

# Addressing Maritime Security Threats in the Malacca Strait: A Malaysian Perspective

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## Abstract

In the Malacca Strait, Malaysia has faced both “traditional” and “non-traditional” security threats throughout its modern history. The territorial dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia is a long-term issue that involves a lengthy process, whereas non-traditional threats from non-state actors are urgent and short-term issues that are not yet properly addressed due to the lack of clear jurisdiction. The research findings emphasize that both countries should strengthen bilateral cooperation, including coordinated maritime patrols, joint maritime exercises, and most importantly, intelligence sharing, such as the establishment of an Intelligence Fusion Center (IFC). By utilizing this strategy, both countries not only enhance maritime security but also build trust, making progress toward resolving the territorial dispute.

## Keywords

Malaysia, Indonesia, Malacca Strait, Security Threats, Non-State Actors, Bilateral Cooperation, Intelligence Sharing

## 1. Introduction

Malaysia faces both traditional and non-traditional security threats. Traditionally, Malaysia and Indonesia have ongoing sovereignty disputes over territorial sea claims extending beyond 12 nautical miles. Non-traditionally, according to International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reports, piracy incidents in the Malacca Strait have increased by 10% annually over the past five years, underscoring growing security concerns in the region.

The Malacca Strait is a vital energy supply route to East Asia, specifically for Japan, South Korea, and China (Mohammed & Mohammed, 2023: pp. 488-498). These countries have a significant economic dependence on the Malacca waterway. For instance, Japan, the third-largest economy, imports most of its oil and

gas through the Malacca passage. China, the world's largest oil importer, relies on this route for 80% of its oil imports, and so does South Korea, the fifth-largest oil importer (Chang & Khan, 2019). Therefore, the Malacca channel plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability and prosperity of these East Asian countries' economies, and this is the reason why threats to this waterway may involve not only adjacent states but also other major powers.

This critical strait is a strategic maritime chokepoint connecting Asia-Pacific with the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. This passage is vital for the transportation of goods and energy supplies, particularly oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) (Lejla & Mason, 2017). In addition, the Malacca Channel is the shortest route linking the Indian Ocean (via the Andaman Sea) and the Pacific Ocean (via the South China Sea). This makes it a crucial channel for trade between the East and the West. Ships from the Middle East, Europe, and Africa enroute to the far East utilize this passage, significantly reducing travel time and costs.

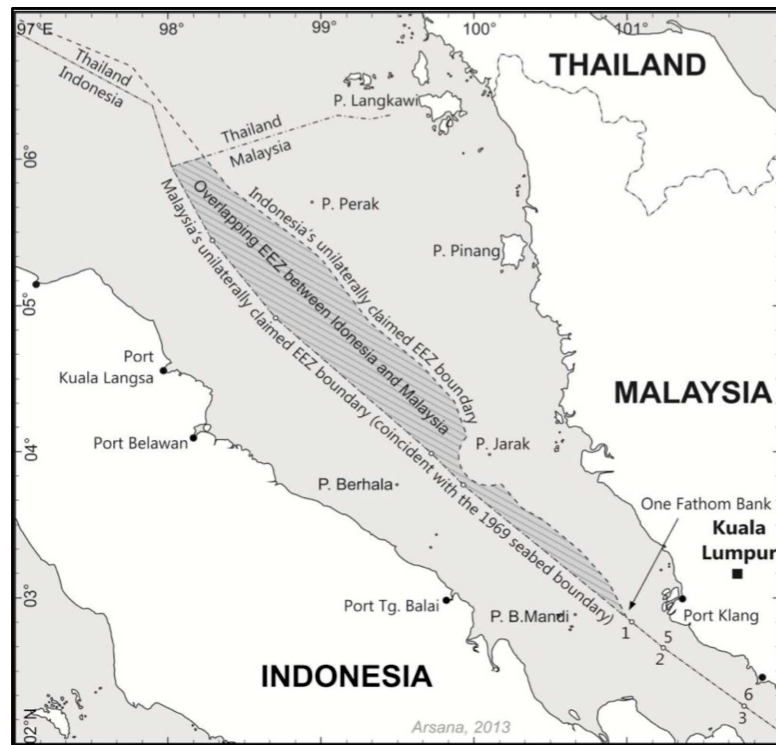
This passage is considered the busiest strait in the world (Laimou-Maniati, 1998). Stretching over 805 kilometers, it serves as a transit point for international routes, with approximately 60,000 to 94,000 ships passing through it yearly (Mohd Hazmi, 2011: pp. 501-526). Statistically, in 2020, the Malacca Strait exceeded other major maritime routes in terms of vessel traffic, with 84,456 transiting annually, compared to over 30,000 through the Strait of Hormuz, 18,829 through the Suez Canal, and 12,169 through the Panama Canal (Zulkifli et al., 2020: pp. 10-32). Consequently, the security of the strait is fundamental to Malaysia and underlines its interest in addressing security threats such as illegal fishing, drug smuggling, piracy, and armed robbery.

The Malacca Strait is bordered by three littoral states: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. This research focuses only on Malaysia and Indonesia due to their active involvement in addressing non-state issues and their significant roles in unresolved maritime boundaries. Additionally, Singapore seeks to maintain a neutral stance in regional disputes, advocating for dialogue and cooperation among the littoral states. Its focus is on fostering mutual relations with Malaysia and Indonesia to ensure a stable maritime environment rather than pursuing aggressive territorial claims in the Malacca Passage (Mohd Hazmi, 2011: pp. 501-526).

There are two critical issues regarding maritime security from Malaysia's point of view. Firstly, the territorial dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia is a long-term issue and involves lengthy processes. Secondly, non-state threats that are not yet properly addressed, are urgent and short-term issues. The focus of this research is on this second issue.

The territorial maritime dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia arises from the two countries' competing claims over their territorial sea zones, which extend up to 12 nautical miles from their coastal baselines (Hamzah et al., 2014: pp. 207-226). Accordingly, territorial issues like the continental shelf boundaries between Malaysia and Indonesia, are clearly defined and uncontested, with unresolved issues concerning the territorial sea and EEZ rights. These unresolved delimitations

have resulted in overlapping territorial sea and EEZ claims from both countries, covering approximately 14,300 square kilometers, as shown in **Figure 1**. Malaysia's claims are rooted in historical usage and the proximity of its mainland and offshore territories (**Noor, 2016**). Conversely, Indonesia's claims are based on its extensive archipelagic state principle (**Purwanto & Mangku, 2016: pp. 51-59**), seeking to assert control over the waters between its several islands.



**Figure 1.** Overlapping claim between malaysia and indonesia in the malacca strait (**Arsana 2014**).

The overlapping territorial sea and EEZ are significant due to the strait's heavy traffic, where lack of clear maritime jurisdiction affects navigation safety. These areas serve as central fishing grounds for Indonesian and Malaysian fishermen. Without an agreed-upon territorial sea and EEZ boundary, both nations continue to operate based on their unilateral claims, leading to uncoordinated patrol activities by Malaysian and Indonesian officers in the overlapping region, and frequent fishing incidents between the two nations' fishermen (**Arsana, 2014**).

