

Sukarno's Neo-Colonialism

The birth of the Federation of Malaysia has unleashed a new and wholly inexcusable storm over the islands of Southeast Asia. Within hours of the proclamation of the new state, this is what happened:

Indonesia reaffirmed its opposition to the federation and mobs of President Sukarno's National Front attacked the Malaysian and British Embassies in Jakarta, hanging effigies of "Uncle Sam" in the bargain. In retaliation, rioting Malaysians sacked and partly burned the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. And Malaysia broke off diplomatic relations with both Indonesia and the Philippines, its two most powerful neighbors, because of their refusal to recognize the new state.

The responsibility for these events rests principally on President Sukarno and to some extent on the Philippines. Both agreed at their Manila "summit meeting" with Malaysian Prime Minister Rahman to "welcome" Malaysia and cooperate with it if a U.N. survey showed the people of North Borneo and Sarawak to be really for it. Secretary General Thant has attested that a "sizable majority" is indeed for the federation. But both Indonesia and the Philippines have defaulted on their promise.

President Sukarno has made no secret of his ambition to annex North Borneo, just as he has annexed West New Guinea. He has announced a "policy of confrontation" with Malaysia, has trained guerrillas to carry it out on the spot and proclaims that nothing can be done in the area without his consent. The Philippines lay claim to North Borneo, but at least they have attempted to act as peacemakers and have rejected Malaysian recognition only for the present.

Britain is pledged to defend the new federation and Australia has warned Indonesia against an overt attack. In any case, the hopeful beginnings of cooperation between the principal states in this vital region are now in ruins—basically because of Sukarno's neo-colonialism.

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