Ho Ying Chan, *Special Relationship in the Malay World—Indonesia and Malaysia*.

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There has been a special relationship between the states now known as Indonesia and Malaysia throughout the history of the Malay Archipelago. When Hang Tuah, a cultural hero in both countries, was asked about his ethnic origins, he said he was of mixed blood (*peranakan*). The relationship has always been in the blood and in the extensive empires. Majapahit, Sriwijaya, and Melaka were great states that opened their doors to the merchants of Asia and even beyond. This was especially the case with Melaka, situated at the edge of the Straits of Malacca, through which much of the world's maritime traffic passed.

Kingdoms rose and fell, each adding a special contribution to the mix of previous ones. Malay texts like *Sulalat al-Salatin*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, and *Tuh-fat al-Nafis* contain narratives of that mix, of the coming together of different peoples in different states. There were many such states before the arrival of the colonial west. Interestingly, although western colonialism operated for its own profits, it largely extended the policies and styles of the empires that preceded it. Remembering their shared past can enhance the connection between two formerly colonized nations. If one is a student of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* ('The Malay Annals') and *Hikayat Hang Tuah* ('The Epic of Hang Tuah'), one will not be able to avoid the many instances which can be found when *rajas* from the various states of the Malay World sent envoys to their neighbors. Many rulers also married princesses from other states, thus physically bringing together states into a kind of family. But as in every family, brothers, sisters, and cousins develop competitiveness and jealousies.

Quite surprisingly, the book's theoretical framework and references are largely from the US and Canada. Relations between Arab countries or other Southeast Asian and Asian states would seem to offer more relevant comparative models—the competition between China and India, for instance, or between China and Vietnam—but for some reason these sorts of examples are ignored. The work is heavy on theory, with multiple cases offered before finally reaching the special Indonesia-Malaysia relationship, starting in 1957–1965. Ho argues that there was no special relationship between the two countries originally: it began only after the fall of Sukarno. He further explains the intricacies of two different schools of thought on the special relationship, the realist and the identity schools, but argues that these schools do not fully reflect reality, so he adds the "constructivist approach" to fill in the gap.

BIJDRAGEN TOT DE TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

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Special relationships are not love stories. For countries that enjoy a special relationship, within the minds of the 'partners' there is always suspicion of the other's military power, possible plans for domination, and hidden agendas. It is interesting to note that through its many phases, several factors have continually determined the shape and scope of this relationship. Most important are the leaders themselves, along with their ideologies. Their political philosophies and their stance towards the US or Russia, particularly during the Cold War, have been very significant, while the governments themselves have been far less important. However, the general political climate, prevalent sentiments of history, brotherhood, and blood ties during a certain period, and the mutual need for security and economic prosperity all play parts, as well. All these factors have different influence at different times.

Ho prioritizes the period after the fall of Sukarno, as this president hindered the special relationship, focusing in particular on the Razak-Adam Malik meeting, which set the stage to improve the relationship after the problematic period of 1957–1965. Another focal point is the period of 1985–2017, when the two countries drifted apart and dealt mostly with their own national problems without concentrating on issues that involved the other nation. It traces the many twists and turns of these years, between sentimental concerns, the dictates of power, the search for associations in a bigger regional union, and more. A change of leaders also often led to a change of policies and directions.

This study has a unique focus, though other periods could also have served to illustrate this relationship. A more complete background could have served to firmly ground our understanding. With a long theoretical introduction and many references to the US and Canada, and the politicians of Europe, this work suffers from the typical requirements of a dissertation: surveying a range of cases, using terms are continually defined, and so on.

Ho's study is also heavily dependent on books and journals published in English. However, the hundreds of papers, dissertations, books, and journals in the Indonesian language that refer to, comment on, and analyze the many reflections on this special relationship are seldom mentioned. Indonesian journals are particularly sharp in their points, views, and perspectives. *Tempo*, the weekly journal would have been a great source. Meanwhile, *Indonesia Raya*, *Sinar Harapan*, and *Kompas* have special pages for current events. In Malaysia, the weekly journal *Era* was important; *Mestika*, *Utusan Melayu*, *Utusan Malaysia*, and *Berita Harian* were/are equally pertinent sources. These sources were written in the national languages of the countries, and hence served as the direct conveyer of the moods, perspectives, and opinions of the people. They do not only present a fairer picture of life inside the countries, but also

of the moments and times being researched. They certainly better reflect the breadth of Malaysian politics, and do not shy away from its hiccups, coughs, and fevers. Still, one of the chief contributions of this work has been to trace the many ups and downs of the Malaysia-Indonesia special relations, which have not been embarked on before. We are made aware of their difficult trajectories, and brittle nature, which are often subject to political changes and the moods of the leaders of the time.

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