These overlapping claims over maritime boundaries have led to diplomatic tensions and created political challenges, raising questions about who has the legal authority to control territorial waters and who is responsible for ensuring the security of this critical waterway. This represents a relevant obstacle to efficient bilateral cooperation. Resolving maritime boundaries is unlikely to address maritime security threats because conventional sovereignty disputes often involve political manipulation. This means these disputes are frequently influenced by domestic political agendas, where governments may exploit sovereignty claims to

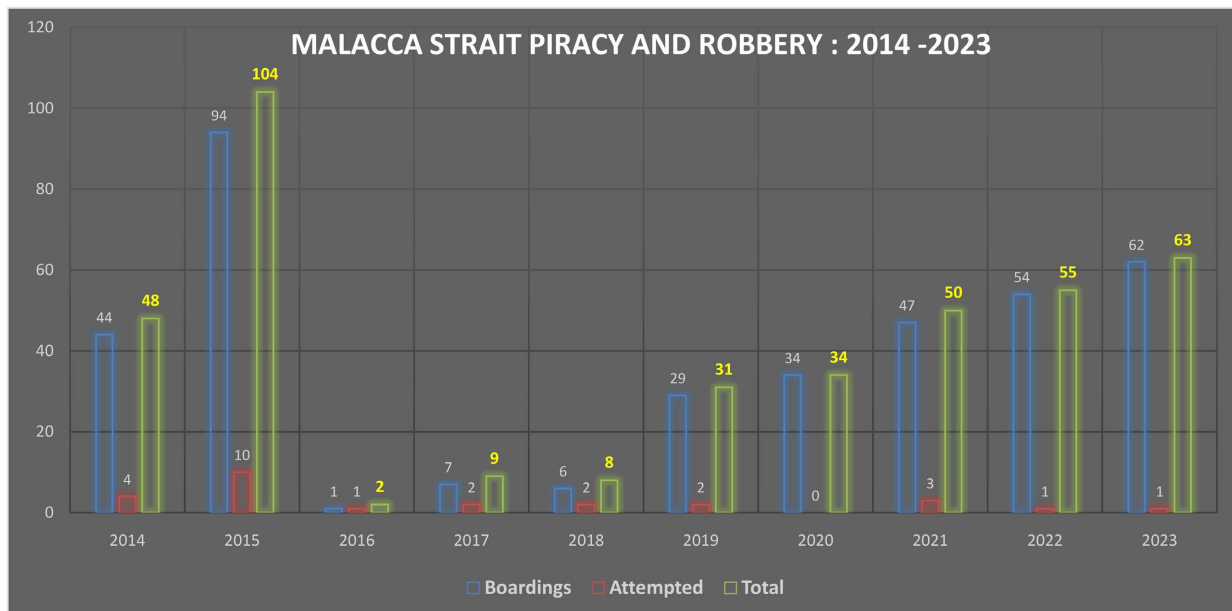
rally nationalistic sentiments or distract from domestic issues. Such manipulation can manifest through strategic communication, misinformation, leveraging social media, and endorsements to influence public opinion, behavior, and decision-making processes for political gain (Gimadeeva et al., 2019: pp. 1233-1236).

Political manipulation was evidenced before the transition of Indonesia leadership (electoral year) in 2024, when there was an increase in non-state threats in 2023 (McGrath & Gill, 2014: pp. 27-35). As a new election approaches, political actors often engage in power struggles, leading to situations of manipulation. During this time, the government's focus may shift to political campaigns and the consolidation of power to promote political gains. However, if there is a rise in nationalist sentiment, the government may highlight issues related to state institutions responsible for security and law enforcement, particularly those involving territorial disputes, to divert attention from domestic issues.

It is important to recognize that as the political year begins, the number of non-state attacks is expected to rise due to the further weakening of state institutions responsible for security and law enforcement. Evidence suggests that the rising trend of domestic terrorist attacks coincides with changes in national leadership in Indonesia. For example, during the final years of Suharto's reign, there was an upward trend in such attacks, which continued through the reformation period (1998-2004) when the Indonesian national leadership changed three times, and acts of terror peaked. Consequently, there has been a significant increase in terrorist acts targeting government institutions, driven by partisan political beliefs in recent years (Counter Extremism Project, 2022).

Threats from non-state actors are the most crucial issues for maritime security in this region. The ongoing non-traditional security challenges, evidenced by 26 piracy and armed robbery incidents targeting ships during January-March 2024 (Beheerder, 2024), highlight the persistence of maritime threats, particularly in this critical waterway. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP ISC), the leading regional body for maritime security monitoring, reports growing issues and increasing security concerns in the Malacca passage (Cameron, 2023). Recent reports indicate a surge in piracy and armed robbery incidents over the past five years, with cases increasing from 31 in 2019, 34 in 2020, 50 in 2021, and 55 in 2022 to 63 in 2023 (ReCAAP.org, 2023). Hence, both countries should recognize that addressing non-state threats is urgent and requires to be addressed in a separate way from the territorial dispute. In addition, settling water boundary issues is a long-term and lengthy process, not allowing for an immediate solution.

As seen in **Figure 2**, the number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the region has increased over the past five years. These non-state threats, including piracy and armed robbery, can disrupt trade routes due to ships choosing to select the safer and longer route. Disruptions in trade routes can lead to higher operational costs for shipping companies due to rerouting and potential delays in delivery schedules. This can result in shortages and increased commodity prices, ultimately raising the cost of goods.



**Figure 2.** Malacca strait piracy and armed robbery: 2014-2023 (ReCAAP.org, 2023).

Additionally, these threats also pose challenges to maritime navigation. Ships may need longer, indirect routes to avoid high-risk areas, causing congestion in safer waters. This increases travel time and heightens the risk of collisions and other navigational accidents. Therefore, there is a need for action to improve security measures and regional cooperation in the Malacca channel.

As discussed above, the Malacca waterway holds significant strategic importance for power rivalries among great powers in the South China Sea, like China and India. China relies heavily on it for energy imports. This can be seen as most of the oil consumed in China is imported from the Middle East and Africa, passing through the Malacca Strait. In addition, India depends on the Malacca Strait for trade with China. Any disruption in this strait could have severe consequences for China's energy supply and India's economy. In this context, it is important to guarantee the security of this maritime route, as well as to constructively engage these major powers in maintaining the stability of this waterway.

Moreover, the Malacca passage is fundamental to the economy of Malaysia as it enables trade and supports maritime industries such as shipping operations, offshore oil and gas explorations, fishing, and maritime tourism. For these reasons, Malaysia claims extensive territorial waters and EEZ in the Malacca Strait, crucial for its oil, gas, and fisheries resources (Zahari & Zulkifli, 2021: pp. 1-13). The abundance of maritime resources, especially the natural assets of the Malacca channel, has enormous potential to improve the national economy and people's welfare.

