

THE ROLE OF MALAYSIA IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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Abstract

During the 69th session of United Nations General Assembly, Malaysia has once again been elected as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (hereinafter refer as "UNSC") for two-year mandate commencing on 1st of January 2015.¹ This article discusses the role and nature of Malaysia's foreign policy in serving the non-permanent seat of the UNSC. In Part I, the article discusses the key roles of non-permanent members in the UNSC and the importance of UNSC as part of the organization. In Part II, the article broadly discusses the foreign policy of Malaysia propounded nationally in maintaining the relationship between regional and international organizations as well as multilateral relationships with other states. In Part III, the article will provide examples on the application of national foreign policy under the UNSC when deliberating peace and security issues under the mandate as UNSC's non-permanent member.

Keywords: Foreign policy; Malaysia; non-permanent member United Nations Security Council

Part I - WHAT IS UNSC?

Malaysia is a member of the UN since 17th of September 1957. Despite the political overhaul with the merger of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore in 1963 with the latter's separation in 1965, Malaysia's membership remained intact and status as sovereign state indisputable.

United Nations on the other hand is an international organization established after World War II guided by United Nations Charter with the mandate of keeping peace within the international community and provide platform for interstate communication. UNSC is one of the six principle organ created as an executive power of the organization in matters relating to threats to peace and determination of actions taken in response to these threats. Besides, UNSC can even resort to imposing sanction or authorize use of force to restore international peace and security.

UNSC membership is limited to 15 states only and divided into two categories whereby the first category is the permanent members which represents the great five power that won the Second World War. These permanent members have veto power that would negate the resolution proposed by the council with only one negative vote. While the second category is named as the non-permanent member which is elected by the general assembly with two year mandate only and selection is based on regional basis. Although the non-permanent members do not have veto power however every decision made by the UNSC require affirmative vote which include

¹ This is the fourth time Malaysia was elected as UNSC's non-permanent member for the term from 2015 till 2016. The previous seats were in 1964-1965, 1989-1990 and 1999-2000. Malaysiaunsc.kln.gov.my, (2016) "MALAYSIA - United Nations Security Council (UNSC) - Background", <http://malaysiaunsc.kln.gov.my/index.php/malaysia-at-theunsc/background> (accessed 24 February 2016).

concurring vote of all the non-permanent members. Resolutions passed by the UNSC requires compliance by all the member states.

On its fourth election as non-permanent member of UNSC, Malaysia stresses the importance of human security and thematic issues on the Council's agenda such as women, peace and security and children and armed conflict; along with working methods and peacekeeping. It highlights the relevance of the concept of "moderation" along the continuum between conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding.²

This position will enable Malaysia to leverage its foreign policy and play a significant role in various multilateral issues that affect its interest.

Part II - MALAYSIA FOREIGN POLICY

Holding the UNSC seat for 2015-2016, Malaysia is determined to continue advocating the vision of peace through moderation by promoting mediation as better means to dispute resolution and enhance the peacekeeping operations besides providing technical support to countries in need. However, Malaysia also stresses the need to reform in the UNSC.³

Yet, Malaysia also propagated the need for UN to cooperate with the regional organizations to maintain the global peace. It is pertinent to note that in 2015, Malaysia was elected as the Chairman of a regional organization namely ASEAN. This has guided Malaysia to prove the regional cooperation could overcome the contemporary challenges of the global security through inclusive, flexible, responsive and adaptable forms of cooperation, especially in the case of complex joint endeavours such as peacekeeping, peace building and post conflict reconstruction. However, Malaysia stresses the need to have sufficient financial and capacity building support to safeguard the aspiration of regional-international cooperation to prevent burden sharing to shifting.⁴

Part III - PRACTICAL OUTLOOK OF MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Assuming the position as Non Permanent Member in UNSC on 2015, Malaysia has play a key role in SC to affirm, recognize, commend and as well as critics towards some issues. This writing will see on how Malaysia put its stand and position on certain matters raised. It will highlight the

² Security Council Elections. Special Research Report 2014 No. 2. Security Council Report.

