

BRUNEI

Introduction

Brunei consists of two jungle enclaves occupying 5,800 square kilometres on the north coast of Borneo. Of an estimated population of 212,000, just over half are Malays, about 25% are Chinese, and the remainder are indigenous races (e.g. Dayaks, Ibans). The foreign community - mainly British - numbers between 2,000 and 3,000.

Domestic Political Situation

Brunei became a British protectorate in 1888. British authority was exercised through the office of a British Resident until 1959, when its first written constitution was promulgated, creating a framework for internal self-government while retaining British responsibility for defence and external affairs. In 1963 a plan to join the Federation of Malaysia was accepted, but subsequently rejected because of disagreements over Brunei's position within the Federation and division of its oil royalties. The country's present political status is that of a constitutional sultanate in treaty relationship with Britain. Independence is scheduled for January 1, 1984.

Brunei will probably remain an autocracy after independence. There has been no effective opposition to the Sultan since the Brunei People's Party was banned after leading a brief, abortive rebellion in 1962. The Sultan appears to have no plans to introduce a multi-party democratic system of government after January 1, 1984. A programme is underway to replace the British civil and military establishments with Bruneians, although there are strong indications that some way will be found to retain the British Gurkha unit after independence.

An estimated 90% of the Chinese population (52,000) are non-citizens. Although the Brunei Nationality Enactment of 1961 allows them to become citizens if they have lived in Brunei for 20 years or more in the past 22 years, and can pass a Malay language test, in practice it is difficult for Chinese applicants to qualify for citizenship. At present the non-citizen Chinese have Brunei "British Protected Person passports", but after independence they will lose their British-protected status and will have to travel on international certificates of identity unless something is done to regularize their status. Because of the uncertainty of their future many Chinese have emigrated, Canada being a preferred destination.

Domestic Economic Situation

Although wealth is very unevenly distributed, Brunei's per capita income is one of the highest in the