

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Malaysia has a population of 31.6 million people in 2016. The largest city and the capital city is Kuala Lumpur. Official languages are Malay (official), English, Tamil, and Chinese. Malaysia consists of two geographical regions divided by the South China Sea: the peninsular Malaysia (or West Malaysia) on the Malay Peninsula bordered by Thailand on the north and Singapore in the south, and Malaysian Borneo (or East Malaysia) located on the northern part of the island of Borneo in the South China Sea, bordering Indonesia and surrounding the Sultanate of Brunei. The country shares maritime borders with the Philippines and Vietnam. Malaysia covers a total area of 329,847 km². Highest mountain is Mount Kinabalu with 4,095 m on the island of Borneo. Mount Kinabalu and the surrounding Kinabalu Park official website are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Profile of Malaysia, 2014)

Malaysia is a sultanate kingdom that led by King has three majorities ethnical group that live in Malaysia, they are Tamil, Malay, and Chinese. Malaysia is a Muslim country that adopted sharia law. This has been the dominant socio-religious pattern on the Malay Peninsula only since approximately the 18th century. It should be understood, however, that the category 'Malay' is a very fluid one, not defined by physical characteristics, but by language, dress, customs and, most importantly, by the profession of Islam. None of these characteristics is innate, in the sense that an individual is born with them. Each can be adopted, and it is now recognised that it is possible to 'become' a Malay by assuming these characteristics. It is therefore, to some extent, a matter of choice as to whether

groups and individuals wish to identify themselves as 'Malays' and to accept the consequences of being seen as 'Malay'. (Harris, 1993)

Most descriptions of the population of Malaysia include accounts of Chinese and Indian groups as if they were not settlers of long standing in the region. This is based on the misapprehension that the majority of the forebears of Chinese and Indians, now living in Malaysia, migrated there in the mid or late 19th century. On these grounds, they are not considered as 'native' as others. This is misleading in the sense that during that same period there were also many migrants arriving from Java, Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia (at that time the Netherlands East Indies), but because their socioreligious organisation was recognisably similar to that of the Malays, they are regarded as 'Malays'. However, it is the customs and lifestyle of the Chinese and Indians which distinguish them from other groups rather than their date of arrival. (Hooker V. , 2003)

Malaysia and China diplomacy relations have been built for a long time story starting May 31, 1974 making a new history for both parties, despite the many dynamics and claims about China issues such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, Malaysia continues to support the mainland PRC as an official country and supports the One China Policy. In 1999 a Joint statement on bilateral cooperation frameworks for the future was signed, a Joint commission was formed in 2005 as a place for planning strategic cooperation signed by Prime Minister Sri Tun Abdul Razak. The two countries believe that it is in their common interest to continue as well as sustain the dynamic economic growth that has brought benefits to both sides. (Handayani M. , 2017)

China is a superpower country with a strong economy and power, this decade China has invested

heavily in countries abroad, through its one belt one road policy. China lends funds in the form of investment through cooperation with countries that want to open cooperation with China with values and contracts agreed by both parties. Not only the capacity in the economy, China is the country that most allocates state spending funds for the military and defence, therefore with its foreign policy, China tries to gain its interests through diplomatic relations with other countries. (Affairs, 2019)

Xinjiang is a border region between Xinjiang bordering the Tibet Autonomous Region in the south and Qinghai and Gansu Provinces in the southeast. The region is also bordered by Mongolia to the east, Russia to the north, and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the west. This province is dominated by a Muslim population named Uyghur, from the beginning of its establishment there were many undesirable things.



figure 1 Map of xinjiang

(Source: VOAIIndonesia)

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, also claimed as East Turkistan by some Uyghur people lies in the heart of Asia. The current territorial size of Xinjiang is 1,626,000 square kilometers (635,000 square miles), Xinjiang has diverse geography. It has large deserts, beautiful mountains, and beautiful rivers, lakes, meadows, and forests. Xinjiang is the homeland of Turkish-speaking Uyghurs and other central Asians such as Kazak, Kyrgyzstan, Tatars, Uzbeks, and Tajiks. According to the latest Chinese census, there are around 12 million Uyghurs. However, Uyghur sources indicate that the Uyghur population in Xinjiang is around 20-30 million. Xinjiang is located outside the logical boundaries of China, the Great Wall. Historically, Xinjiang is part of Central Asia, they are not China.