³ Un Int, (2016) "Statements Made at the Security Council Malaysia", https://www.un.int/malaysia/statements_speeches/statements-made-security-council (accessed 25 February)

⁴ ASEAN (2016), "International / Regional Organisations - ASEAN | ONE VISION ONE IDENTITY ONE COMMUNITY", <http://www.asean.org/asean/external-relations/international-regional-organisations/> (accessed 25 February 2016).

statements made by Malaysia during the UNSC meeting in regards to issues arising in (a) Asia & Middle East region, (b) African region and (c) European region.⁵

(a) Asia & Middle East region

Malaysia plays an active role in addressing situation happened in Middle East especially the Afghanistan, Israel – Palestine and Yemen issues. Even before Malaysia elected as the Non Permanent Member of UNSC, Malaysia is the leading country in oppressing Israel occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Afghanistan

The attack by Taliban has sparked a devastated situation in Afghanistan. As the Non Permanent Member of Security Council, Malaysia has speak its position on the protection of women and child during the attack or war. Pursuant to Resolution 1612⁶ , Malaysia glad that the Afghan government complied with the resolution.⁷

UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is extending the Security Council mission to stabilize the peace of Aghanistan. Malaysia has taken his time to appreciate UNAMA as the sole mission to reconcile the progress in Afghanistan in many speeches on Afghanistan issue⁸. In fact, Malaysia has sent a troop of Malaysian police to join the mission. Due to Malaysia spirit in aiding Afghanistan, International Stabilization Assistance Force (ISAF) has recognized Malaysia for contributing their work in Afgahnistan from 2003 – 2014⁹.

Israel – Palestine issue

As the Non-Permanent Member of UNSC, Malaysia has demanded some actions that should be taken by UNSC, UN and the global citizens that include:

1. Implementation of internationally recognised initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative, the Oslo Accords, the Quartet Road Map, the Madrid Terms of Reference, and relevant Security Council resolutions. Malaysia also commends the diplomatic initiatives by the United States in trying to revive the peace talks.¹⁰

⁵ The regions stipulated covered by Malaysia’s statement as Non-Permanent Member at UNSC from March 2015 – February 2016 only.

⁶ Monitoring of Child Soldiers adopted by UNSC on 26th July, 2005.

⁷ Statement made by H.E Ambassador Dato’ Ramlan Ibrahim on 22nd June, 2015 pursuant to Security Council Debate: Situation in Afghanistan/UNAMA.

⁸ Statement made by H.E Ambassador Hussein Haniff on 16th March, 2015 for the Situation in Afghanistan 7403rd Meeting of Security Council.

⁹ International Stabilization Assistance Force(ISAF): Key Facts and Figures. December 2013.

¹⁰ Statement made by H.E Ambassador Hussein Haniff on 15th January, 2015 at the Quarterly Debate on the Middle East.

2. Direct bilateral negotiations between Palestine and Israel.¹¹
3. Uphold the legitimate right to self determination by Palestinian people.¹²
4. UN protection to address the current crisis.¹³

Syria

Malaysia strongly supports all efforts towards finding a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis through dialogue and negotiations, especially by the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

Yemen

During the insurgent of Houthi rebellion group, Malaysia has demanded the group to release the Yemeni President, Prime Minister and cabinet from the house of arrest. This commitment has been initiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Later, Malaysian forces has affirmed to join the Saudi-coalition led to fight against Yemen rebel group¹⁴.

(b) African region

Africa remains the on-going conflicted continent discuss in Security Council. Recently, the UNSC has adopted the Resolution 2265¹⁵ during 7619th Meeting¹⁶ on Sudan. Malaysia put their position to call the member states to aid and help Africa as a whole.

Somalia

Malaysia has participated actively in on-going deliberations on how best they could collectively provide the necessary assistance and support needed by Somalia¹⁷, while fully mindful of the need to ensure that such efforts remain fully Somali owned and led. Malaysia has voted in favour

¹¹ Statement made by The Honourable Dato' Sri Reezal Merican bin Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia on 22nd October, 2015 at the UNSC Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question.

¹² Statement made by The Honourable Dato' Sri Reezal Merican bin Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia on 22nd October, 2015 at the UNSC Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question.

¹³ Statement made by H.E Ambassador Dato' Ramlan Ibrahim on 16th October, 2015 pursuant to the Emergency Meeting on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question.

¹⁴ Arab News. Malaysian troop join Arab coalition. 10th May, 2015.

¹⁵ Renews the mandate of experts in monitoring sanctions in Darfur Situation, adopted by UNSC on 10th February 2016.

¹⁶ Held in 10th February 2016.

¹⁷ Education opportunities in public universities and joining the peacekeeping forces namely as UNOSOM

of series of Resolution made on Somalia namely 2245,¹⁸ 2244,¹⁹ 2232²⁰ and 2221²¹ during his years in UNSC.

Malaysia also stressed to fight against the terrorist organisation in Somalia called Al-Shabab that contributes to chaotic condition in Somalia. Malaysia committed to assist Somalia in the recent years to further the diplomatic relation between two countries.

