

Malaysia's And Indonesia's Security Concerns and Priorities in the Strait of Malacca

Similarities and Differences

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Objective

- Delineate the security threats in the Strait of Malacca
- Analyze the Security Priorities of Indonesia and Malaysia
- Determine their similarities and differences

Introduction

- Malaysia and Indonesia share the Malacca Strait
- Threats:
 - Sovereignty
 - Smuggling of goods, arms and humans
 - “Piracy”
 - Catastrophic pollution
 - Illegal Fishing and Degradation of fish stocks
 - Transport of weapons of mass destruction
 - Terrorism

Importance of the Strait of Malacca to Malaysia and Indonesia

- Malaysia and Indonesia is a maritime nation located between the Andaman Sea, The Strait of Malacca, the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas & South China Sea
- The SOM is part of the golden heritage of its littoral states
- Rich in marine resources, primary conduit for movement of cargo and oldest and busiest shipping lanes
- Shortest East-West sea route
- RM 3.8 trillion worth of goods and services pass through yearly

- 380,000 tones of fish per year worth RM 1.2 billion landed from SOM
- SOM contributes second highest fish production for Indonesia after Java Sea
- Others – mariculture, tourism, recreation
- Despite the high dependence on SOM for resources and commerce, the security priorities of Indonesia and Malaysia differ

Priorities: Similarities and Differences

Sovereignty

- State sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction are central elements of Malaysia's priorities
- The 1982 UNCLOS provides sovereignty over 12nm territorial waters and the airspace above it
- Malaysia will not compromise its sovereignty

Defense priority in SOM is to protect maritime zones

- Indonesia's sovereignty and sovereign rights at sea is the most important priority
- Article 2,34,47 & 49 of UNCLOS gives authority to state to protect national interest
- Similarity – Indonesia and Malaysia have responsibility for security and safety in SOM

Piracy



- SOM continue to be popular in piracy news – Lloyd's declared War Risk Area
- Priority for Malaysia's security; crucial threat that needs immediate attention
- MMEA
- Indonesia – Article 100 UNCLOS

According to Article 100 of the 1982 UNCLOS, piracy is an illegal act “on the high seas or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any state.” An act of ‘piracy’ that takes place in waters under national jurisdiction is, therefore, not an act of piracy, but an act of armed robbery or sea robbery, that should be dealt with exclusively by the affected state, under the principle of coastal state sovereignty and national security.

- By definition “there is no piracy in the SOM” -
*Chief of Indo Navy
- Only criminal acts against ships, cargo and ship’s crew
- SOM is only tiny percentage of its extensive waters – piracy is another old familiar problem
- Priorities are different – Indonesia & Malaysia
Malaysia –piracy or sea robbery is a criminal act and needs serious attention

** Paper presented in SOM*

Strait of Malacca : Piracy Prone Area



Source: Royal Malaysian Navy, 2005

Marine Pollution

- The strait has become the busiest navigational route and shortest connection between IO and PO for oil transportation from Middle East to Western Pacific
- 70,000 ships pass through annually
- 20,000 supertankers
- High density for accidents – oil pollutions
- Growth of ports and oil refineries – along coasts of states

- 3 main pollutants are heavy metals, organic chemicals and nutrient
- Affect aquaculture, marine life and marine recreation
- Oil spill – illegal discharge from tanker and small vessels.
 - 2000 - 11
 - 2001 - 13
 - 2002 - 6
 - 2004 - 4

Indo and M'sia have common perception of the threat to the environment

Illegal Fishing

- Fish –main source of protein for Asians
- Indo maritime area divided into 9 Fisheries Management Zones
- SOM falls in zone WPP Malacca Strait
- Fish stock assessment by Indo fisheries and Marine Research Inst revealed:-
 - Fishery potential for whole Indo sea is 6,409,200 ton per year

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- SOM maximum sustainable yield is 276,030 ton per year
- Fishery production from SOM has already reached 389,280 ton per year
- Thus exploitation rate exceeded the maximum sustainable yield –SOM most exploited
- Threaten the sustainability of the resources

- Threat of illegal fishing in Malaysia portion of SOM from Thai trawlers and Indo fisherman
- Until end of 1980's Thai trawlers operate freely – absence of enforcement and patrol in territorial water
- 1980's SEA countries began to patrol territorial waters
- 12 nm EEZ means Thai trawlers intrude into EEZ
- 2004 – 63 sightings of foreign vessels encroaching in M'sia waters in SOM

Foreign fishing vessels in SOM



Source: Royal Malaysian Navy, 2005

| YEAR | NUMBER OF VESSELS |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 2000 | 128 |
| 2001 | 164 |
| 2002 | 176 |
| 2003 | 69 |
| 2004 | 63 |
| TOTAL | 600 |

Human Smuggling

- Human – exploitation, alters demography; some move voluntarily for better economic situations; lucrative business
- M'sia is a favorite destination – enormous social problems due to large illegal immigrant
- Second biggest threat
- Illegal immigrants by sea –cheap
- 382,082 enter by sea – 70% from SOM
- Indo illegal immigrant from Java via Johor, Sumatera via Penang and N.Sembilan
- Myanmar and Thailand via northern part of SOM
- Threat for M'sia and not for Indonesia

Small Arms Smuggling

- Indo – GAM involved in weapons smuggling across SOM
- Weapons from Cambodia or illegally purchased from Thailand transferred to M'sia – Ache by boat and supplied to separatists
- Indo threat, unable to control – porous borders and under equipped police, smugglers high tech speed boats

Terrorism

- Indo archipelago – 17,506 island, 5.8 million km water territory , choke point (SOM, Sunda, Lombok and Ombai)
- Indo fully aware of potential maritime threat
- Terror on land- Legian-Bali, JW Marriot Hotel
- Hijacking of chemical tanker – Dewi Madrim
- Maritime terror important security consideration for Indo

- M'sia threat of maritime terror is minimal
- M'sia maritime security community rejects linkage between piracy and terrorism
- Should not be used as a reason for foreign forces to intervene
- Threat is very remote although cannot completely deny the possibility
- Indo and M'sia have different perception on terrorism

Weapons of Mass Destruction

- US proposed RMSI in SOM
- To operationalize PSI by “facilitating intelligence sharing and law enforcement activities to monitor vessels carrying WMD”
- PSI is to prevent trade in manufacturing equipment and components of WMD by non state actors
- Indo and M’sia reject concept of RMSI if it involves foreign forces in Strait
- Threat of movement of WMD in SOM is concern of US but not Indo and M’sia

Conclusion

- Security threats in SOM are concern of M'sia and Indo
- Differ in perception, in priorities and their approaches
- Threat to sovereignty is the highest priority for both Indonesia and Malaysia
- There are shared and unshared concerns
- Threats are not of concern of both
E.g. WMD
- Different priority will have implications for each other's security

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