The majority of people of Xinjiang are not Chinese; they are Turks in Central Asia. Records show that the

Uyghur has a history of more than 4000 years in Xinjiang. Located along part of the legendary Silk Road, the Uyghurs play an important role in the cultural exchange between East and West and develop their own unique culture and civilization. The Uyghurs embraced Islam in 934 AD during the Kingdom of Karahanid. Kashgar, the capital of the Kingdom, quickly became one of the main centers of Islamic learning. Art, science, music, and literature developed rapidly when Islamic religious institutions maintained the pursuit of advanced culture. The heavy-handed state repression of all activities associated with the Chinese government with "Separatism" has created a dire human rights environment for the Uyghur Muslim minority population of northwest China. Beijing has for more than a decade claimed to be confronted with "religious extremist forces" and "violent terrorists" in Xinjiang Province, a vast region one-sixth of China's land area. (admin, n.d.)

Mao Zedong officially became the new leader of China with the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) as the motor that played a role in the government, Xinjiang was officially claimed to be the territory of China, albeit with a cultural, ethnic and religious background. Although Turkish and Uyghur nationalism is on the rise. Under the new leader through the Chinese Communist Party in contrast to the leadership of Yang Zining who ruled before Mao Zedong, those unfamiliar with the region and people in Xinjiang adopted a strategy that could minimize the influence of the Uyghur elite and make Xinjiang integrated into China. However, the government does understand that the Xinjiang people, who are predominantly Uyghurs, are culturally and linguistically unique in China and believe that the theoretical autonomy system would be following their current approach. Thus, in 1955, Xinjiang changed its name to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). While this step of autonomy illustrates a sense of independence for the

Uyghurs in self-government, it might be better understood as a strategy by the Chinese government to calm or even divert differences of opinion about the Uyghurs and other minorities while the government maintains an imperialist grip on the region.

During the nearly thirty-year span under Mao Zedong's rule, riots were brought about by the Uyghurs and other ethnic groups in Xinjiang in connection with the harsh national policies of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution policy suppressed religion and ethnic groups throughout China. As a result, Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities are prohibited from speaking their language, wearing traditional clothing, and eating special food culture. Besides, mosques and religious texts were destroyed and religious leaders were cruelly persecuted. Following the end of the violent cultural suppression of the Mao era, China, under Deng Xiaoping, went through a milder phase of cultural control to lay out a new national reform policy.

The lifting of cultural oppression seems to increase the appeal of Uyghurs and ethnic minorities for greater political autonomy from the state. With a combination of boiling riots from the Uyghurs and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Chinese state developed anxiety about the rise of Islam internally (in Xinjiang) as well as externally in Afghanistan and newly established Central Asia. Since then, the government has implemented economic and investment policies, internally and externally, to ease ethnic tensions in Xinjiang and ensure security along the border. Instead, this "reform and openness" policy had the opposite effect when the severity of the Uyghur riots escalated to erase the appearance of separatism throughout Xinjiang and in Beijing, however, until the 2000s, the government continued to implement strengthened economic reforms, such as "Kashgar's Dangerous House Reform" which displaces thousands of

Uyghurs. Besides, to subdue separatist activities with violence, the government also implemented a "Strike Hard" campaign specifically designed to target Uyghur individuals.

The Malay Muslim group constitutes a large community, according to the government as stipulated in the federation's constitution the definition of "Malay" means a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom. Muslims are being hit by a terrible issue, the persecution reported by the media related to Muslims in the Uyghur has come under fire from various responses around the world for demonstrations of solidarity as Muslims are held in various parts of the world, in Malaysia, a demonstration was held in front of the PRC embassy on December 27, which was driven the progressive group Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (Abim) and the pro-Khilafah group Hizbul Tahrir Malaysia strongly protest over what happened in Xinjiang against Muslims there. (Januar, 2019)

Another response was shown not only from the group but came from famous Ulama from a country commonly called the Jiran country, famous Ulama in Malaysia, Mohd Asri bin Zainul Abidin, calling for Islamic countries in the world to promote an idea of a boycott for Chinese products for the country to agree to increase its detention of Uighurs. Most Uighur people live in the Xinjiang Province of China. Mohd Asri said, "Politicians and religious leaders from Muslim countries in the world must put greater economic and diplomatic pressure on Beijing". (Sekarwati, 2019)

