### The Singapore

# icentennial Conference

30 September to 1 October 2019







#### 'CONTESTATIONS & CHOICES'

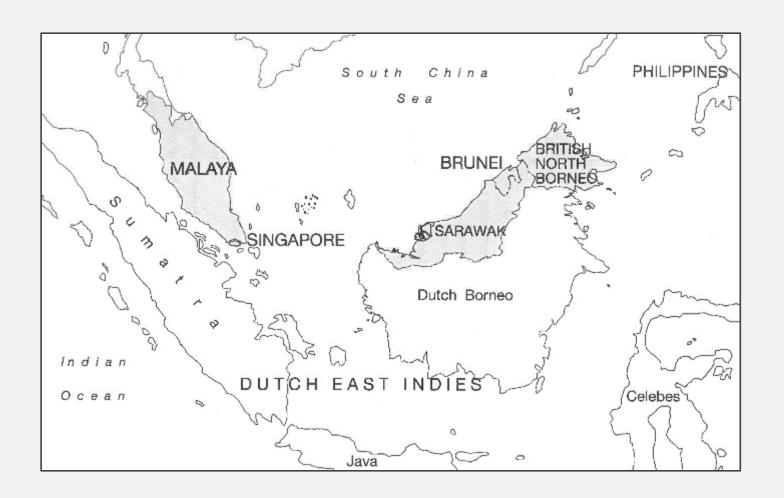
#### THE SINGAPORE BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

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# DECOLONIZATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

- International Cold War
- Regional Nationalist movements, anti-colonialism, Non-alignment
- Domestic social, economic and political challenges, anti-colonialism + the quest for political changes and self-determination

#### British Colonies in Southeast Asia in 1946 (shaded portions)



#### BRITISH CALCULATIONS

- When and How to de-colonize?
- The Grand Design regional grouping of former colonies in SEA
- Plans for Singapore security concerns; continued use of naval base
- Transfer power to whom?
- End of empire playbook support reliable local ally; maintain levers of power.

#### FROM GRAND DESIGN TO MALAYSIA

- British Merger will undermine left-wing forces and secure naval base in Singapore; solve the problems of the politically under-developed Borneo Territories
- Tunku –to prevent a "Cuba in the backyard"
- <u>Lee Kuan Yew</u> economic and political reasons for merger

#### THE SITUATION IN SINGAPORE

#### Political contest between:

- LKY and PAP Merger to achieve self-government, Singapore's economic survival and PAP's political survival
- Left-wing full merger or nothing, fear of anti-communist, conservative Alliance government, advocated full independence so that internal security in local hands
- Different visions for the future of Singapore; different political strategies

#### Malaysia 1963 (shaded portions)



#### **SEPARATION**

- Intractable differences between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur
- Ideological differences: special rights for Malays vs Malaysian
   Malaysia
- Political differences
- Negotiated separation

## HOW HAS THIS HISTORY SHAPED OUR CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT?

- Albert Winsemius' advice
- The significance of the Malaysian experience meritocracy & multiculturalism vs communalism
- How to survive without a natural hinterland search for new hinterlands; idea of global city-state.