Penang, Malacca, Johor, and Selangor all situated along the Malacca waterway, exhibit the highest potential for maritime industries (Evers & Darit, 2011: pp. 40-45). This is due to their extensive coastlines relative to their land area, numerous sheltered anchorages and estuaries, and proximity to central fishing grounds and

shipping lanes. That is why, over the past 20 years, Malaysia's maritime sector has increasingly concentrated along the Malacca Strait rather than the South China Sea. The rise of the harbor and shipping industry along the Malacca Strait can be partly attributed to trade with major global markets such as China and India between 1999 and 2010 (Idris & Ramli, 2018: pp. 25-46).

This research' question asks what are the limitations of Malaysia's current maritime strategy in mitigating non-state threats in the Malacca Strait, in relation to cooperation with Indonesia. This question aims to understanding the factors that explain the ineffectiveness of Malaysia's existing approach in combating piracy and armed robbery in the region. Additionally, it explores how addressing these limitations can help overcome jurisdictional ambiguities to better address these common threats.

According to the evidence, the current strategy is not effective in mitigating the persistent threats posed by non-state actors in the region. Despite Malaysia's heightened naval patrols and coordinated maritime exercises with its neighboring countries, such as Indonesia, the region reported over 38 incidents of piracy or armed robbery in 2022, making it one of the areas with a high frequency of such attacks (Lott, 2022). This research identifies no improvements of strategic measures and no efficient and stable mechanisms for cooperation with Indonesia to confront non-state threats in the area.

The hypothesis of this research holds that Malaysia's limitations to confront non-state threats in the Malacca Strait come from a lack of efficient cooperation with Indonesia, which is not directly related to the confusion regarding jurisdiction because of the maritime dispute, but to the absence of an adequate intelligence sharing mechanism that hinders the bilateral response to common threats.

## 2. Methodology

This research combines qualitative analysis of maritime security threats, and quantitative analysis regarding the persistence of historical threat data. Data sources encompass primary data, both qualitative such as Malaysia's national documents, and secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and documents from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It also includes quantitative data from the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP ISC). The objective of this combined methodology is to prioritize evidence to strengthen the arguments regarding maritime security concerns in the Malacca Strait and their impact on Malaysia's national security.

The qualitative method involves content analysis regarding Malaysia's national maritime strategy, to understand how the country is securitizing these issues, and the possibility for Malaysia and Indonesia to enhance cooperation. Content analysis allows for a detailed examination of the patterns, and contexts surrounding these security threats. For data collection, several sources are utilized. Document analysis includes primary sources such as government reports, policy documents,

and international maritime agreements to understand the official stance and strategy. Secondary sources such as, books, academic journals and research papers are reviewed to gather scholarly insights and theoretical frameworks, while news articles and media reports capture up to date data and public perceptions.

The quantitative method involves descriptive analysis to examine historical incidents of piracy and armed robbery from 2014 to 2023. This analysis utilizes data from the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP ISC), which provides detailed records of these incidents. Statistical analysis is used to summarize the frequency and trend of maritime security incidents over the specified period and its impact to national economic consensus.

### 3. Analytical Framework

Firstly, it is important to define maritime security. This is a concept that became more popular after the end of the Cold War. The term encompasses a wide range of issues related to the safety and security of maritime activities, but there is no consensus on its definition as its interpretation varies among nations. The lack of international consensus on what maritime security is reflects the intricate and evolving nature of security challenges in the maritime domain. For instance, the United Kingdom's National Strategy for Maritime Security emphasizes the protection of national interests and the management of risks from the maritime domain, pointing to a broad and integrated approach to maritime issues (Edwards, 2022).

Another example, such as the United States' National Strategy for Maritime Security, emphasizes the importance of building global partnerships and engaging in cooperative maritime security operations to address the security challenges of the 21st Century (Teich & Houff, 2008). This strategy aligns with liberal theory's emphasis on multilateral institutions and partnerships as effective means for nations to collectively address shared security challenges. Similarly, the European Union (EU) National Strategy for Maritime Security underlines the necessity of establishing an effective EU Maritime Security Strategy that provides a strategic framework for the Union's security-related activities regarding the sea, encompassing maritime power projection, security, and safety (Germond, 2011: pp. 563-584). This strategy underscores the EU's commitment to enhancing maritime security through a comprehensive and coordinated approach that addresses the diverse security challenges in the maritime domain. Additionally, NATO's National Strategy for Maritime Security highlights the alliance's dedication to improving maritime security through maritime operations that reinforce sea patrolling and enhance the security of sea lanes, with a particular focus on regions like the Mediterranean (Shukri, 2019: pp. 105-116). This strategy underscores NATO's proactive approach to safeguarding maritime interests and promoting security in a constantly evolving regional security landscape. This brief review shows that different strategies emphasize different issues, based on the specific goals.

This lack of consensus highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to

maritime security, addressing diverse and evolving threats in the maritime domain. During the Cold War, the bipolar competition between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union underscored the importance of military alliances, balance of power, and deterrence strategies. [Morgenthau \(1973\)](#) emphasized the role of power and national interest as central to understanding international politics. He asserts that states, as rational actors, prioritize their survival and security, leading them to engage in power politics. This perspective has shaped the understanding of state behavior and international conflicts, emphasizing that states will act in ways that maximize their power relative to others. In this era, the notion of maritime security revolved around naval power, and issues were analyzed through the lenses of traditional realist theory, which is based on state and military power ([Morgenthau, 1973](#)).

During the Cold War era, the focus shifted to neo-realist theory, and it emphasized the centrality of power and national interest in state behavior, suggesting that states must rely on their capabilities (self-help) to ensure survival and security ([Waltz, 1979](#)). This theory explains that the international system is anarchic, lacking a central authority, leading states to act in self-help for survival. [Waltz \(1979\)](#) highlights the competitive nature of international relations, where states prioritize their own interests (zero-sum game) and seek to maintain or enhance their power to safeguard their sovereignty and security.

With the end of the Cold War, the multipolar structure of power and the new security agenda, characterized by the growing importance of non-state threats, highlighted the crucial role of international organizations in facilitating cooperation and mitigating conflicts. [Keohane and Nye \(1977\)](#) viewed global politics through the lens of complex interdependence. This theory emphasizes that states are interconnected through various elements, including economic, environmental, and social ties. This interdependence alters the nature of international relations, and contributes to the development of liberal theories that emphasize states must collaborate to enhance international cooperation and international institutions ([Keohane & Nye, 1977](#)). It highlights the importance of multilateral institutions and partnerships through which nations can address shared security challenges. This perspective involves more actors, besides states, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, and societies. Moreover, it considers more factors, besides the military ones, such as economic, political, environmental, and societal in comparison to the Cold War era revolving around the state and military power.

The emergence of multiple centers of power, including the US, China, the EU, and the emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), as well as non-state issues like piracy and armed robbery, moved to the top of the security agenda. A new understanding was required, therefore, based on the broadening of the concept of security, where liberal theory emphasizes international cooperation ([Moravcsik, 1997](#): pp. 513-553). This perspective underscores the capacity of international cooperation to establish rules, norms,

and mechanisms for managing crises and conflicts peacefully.

