P88>.

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