Responding to the Malaysian government through the prime minister of the religious affairs department, Dr. Mujahid Yusof Rawa visited the Uyghur ethnic minority in Xinjiang province, he posted a classroom with the

caption "'visits to vocational and training institutions' for Uighurs in the Xinjiang region". However, his statement drew much criticism from both NGOs and individuals. Amnesty International commented on the statement in the Mujahid post by calling it 'very disappointing'. Amnesty International mentioned that Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang were victims of 'political indoctrination, rejected their beliefs, persecuted and in some cases, tortured'. "That is not the 'vocational and training institution' that the minister seems to be visiting," said the Malaysian regional Amnesty International Executive Director, Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu. In its acknowledgment that China built the room as an important 'vocational training centre' in combating separatist sentiments and religious extremism. In his statement, Mujahid defended himself by calling his visit at that time "covering other aspects". "This includes building a global Malaysia-China cooperation network to exchange views and information on various issues such as peace and religion," Mujahid said. (Chistiastuti, 2019)

Long before the Xi Jinping Government established the Centre for Vocational Education and Training or what Western media now accuses of being the 'detention camps' of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang built-in 2014, Lilian Craig Haris was once writing with the title 'Xinjiang, Central Asia and The Implications for China's Policy in The Islamic World'. This article discusses turbulence in Xinjiang as part of the Chinese region associated with its geostrategic, geopolitical position, and geographical connectivity with Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Although Beijing's various policies to overcome instability in Xinjiang through both economic and political instruments are not parallel to the complexities of the interests of Muslim-populated countries, the response shown by Arab countries and Central Asia remains cool. (Haris, 1993)

The lack of negative responses from Middle Eastern countries to Beijing's policy in Xinjiang in addition to the interests of economic and military pragmatic (arms purchases) also aims to maintain good relations with China as a permanent member of the UN Security Council so that they are aware of the interests of third world countries including countries Muslim countries in it. Harris also mentioned that the Chinese authorities negated alternative problem solving through a government-to-government (G to G) consultation scheme regarding how to deal with turbulence in Xinjiang because Beijing was very sensitive to outside intervention on what was in its domestic affairs. (Harris, 1993)

The response from Malaysia government that has good relationships with China it would be difficult to consider how the best solution to prove that Malaysia can keep their interest with China, because China agree to improve the partnership in Malaysia through the investment, and the pressure from Muslim group through a demonstration which has been done in PRC's embassy would influence the response from the government.

This research would be interested because several points make Malaysia have to take the actions that opposite with the recent situation, however, Mahathir as the PM has shown us the political attitude towards the persecution in Xinjiang that different from the needs demonstrated by Muslim groups in Malaysia.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the discussion above, the formulation of the problem that can be taken is **Why was Government of Malaysia Apply a Safe Play Policy towards the Uyghur Persecution in Xinjiang, China?**

C. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As a guideline for writer to make it easier to conduct research and analysis of existing data and prevent the distortion of the discussion of the research object and the extent of the discussion towards the insignificant, the writer tries to propose a framework of thought as a reference in this study. The framework of thought is the theory and opinion of experts who certainly have a relationship with the object under study and can provide a strong rationale in a study to be recognized its truth in supporting a hypothesis. And to answer the question and analyze the case, the writer will use the Foreign Policy theory.

According to K.J Holsti "Foreign policy as ideas or actions designed by policy makers to solve a problem or promote some change in policies, attitudes or actions of other states or states, also includes the intentions behind the actions". Foreign policy is an "actions theory" in which a country takes a stance or an effort to respond to certain situations in a country so that it can fulfill its interests. Foreign policy is a formula of values, attitudes, directions, and targets to achieve, maintain, secure, and develop national interests in the international world. A basic need that is committed by implementing strategies to achieve goals in both domestic and foreign coverage once determines the role of a country in international and environmental issues. (K.J Holsti, 1967)

It is undeniable that there are a lot of consequences of foreign policy making with many considerations for the best results. Henry Kissinger stated that "foreign policy begins when the domestic policy ends" in other words that foreign policy is the intersection of domestic politics and the ultimate goal is how to make the situation in the country stable. Although the orientation of foreign policy is to achieve the interests of the community although it is also determined by who is leading and in power at the time.

There is a formulation that includes foreign policy. that is important events, domestic and foreign political needs, ideological and social values, the state of public opinion, the capacity, the level of threat, the perceived opportunity in a situation, the expected consequences, the costs of preparing action, and the elements of time or demand under certain conditions. (Harieder, 1971)

Foreign policy is a set of goals on how a country should interact with other countries in several aspects related to politics, economy, society, and military. In other words, the orientation of foreign policy is to reach an obvious benefit that can be distributed to people. The policy maker's goal is to maximize the national interests which hopefully become beneficial for its society. The state is the main actor to achieve national interest with a rational approach as the tools to gain the goal. Coplin stated that to understand why a country conducts its foreign policy following the national interests because of the limited capability or natural source to fulfill the needs of the state, we should also examine how or why behind the high authorities decisions. According to Coplin, foreign policy activities can be classified into three types, namely general policy, administrative decisions, and critical decisions. Coplin explained that foreign policy was hugely influenced by three aspects, namely domestic political conditions, economic and military capabilities, and international context. By observing three these three considerations, we can explain why a country's foreign policy is determined. It should be underlined that each consideration is not a single factor in controlling the whole formation of foreign policy. (Coplin, 2003)