Based on the theoretical perspectives explained above, there are three approaches to understanding the concept of maritime security: semiotic, securitization, and practice (Bueger, 2015: pp. 159-164). Semiotic focuses on the symbolic and communicative aspects of security, examining how security meanings are constructed and communicated. Securitization involves understanding how certain issues are framed as security threats through discourse and political processes. Practice looks at the everyday practices and routines that constitute security, focusing on the actions and interactions of security actors. These approaches contribute to understanding maritime security by examining how security is constructed (semiotic), framed through discourse and politics (securitization), and enacted in daily practices (practice).

This research relies on the “Securitization” approach as it allows to understand how an issue can be constructed as a threat incorporating elements of both the realist and complex interdependence perspectives. There are two reasons why this research considers the securitization framework adequate for understanding maritime security. Firstly, the securitization approach highlights how threats are constructed and the political implications they carry, revealing varying ideologies and interests (Bueger, 2015: pp. 159-164). This approach suggests that societal perceptions and political processes determine what is considered a threat. Addressing these threats involves practices beyond traditional military measures, such as legal frameworks, international cooperation, and community engagement. Secondly, securitization theory combines traditional realist and liberal theories. Traditional realist theory as discussed above emphasizes the centrality of power and national interest in state behavior, while liberal theory emphasizes the importance of multilateral institutions and partnerships through which nations can address shared security challenges. The securitization framework, therefore, emphasizes the importance of broader security issues beyond traditional military concerns (Buzan et al., 1998). It suggests states should expand the traditional focus on state-centric and military issues to encompass a broader range of security concerns.

Barry Buzan’s securitization concept, developed within the Copenhagen School, incorporates realist and liberal perspectives, offering a nuanced understanding of security. From a realist perspective, securitization aligns with the view that security is fundamentally about the survival and protection of the state from existential threats. Realists emphasize the importance of power and the state’s central role in maintaining security. Buzan’s concept reflects this by highlighting how specific issues are framed as existential threats that necessitate extraordinary measures, typically involving state intervention and the use of power (Buzan et al., 1998). For instance, during the Cold War, framing the Soviet Union as an existential threat to the United States and its allies led to the securitization of the conflict. This perception justified extraordinary measures such as the arms race, establishing military alliances like NATO, and implementing policies focused on containment (Kennedy, 1987). These actions were driven by the realist view that

the state's survival was at stake, necessitating significant state intervention and the use of power to counter the perceived threat.

On the other hand, the liberal perspective is reflected in the emphasis on the role of discourse and the construction of security. Liberals highlight the importance of international cooperation, institutions, and norms. Buzan's securitization theory incorporates this by examining how security issues are socially constructed through speech acts and how various actors, including international organizations and civil society, can influence these constructions (Buzan et al., 1998). For instance, the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Aden has been securitized through international discourse. Various actors, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and regional coalitions, have framed piracy as a significant security threat to global trade and navigation (Hansen, 2012). This framing has led to coordinated international efforts, such as joint naval patrols and establishing security protocols for vessels. The liberal perspective is evident as international cooperation, institutions, and norms have shaped the response, highlighting how maritime security issues can be constructed and addressed through collaborative efforts and discourse, and this approach represents the foundation for Malaysia and Indonesia to jointly address common threats.

Buzan's securitization theory bridges the gap between liberal and realist perspectives by recognizing two aspects, including the state's role and power dynamics in defining and responding to security threats, while also emphasizing the importance of discourse, norms, and social constructions in shaping what is perceived as a security issue. This integration offers a comprehensive understanding of security that considers both aspects, such as military capabilities and economic resources, and the conceptual factors, including perceptions, narratives, and societal norms, thus providing a more nuanced analysis of how security issues are identified and addressed.

Buzan and his co-authors promote a sectoral approach to security analysis (security sectors), categorizing issues into military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors. They also introduce the concept of securitization (security process), which involves series of interconnected steps, including to identify a threat, securitizing actor, object of security, speech act, and audience.

This research focuses on the securitization process by involving several key elements. The *Identified Threat* refers to the issue being securitized, such as piracy and armed robbery. The *Securitizing Actor* is the entity that declares this issue as an existential threat; for example, political leaders and security officials from the Malaysian government declaring these threats as existential to national security. The *Referent Object* such as the society, community, economy, environment to be perceived under threat, such as the communities around the Malacca Strait and the international community that relies on this passage. The *Speech Act* is the act of framing this issue as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures such as a national maritime strategy, as seen in Malaysia's response. Finally, the *Audience* refers to the public, whose acceptance of this framing is crucial for securitization

to succeed.

In the Malacca Strait, piracy and armed robbery are identified as threats that disrupt shipping and endanger lives (Abhyankar, 2006: pp. 1-22). Malaysia recognizes these issues as threats to its national security (Hidayat & Jeslyn, 2021). This framing is accepted by Malaysia's stakeholders, leading to a consensus on the need for enhanced security measures (Huang, 2020: pp. 41-50). In response, Malaysia's authorities adopt protective measures, such as naval patrols, to improve interoperability and readiness (Wirawan et al., 2022). Recognizing these shared threats is a crucial step for Malaysia and Indonesia toward forming a maritime security community. These perspectives emphasize Malaysia's widening of the concept of national security by securitizing threats at sea to develop a national maritime strategy.

It can be argued that a common understanding and securitization of non-state threats, allows Malaysia and Indonesia to set the foundation for a maritime security community. The concept of a "Security Community" was initially proposed in 1957 by Karl Deutsch and describes a group of people who believe that common social problems can and must be resolved through peaceful change (Deutsch, 1957: pp. 200-211). Deutsch noted that members of such a community are unified by a sense of community, identifying themselves as a distinct group with mutual sympathy, trust, and shared interests. This community emphasizes preventing future conflicts through integration and cooperation, often involving the sharing of best practices and operational strategies to solve common problems.

The security community concept underscores the idea that issues can be jointly securitized, establishing a basis for security cooperation. Joint securitization involves multiple states coming to a consensus on identifying a threat and framing it in a manner that necessitates collective action (Wilhelmsen, 2021). This shared understanding of security threats is crucial for effective cooperation. Initiatives like the Malaysia-Indonesia maritime patrol demonstrate how bilateral cooperation can enhance maritime security and address common security challenges.

#### 4. Findings

Non-state actors in the Malacca Strait pose short-term, immediate threats requiring urgent bilateral action by Malaysia and Indonesia, despite their long-term territorial dispute. Firstly, Malaysia and Indonesia need to adopt a compartmentalization strategy to address territorial and non-traditional issues on different tracks. This approach enables both nations to increase cooperation to confront the immediate common threats posed by non-state actors, despite having conflicting positions on other issues. By compartmentalizing their bilateral agenda, states can work together on areas of common interest without letting differences in other areas hinder the overall relationship, effectively addressing the territorial dispute and non-state threats separately.