Sudan & South Sudan

The famine condition in Darfur has caught the attention of Malaysia. Malaysian police has been sent to join the peacekeeping mission in Darfur²². Malaysia has commend the UNAMID to strive its strategic goals in keeping the peace of Darfur. Eventually, Malaysia has called the parties to the conflict to abide with the Doha Declaration for Peace in Darfur(DDPD) framework.²³ Putting the peace as the strategic goal, Malaysia has asked the Government of Sudan to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions towards building a trust and confidence by the member states.

Haiti

Malaysia has taken the opportunity in UNSC to call the government to²⁴:

1. The establishment of the transitional government and the installation of a new Provisional Electoral Council,
2. The promulgation and subsequent adoption of the new electoral law as well as the Government's recently proposed elections calendar.

Malaysia affirmed that Haiti's government remains fragile thus actions should be taken by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) pursuant to Resolution 2180.²⁵ Malaysia also putting the steps that needs to be taken for the Haiti:

¹⁸ United Nations Mission in Somalia for a Better Respond to Dramatic Spike in Support Request, adopted by UNSC on 9th November 2015.

¹⁹ Extending the Arms Embargo in Somalia, Eritrea until November 15, 2015 adopted by UNSC on 23rd October 2015.

²⁰ African Union deployment in Somalia, adopted by UNSC on 28th July 2015.

²¹ Security Council extends the mandate to United Nations Mission in Somalia, adopted by UNSC on 26th May, 2015.

²² Sudan Tribute. Malaysian police join the peacekeeping mission. Retrieved from <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article28640>.

²³ Statement made by Madam Siti Hajjar Adnin on 29th June, 2015 for Briefing on Sudan and South Sudan.

²⁴ Statement made by Madam Siti Hajjar Adnin on 18th March, 2015 at the Security Council Debate on the Question Concerning Haiti.

1. Eliminating the still prevailing cholera epidemic;
2. Ongoing efforts towards resettling, relocating and integrating IDPs;
3. Continuing efforts to include women in the political process and development of the 5-year National Strategy for Child Protection.

Malaysia has been one of the countries that support the Haiti's development for a better state in the future.

(c) European region

Southeastern Europe has been affected the most after the Soviet Union dismantled. Malaysia's step to give help to countries such Bosnia and Kosovo has been praised in international level. Malaysia keeps its position even after the post under United Nations Security Council.

Ukraine

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has gone on for far too long and claimed the lives of far too many innocent civilians, including those 298 souls aboard flight MH17 which was tragically shot down over the conflict area on 17 July 2014. Malaysia highlighted the compliance of all parties to the conflict to Minsk Protocol, a ceasefire between Russia, Ukraine, Donetsk and Lugansk. Malaysia welcomes all efforts that could facilitate the de-escalation of the crisis and contribute to ending the conflict, including the possibility of resuming Geneva format negotiations.

Kosovo

In 2015, Malaysia gave its support to application of Kosovo to UNESCO²⁶. In his diplomatic speech, Malaysia also compliments the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to stabilise the country after the succession from Serbia in 2008. Before Kosovo's independence, Malaysia already gave its support via joining the UN Peacekeeper²⁷ established the liaison office in Kosovo²⁸ and statement for holding the election²⁹ in Kosovo for a free Kosovo. Recognition of Malaysia as the Non Permanent Member in UNSC will open the other members in UNSC to see the importance of more progressive Kosovo.

²⁵ One Year renewal of MINUSTAH in Haiti adopted by UNSC on 14th October, 2014.

²⁶ Statement made by Madam Siti Hajjar Adnin on 19th November, 2015 for the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMK).

²⁷ Simon S. Sundaraj Keun. Malaysia's United Nations Peacekeeping Mission. September 2012.

²⁸ Strategic Information and Developments. Malaysia Recent Economic and Political Developments Yearbook. Volume 1. 2009.

²⁹ Dialogue between Ambassador Keith of US Embassy in Malaysia and Andrin from UK dated 25th February 2008.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Despite of two political entities³⁰ in Bosnia namely Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malaysia put a great support to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Malaysia condemned the act of Republic of Srpska to hold a referendum to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2011³¹ which is clearly violated the Constitution. Malaysia also has alarmed the UNSC to:

1. Reaffirm the Dayton Peace Agreement
2. Implementation of 5 plus 2 agenda for the condition of closure of Office of High Representative³²

The recognition made by Malaysia has given a good impact towards the political and economy stability in Bosnia.

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³⁰ Article 3 of Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1995 also known as Dayton Peace Agreement signed in Ohia, USA.

³¹ The 5th Report of Republika Srpska to the United Nations Security Council: Reply to High Representative’s Letter and Special Report of 4th May 2011 to the UNSC.

³² Statement made by H.E Ambassador Dato’ Ramlan Ibrahim on 10th November, 2015