

Malaysia Postponed
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OUR COMMONWEALTH CORRESPONDENT writes: If Tunku Abdul Rahman can no longer hope that Malaysia will be all right on the night, he can be pretty certain that all will be well two or three weeks later. The short hold-up in the birth of the Federation of Malaysia while the will of the people is once again consulted, this time by the UN, should do no great harm, for the result is scarcely in doubt. The UN mission will be checking the fairness of the recent elections and confirming that Malaysia was a major issue. The result should at least forestall the criticism of lack of consultation.

It seems that President Sukarno, who pressed the demand, is thus depriving himself of future propaganda material. It is more likely, however, that he has no illusions about which way the decision will go and is thinking just as much of convincing his own Communists. For while, even recently, Sukarno's attitude to Malaysia has not done much more than alternate between luke-warm and frozen, one encouraging factor has emerged in the shape of the Maphilindo confederation under which the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia will attempt to agree that they have, or ought to have, certain interests in common. Its formation has been due in large part to the efforts of President Macapagal of the Philippines. His intervention in the Malaysia debate earlier in the year did not seem likely to augur so well, but he has taken the realistic view that Indonesia has to be lived with and that it is early yet to assume that a clash is inevitable. It would be better, he argued, to allow Indonesia to change her policy. The clumsily-named Maphilindo concept is the result. Its existence at least presents that part of the world with a reasonable long-term goal.

Meanwhile Malaysia goes on. The British Government is irritated at the delay and particularly anxious to make it clear that the presence of the UN in North Borneo is no precedent for UN supervision in any other part of the Commonwealth. It need have no fear; it was, for all practical purposes, the Tunku's decision, which it would have been discourteous and undiplomatic to have vetoed. Malaya is unfortunate in missing the symbolic date of August 31, for it was on that day that she, too, became independent, but this is a small enough loss. The Tunku's prestige has been slightly diminished by the hold-up and Sukarno's slightly raised; both will presumably soon get over it. However, it is American support (or lack of it) which may ultimately decide Malaysia's future.

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