One of the main benefits of compartmentalization is that it allows states to continue collaborating on dealing with shared security threats, even when broader geopolitical tensions exist. For example, despite active competition in several ar-

eas, Türkiye and Russia avoid open conflict due to shared interests, significant economic ties, and strategic diplomatic efforts. Türkiye's economy strongly depends on Russian tourism, oil and gas supplies, and the Russian manufacturing market. Russia relies on Türkiye for oil and gas pipelines, bypassing traditional routes in Ukraine and Eastern Europe (Stergiou, 2017: pp. 101-119). Moreover, Türkiye leverages its relationship with Russia to influence NATO (Fleck, 2015), benefiting from the potential to purchase Russian arms and complicate the alliance's efficacy. Russia sees Türkiye as a key disruptor within NATO, promoting division within the alliance. Another factor enabling the compartmentalization of differences between Russia and Türkiye is the employment of mercenaries and proxy armies, avoiding direct military engagement and diplomatic fallout (Celso, 2019: pp. 92-116).

In the Malacca Strait case, Malaysia and Indonesia should agree to compartmentalize their bilateral agenda by prioritizing prompt bilateral cooperation and intelligence sharing to tackle non-state threats and address their territorial maritime dispute on a different track. This approach suggests a bilateral cooperative strategy for security in the Malacca Strait, including joint exercises and coordinated patrols to strengthen capacity-building. Most importantly, this finding emphasizes intelligence sharing such as exchange data regarding potential extraordinary threats to anticipate and respond to them more adaptively and accurately to enable Malaysia and Indonesia to mitigate maritime issues effectively.

Secondly, applying the securitization approach to maritime security in the Malacca Strait offers a framework for bilateral cooperation and intelligence sharing, enabling both countries to create a maritime security community. A security community is essential for preventing future conflicts through integration and cooperation, often involving the sharing of best practices and operational strategy to solve common problems (Browning & Pertti, 2004: pp. 233-253). For instance, the post-Cold War period has seen significant securitization and regionalization, with EU and NATO enlargements playing crucial roles in integrating Baltic states, reducing Russian influence, and securing Western guarantees (Szejgiec-Kolenda et al., 2020: pp. 609-630). Szejgiec-Kolenda et al. argued that as primary security threats diminish, the region may need new motivations for cooperation, potentially shifting focus to economic, environmental, and social issues. The concept a security community, where war becomes unthinkable among cooperating states, highlights the transformative role in shaping security and cooperation, as seen in NATO's involvement in the Baltic Sea region (Smirnov, 2020: pp. 4-25). NATO's initiatives, such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP), have provided a platform for dialogue and military cooperation, fostering a shared identity among member states. This integration process is crucial in establishing a sense of "us" that is fundamental to a security community, where member states view each other as allies rather than threats (Lucarelli, 2002).

Thirdly, given the imminent threats posed by non-state actors in the Malacca Strait, Malaysia, Indonesia, and potentially Singapore should engage in creating

regional maritime security community to prioritize immediate and urgent issues like piracy, armed robbery, and other non-traditional threats in the region. This course of action promotes bilateral cooperation through joint military exercises and coordinated law enforcement patrols in the Malacca Strait. This enables Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta to strengthen capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving interoperability and readiness, thereby securing the maritime environment. Additionally, the most important strategy tailored to respond to each type of threat is intelligence sharing, which allows both countries to share real-time information on areas of responsibility, current situations, and potential extraordinary threats. This facilitates both countries to anticipate and respond to threats more adaptively and accurately, fostering trust and reducing the likelihood of conflict at operational levels.

Intelligence sharing is a critical aspect of national security and international cooperation (Lander, 2013). By implementing the proposed measures, Malaysia and Indonesia can improve their intelligence capabilities, strengthen partnerships, and ensure a more effective response to security threats. Intelligence sharing allows both nations to pool resources and gather a wider range of information about maritime threats. This includes data from various sources, such as surveillance operations, reports from law enforcement agencies, news from local society, and information from international partners. In terms of growing maritime security issues, sharing intelligence can provide early warnings and coordinate responses.

Moreover, intelligence sharing between Malaysia and Indonesia enables comprehensive threat intelligence assessment. This process involves collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about existing or potential threats that could harm the maritime security of both countries. Shared intelligence is then analyzed by experts from both countries to identify patterns, trends, and potential risks (Möller, 2023). This collaborative analysis allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the threat landscape, as each nation brings its own expertise and perspectives to the table. The analysis process helps prioritize threats based on their likelihood and potential impact.

Once intelligence about a threat collected and analyzed, it is disseminated to stakeholders, including policymakers, military commanders, and law enforcement authorities. This information-sharing ensures that all parties involved in maritime security have access to up-to-date and actionable intelligence (Landoll, 2021). The timely dissemination of threat intelligence enables proactive measures to mitigate risks.

## 5. Analysis

To answer the research question about the limitations of Malaysia's current maritime strategy in mitigating non-state threats in the Malacca Strait, it is essential to understand how Malaysia's current strategy addresses security threats. "The Defence White Paper: A Secure, Sovereign, and Prosperous Malaysia (2014)" established Malaysia's national maritime strategy and consists of Concentric Deter-

rence, Comprehensive Defence, and Credible Partnership as a strategy to tackle non-state threats.

Firstly, Concentric Deterrence, the principal pillar of Malaysia's defense strategy, primarily involves the role of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) in protecting national interests. This approach involves creating layers of defense (core, extended, and forward areas) to protect the country from non-traditional threats and deter potential aggressors while safeguarding its territorial integrity. Based on Concentric Deterrence, the MAF plays a central role in ensuring security and sovereignty (Gromek, 2023: pp. 47-69), which are instrumental in upholding national pride, strength, and resilience while securing borders and citizens from external dangers (Dada et al., 2022: pp. 91-107).

**Resilience is related to the fact that** sea power involves collaboration between navies and other maritime agencies to ensure security against threats. It enhances coordination between Malaysian naval forces, coast guards, law enforcement agencies, and international partners, ensuring efficient resource utilization and a cohesive response.

Malaysia's focus on Concentric Deterrence highlights the significance of naval strength and readiness in safeguarding its maritime interests and asserting its regional presence (Artanto et al., 2024; Foy, 2016: pp. 6-35; Bernard, 2011: p. 381). Naval dominance is essential to traditional realist theory, emphasizing the importance of controlling sea lanes and strategic maritime areas (Crisher & Souva 2014: pp. 602-629). The enhancement of naval dominance, as exemplified by China's Belt and Road Initiative, signifies a shift in global power dynamics (Turker, 2024). For this reason, Malaysia views strengthening power as central to international relations and influences state behaviour and interactions. It provides strategic advantages by projecting power globally and influencing international affairs, particularly emphasizing the importance of naval power in influencing global trade and projecting power on land (Mahan, 1890; Glaser & Rahman, 2016: pp. 95-111).

Secondly, Malaysia emphasizes Comprehensive Defense and it involves the synergistic application of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to defend the nation, aligned with the HANRUH (Pertahanan Menyeluruh) concept. This approach emphasizes the importance of civil-military cooperation, inter-agency coordination, and the involvement of non-governmental organizations to ensure adequate infrastructure, support services, and emergency preparedness (Mohd Sarkam et al., 2023: pp. 41-49).