To understand more about this theory, William D. Coplin explains in this figure:

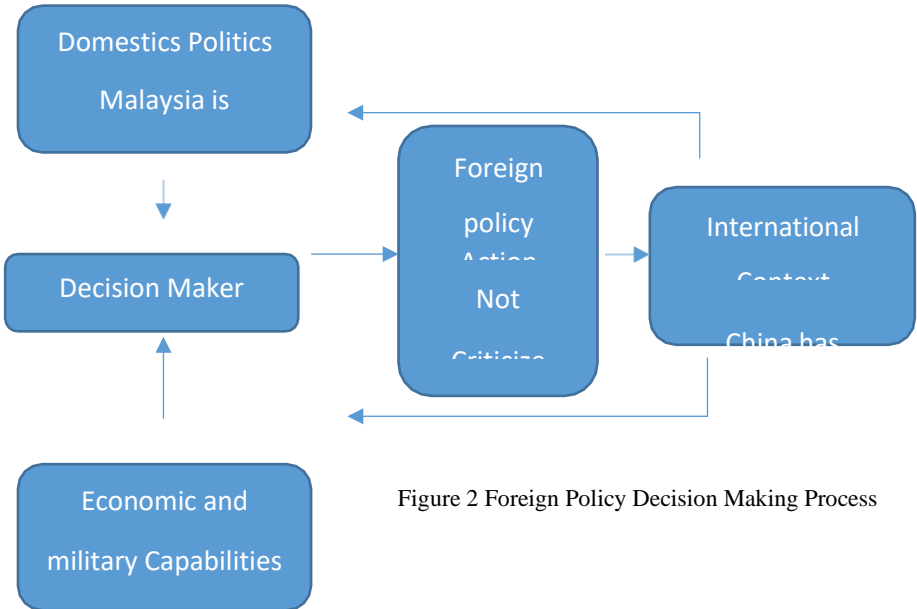


Figure 2 Foreign Policy Decision Making Process

(Source: Wouldiam D. Couplin, Pengantar Politik Internasional: suat telaahan teoritis, (Bandung: CV.Sinar Baru, 1992), p.30)

The author would explain the formulation that Mahathir as prime minister applies in his policy in Uyghur to keep the relations with China.

D. HYPOTHESIS

Based on the background and theoretical framework above, this thesis argues that Government of Malaysia apply a safe play policy towards the Uyghur case in Xinjiang China because;

1. Malaysia Considering the economic partnership with China. So, Malaysia would not take offensive actions towards China instead Malaysia drives an alternative solution.
2. The government of Malaysia thought if the persecution in Xinjiang is internal problem.

E. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was formulated in three methodologies, which are the type of research, data collection methods, and methods of analysis.

1. TYPE OF RESEARCH

In this research study, the author used a type of qualitative research by using the analytical methods and the elaboration of each existing data. The author only describes existing data with qualitative methods.

2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection methods used were secondary data collection, mainly through a literature study. The materials of the study literature are found from textbooks, scientific journals, e-journals, government documents/decisions, reports of government and non-government institutions, as well as from websites/internet which discuss the Prime minister Mahathir Muhammad about the persecution in Xinjiang.

F. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The scope of research is necessary for the author to limit the analysis and accommodate the data information. The research time limitation focuses on 2019 when Malaysia government respond to persecution in Xinjiang, however, because this argument has arisen because of the history between China and Malaysia then necessary to analyse Malaysia-China relationship and Uyghur conflict.

G. OUTLINE

This research has five chapters that would be arranged as follow:

- Chapter I:** This chapter contains the Background, Research Question, Theoretical Framework, Hypothesis, Research Methodology, and Scope of Research that guides the writer to the next chapter.
- Chapter II:** This chapter explain the changing of political Malaysia's direction.
- Chapter III:** This chapter discuss the persecution in Xinjiang towards Uyghur ethnic, and How the response from the Malaysian government and their people.
- Chapter IV:** This chapter analyze the Prime Minister (Mahathir Muhammad) restoring safe play policy towards the Uyghur case in Xinjiang China
- Chapter V:** This chapter conclude all the materials that are written above.