Geographical constraints, such as porous maritime boundaries and maritime threats, have made it difficult for Malaysia to manage rising security challenges like non-state actors. The Malacca Strait, with its extensive coastline and numerous small islands, presents significant physical and logistical challenges for effective maritime surveillance and enforcement. The intricate network of islands and narrow passages provides ideal conditions for illicit activities, such as smuggling, piracy, and armed robbery, allowing perpetrators to exploit these natural features to evade detection by law enforcement agencies.

Thus, Malaysia's maritime enforcement agencies play a crucial role in patrolling and protecting Malaysia's waters in the Malacca Strait. The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) regularly collaborate with civilian maritime agencies, such as the MMEA, to conduct joint patrols and surveillance operations. This inter-agency coordination also involves the harmonization of legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure cohesive enforcement of maritime laws. This Comprehensive Defense helps to eliminate jurisdictional ambiguities and strengthens the overall legal basis for maritime security operations.

Thirdly, Malaysia engages in Credible Partnerships to establish a sustainable legal framework to combat maritime security effectively. Malaysia emphasizes Credible Partnerships through initiatives like the Malacca Strait Patrol (MSP) with Indonesia and Singapore, involving sea patrols, air patrols, and intelligence exchange (Oktavian, 2021: pp. 61-90). The beneficial advantages of the program are exemplified by the fact that Malaysia and Indonesia mobilized two maritime patrol aircraft and four warships in December 2004 to retrieve a Singaporean tug that had been hijacked (Bradford, 2005: pp. 63-86). This partnership serves as a crucial platform for Malaysia to engage with key regional and international partners to address common security challenges and promote Southeast Asian stability.

In Malaysia's defense white paper, Indonesia is mentioned nine times concerning collaboration, coordination, and cooperation. This highlights that Malaysia and Indonesia have established a long-standing bilateral relationship as Credible Partnerships (Chooi-Ye, 2023). However, this collaboration has not yet reached its full effectiveness, particularly in terms of intelligence sharing between the two countries. The white paper mentions intelligence sharing only once, stating: "There is a need to improve the mechanisms of intelligence sharing on militant activities in the region. ASEAN has launched the ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative (OEI), a strategic-level information sharing platform to increase cooperation among ASEAN member states to counter extremism." This statement emphasizes Malaysia's promotion of intelligence sharing within ASEAN countries, but specific intelligence sharing between Malaysia and Indonesia has yet to be fully realized.

Moreover, by aligning its defense strategy with broader diplomatic efforts, Malaysia ensures a holistic approach to maritime security that addresses immediate threats and long-term strategic goals (Keling et al., 2011: pp. 180-193). It can be argued that Malaysia's current strategy is likely to hinder by several critical issues including ineffective bilateral cooperation with Indonesia, inadequate intelligence sharing, and limited cross-territorial patrols. It has been pointed out that the lack of effective cooperation with Indonesia—stemming not from the maritime dispute itself, but from jurisdictional confusion—makes it harder for Malaysia and Indonesia to address common threats. This creates surveillance and enforcement gaps, allowing criminal activities to thrive in these regions. Moreover, the lack of a sufficient communication network and intelligence-sharing mechanisms between Malaysia and Indonesia has led to fragmented security responses, allowing criminal activities to persist.

The growth of these security threats reflects the ineffectiveness and limitations of current security measures. While increased security measures have been implemented, their efficiency has been inconsistent due to ineffective bilateral cooperation with Indonesia. For example, the IMB's annual reports show that while there were significant reductions in piracy during certain periods, these improvements were not sustained over the long term, indicating gaps in coordinated efforts (IMB, 2019). The two nations share a lengthy maritime border in the Malacca Strait, making collaboration essential for maintaining security. Although both nations have already engaged in bilateral cooperation, a notable gap remains in intelligence sharing between them. This lack of shared intelligence underscores the need for improved information exchange regarding potential suspicious activities to enhance joint security efforts. Moreover, historical territorial disputes and differing national interests have frequently impeded joint efforts, resulting in difficulties in collectively addressing security issues, due to both countries' hesitation to engage in joint security efforts if they perceive that such cooperation could undermine their sovereignty related to disputed areas (Sidik et al., 2023: pp. 3338-3353).

Inadequate intelligence sharing poses a significant challenge to Malaysia's maritime security efforts, particularly in addressing threats such as piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing. Reports from the International Maritime Bureau have highlighted that delayed responses to piracy incidents in the Malacca Strait are often due to inadequate intelligence sharing mechanisms (Musa & Zulkifli, 2022). This indicates that both countries require the exchange of critical information, such as real-time intelligence on suspicious activities, to enable quick and coordinated responses to these risks. Timely intelligence sharing is essential to pre-empt and mitigate these security threats.

Limited cross-territorial patrols further weaken Malaysia's maritime security. Regular and coordinated patrols are necessary to maintain a persistent presence and deter illicit activities. However, Malaysia's maritime enforcement agencies are often constrained by who has the legal authority to monitor territorial waters and who is responsible for ensuring the security of this critical waterway (He, 2009: pp. 667-689). These constraints underscore Malaysia's need to coordinate with Indonesia in the scope of surveillance coverage and to optimize the maritime law enforcement capabilities of both countries in carrying out their duties.

Despite Malaysia's increased naval patrols and joint maritime exercises with its neighbouring countries like Indonesia, these efforts have not fully stopped the growing trend of illegal incidents. **Figure 3** illustrates the trends in the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in the Malacca Strait between 2014 and 2023.

The chart reveals a significant peak in 2015, with 104 attacks, followed by a sharp decrease to just 2 attacks in 2016. These incidents were significantly reduced due to the proposal of the Eyes in the Sky (EIS) system by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in September 2015 (Ho, 2016). A deterrence strategy by the littoral governments' heightened patrols and vigilance, along with the continued precautions taken by ships, contributed to the decline in attacks (Nurbiansyah, 2019).

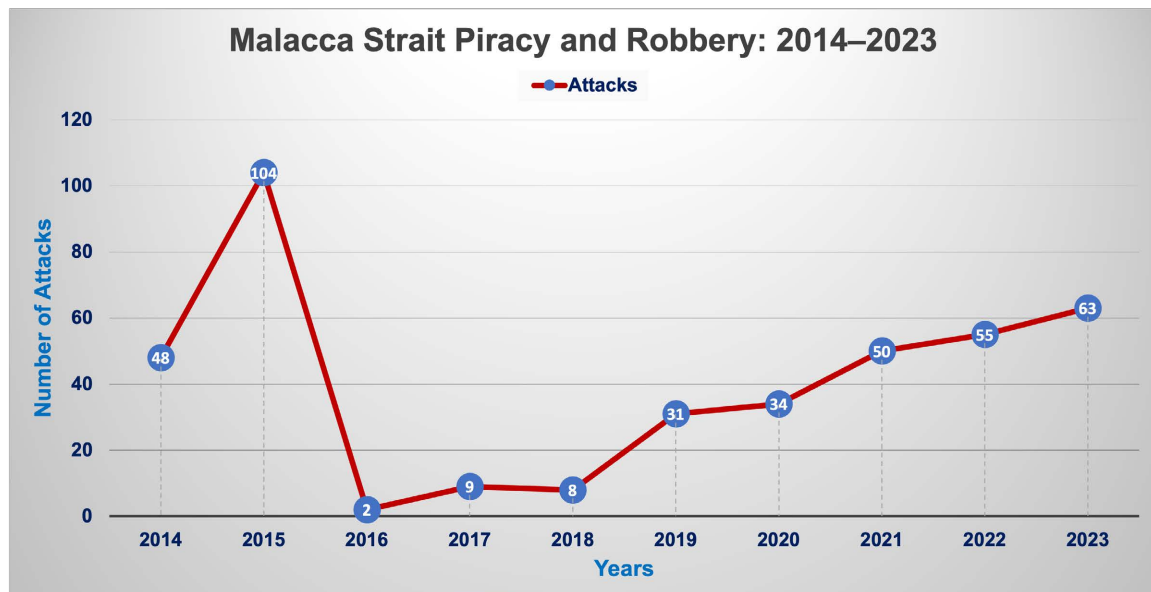


Figure 3. Malacca strait piracy and armed robbery: 2014-2023 (ReCAAP.org, 2023).

The Eyes in the Sky integrates sea and air patrols with intelligence sharing and standardized operational procedures for air and sea units, enabling more effective monitoring and securing of shared maritime boundaries (Dumas et al., 2021). As a result, the Malacca Strait experienced a remarkably low incidence of incidents in 2016. However, from 2018 onwards, the chart shows a gradual rise in the number of incidents, concluding in a higher frequency of attacks by 2023 with 63 attacks. This figure highlights the variability of piracy incidents over the years and the concerning trend of consistent year-to-year increases in maritime security threats.

From 2014 to 2023, there have been a total of 404 incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the Malacca Strait. This decade-long data underscores the persistent threat that these criminal activities pose to maritime security in the region. Despite the implementation of various security measures by the littoral states, including joint patrols conducted by Malaysia and Indonesia, resurgent attacks in the last part of the decade imply that these efforts, while initially temporarily effective, may have deteriorated. This deterioration is partly because the measures did not address the underlying causes of the criminal activities—such as poverty, unemployment, economic hardship, and lack of job opportunities (Islam, 2004). Without strategies to improve local economic conditions and social stability, the root drivers of criminal behaviour remain unaddressed, leading to a resurgence of attacks.

Securitization theory offers a robust framework for maritime security studies by providing insights into how various threats are identified and addressed. It highlights the dynamic interplay between power, cooperation, and the socio-economic aspects of maritime security, ultimately guiding the formulation of comprehensive and adaptive security strategy (Chapsos & Malcolm, 2017: pp. 178-184).

According to evidence, there is an opportunity for Malaysia and Indonesia to

increase bilateral security cooperation in the Malacca Strait, as both nations securitize the same issues. Malaysia, as a significant maritime nation in Southeast Asia, has a distinctive response to maritime security issues, particularly in maintaining the security and stability of the Malacca waterway. Over the last decades, Malaysia has enhanced its maritime capabilities by developing a modern navy, building a fleet of larger ships and patrol boats for its coast guard, and focusing on hard power assets to compel and deter adversaries (Hayton, 2014). Malaysia's approach strengthens its capabilities, demonstrating its national interest in maintaining maritime security.

Additionally, actors responding to maritime security issues include governments, navies, maritime law enforcement, and international and regional organizations. Each actor has specific roles: navies conduct military operations, while maritime law enforcement enforces laws and regulations at sea (O'Connell, 1975). The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) conducts the multi-agency task force operation, involving the Royal Malaysian Air Force, Royal Malaysian Navy, Air Wing Unit Police, Maritime Police, and the Fisheries Department, ensuring Malaysian waters are free of illicit foreign vessels. This operation reflects Malaysia's comprehensive response to tackling illegal activities at sea. By coordinating multiple agencies, Malaysia enhances the enforcement of maritime laws, strengthens surveillance, and improves quick response capabilities.

Furthermore, Malaysia has pursued maritime security cooperation within the ASEAN framework, focusing on its role and response to regional maritime security challenges in the Malacca Strait (Agastia, 2021). Through dialogue, practical cooperation, and the establishment of regional forums, ASEAN nations have made significant progress in ensuring peace in the region. This collaborative effort showcases Malaysia's proactive stance in regional maritime security. Malaysia has also engaged in maritime security cooperation with the US, highlighting its implications for national security and emphasizing its strategic context for addressing maritime security concerns with major powers (Musa & Zulkifli, 2022). Both efforts indicate Malaysia's approach to strengthen regional cooperation and participation in international initiatives to ensure security in its maritime region, demonstrating its significant national interest in maintaining maritime security.

The concept of securitization involves both reactive and preventive actions to address the root causes and broader implications of maritime threats. This means that maritime security should go beyond coercive measures to include economic, environmental, legal, and human security approaches (Bueger, 2015: pp. 159-164). It emphasizes the need for non-coercive methods like socioeconomic security measures to tackle fundamental issues, as the use of force alone is insufficient to address the underlying factors contributing to maritime threats.

Evidence of this can be seen with piracy off the coast of Somalia. Somali fishermen turned to piracy due to illegal fishing in their waters, driven by economic needs and situational factors (Ondigi, 2023). This shift from fishermen to pirates highlights the coastal community's struggle to sustain their livelihoods. The des-

peration and lack of alternatives have forced them into piracy as a means of survival. Addressing this requires combining strict maritime security measures, economic development, and legal fishing practices to provide sustainable and lawful income sources. By improving economic conditions and offering viable solutions, piracy can be mitigated, ensuring a more stable and secure coastal environment.

The significance of non-coercive measures, such as education, environmental protection, investment in infrastructure, health services, lies in their ability to complement coercive policies by targeting root causes. Unlike coercive measures, which often enforce compliance, non-coercive approaches emphasize persuasion and directly address underlying issues such as economic disparities. By focusing on these foundational problems, non-coercive strategies help create more sustainable and effective solutions.

This research focused on analysing the limitations of Malaysia's current maritime strategy that hinder effective cooperation with Indonesia. The study suggests that both nations need to build a stronger foundation for collaboration, mainly based on strengthening intelligence sharing.

Several key foundations for collaboration have been identified. Firstly, establishing a clear governance framework to manage the multi-layered involvement of actors in the Malacca Strait is crucial. This framework, by clearly defining and coordinating roles, prevents overlaps and uncertainties that could otherwise hinder cooperation. Secondly, strengthening law enforcement coordination facilitates joint patrols in contested areas, allowing both countries to effectively monitor and respond to piracy and smuggling in overlapping territories. This increased presence deters attackers and boosts regional security. Thirdly, enhanced maritime security cooperation enables Malaysia and Indonesia to share critical information and resources, making their collective efforts more robust and efficient. Lastly, building more capable and responsive law enforcement agencies through targeted investments in training, equipment, and technology ensures improved law enforcement capacities.

In the Malacca Strait, joint maritime exercises represent synergistic collaboration to fostering bilateral cooperation between the two nations, especially in building trust and sharing interests. These exercises provide a platform for enhancing security cooperation between both countries. For example, the MALINDO Jaya exercise involving the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) and the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) highlights the benefits of maritime cooperation in addressing shared challenges and achieving mutual interests (As'ad & Nafilah, 2022).

However, the most important aspect of bilateral cooperation is intelligence sharing between two countries to develop actionable strategy and to build trust and operational efficiency. The coastal communities in Sumatra (Indonesia) and Malaysia have a longstanding history of engaging in maritime crime, including activities such as piracy, IUU fishing, and armed robbery. Despite establishing modern borders, these illegal activities persist primarily due to the deep-rooted connections among people across the Malacca Strait. One key factor contributing

to the continuity of these activities is the shared language, culture, and familial ties that span the region. These ties foster a sense of community and mutual support among the population, transcending national boundaries imposed by governments. Illicit trade and activities benefit from local knowledge and informal networks, which make it difficult for law enforcement agencies to track these illegal activities (Anagnostou, 2021). It underscores the importance of intelligence sharing in building local networks to detect and prevent harmful activities, by enhancing situational awareness, fostering collaboration among agencies, and empowering local communities.

Intelligence sharing has become crucial for enhancing situational awareness of maritime security to identify indicators of criminal activities by non-state actors. By leveraging shared information mechanisms, both countries can prevent incidents before they occur and identify the root causes of security problems. Intelligence sharing allows for real-time communication and collaboration, enabling Malaysia and Indonesia to anticipate and respond to threats more adaptively and accurately (Kadarsih et al., 2020: pp. 126-137).

Sharing intelligence has become key for fostering collaboration among agencies. Both countries benefit from the shared language, making language barriers insignificant. This shared language allows for more effective and efficient communication. The exchange of information regarding potential threats, criminal modus operandi, and the latest security trends will strengthen prevention and response efforts in both countries. For instance, in the early 2000s, Indonesia and Malaysia signed bilateral agreements to formalize their cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts (Emmers, 2009: pp. 159-177). These agreements facilitated the exchange of intelligence against terrorist networks. Notably, the arrest of key Jemaah Islamiyah operatives involved coordinated efforts between Indonesian and Malaysian intelligence agencies. This is an example of how, by leveraging the exchange of information between the two countries, the security framework and mutual trust between both parties will be strengthened.

Intelligence sharing allows Malaysia and Indonesia to disseminate critical maritime threat information promptly, keeping both countries informed about illicit activities such as piracy, illegal fishing, and smuggling. To improve intelligence sharing, it is needed:

- a) The establishment of an Intelligence Fusion Center (IFC) to compile and update the security picture.
- b) Standardized secure mechanisms or protocols, such as radio cryptography.
- c) Secure communication channels, such as Ultra High Frequency (UHF).

Firstly, effective intelligence sharing requires innovative approaches and technologies, such as common databases for information exchange and analysis. By sharing resources, security agencies in both countries can identify patterns in high-volume crimes that isolated databases might miss, fostering synergy among intelligence communities and a comprehensive understanding of security threats. For this reason, it is important to build an IFC, enabling both countries to main-

tain an updated security picture by exchanging threat and criminal activity information (real-time intelligence).

Secondly, standardized protocols are the foundation of intelligence cooperation to improve security posture and threat detection. Trust-based protocols, particularly in the context of government intelligence agencies, ensure the secure exchange of confidential information across national boundaries using public key radio cryptography (Headayetullah & Pradhan, 2009: p. 346). Advanced technologies, such as encrypted radios, can potentially transform and empower the Intelligence Community (IC) by expanding, automating, and sharpening intelligence collection and processing (Gorman, 2019). Additionally, establishing standardized protocols helps streamline intelligence sharing and ensure consistent implementation across participating nations. By implementing innovative technologies and trust-based protocols, both countries can establish secure communication channels for intelligence sharing. These secure communication networks using encrypted channels enhance data security and foster security cooperation and information exchange among stakeholders.

Thirdly, secure communication is essential for government and military applications to protect confidential information. To establish secure communication channels between Malaysia and Indonesia for intelligence sharing, utilizing secure channels such as Ultra High Frequency (UHF) is important. Currently, both institutions are using Very High Frequency (VHF), which is an internationally recognized channel that can be monitored by other vessels. This is why advanced modulation techniques in UHF communication systems improve privacy and security for confidential communication (Pallis et al., 2005).

Another possibility besides bilateral cooperation and intelligence sharing is multilateral cooperation, which can also help solve complex global maritime security challenges. Enhancing multilateral cooperation through regional and international engagement is essential for fostering robust international relations and effectively addressing shared challenges. ASEAN regional cooperation highlights the importance of practical collaboration in addressing regional security challenges, evident through mechanisms such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), focusing on issues like Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) (Agastia, 2021).

## 6. Conclusion

The Malacca Strait, strategically positioned between Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, serves as a crucial maritime corridor with significant geopolitical and economic implications. This waterway has a strategic importance in the power dynamics between major nations in the South China Sea, such as China and India. China is greatly dependent on it for importing energy. Most of China's oil consumption is sourced from the Middle East and is transported through the Malacca Strait. Furthermore, India relies on the Malacca Strait for conducting trade with China. Any disruption in this strait could have severe consequences for China's

energy supply and India's economy.

Malaysia's extensive coastlines and numerous islands present significant challenges for monitoring and controlling access points within the strait. The length and geographic diversity of Malaysia's maritime boundaries create numerous potential entry and exit points for vessels, making the region particularly susceptible to illicit activities. The difficulty in maintaining comprehensive surveillance over this vast and intricate maritime area facilitates the growth of illegal activities such as piracy, IUU fishing, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.

Malaysia's ability to address non-state threats in the Malacca Strait is limited due to a lack of effective collaboration with Indonesia. This constraint is not directly related to the maritime dispute or confusion about jurisdictional matters, but rather stems from inadequate intelligence collaboration that hampers the ability to respond adequately to shared concerns through bilateral efforts.

To resolve maritime security threats, the Malaysian government should highlight specific measures within the existing cooperative framework with neighboring countries like Indonesia. Malaysia and Indonesia should prioritize addressing these non-state threats, recognizing their immediate urgency. They should adopt a compartmentalization approach to addressing the territorial dispute and non-state threats on different tracks, enhancing cooperation without allowing territorial disputes to hinder their relationship. Malaysia and Indonesia can benefit from this approach in the following ways:

- a) Establishing a clear governance framework to manage the involvement of actors, preventing overlaps and uncertainty.
- b) Strengthening law enforcement coordination for effective patrols in grey regions, boosting regional security.
- c) Enhancing maritime security cooperation to share critical information and resources, making collective efforts more robust.
- d) Improving law enforcement capacities through investments in training, equipment, and technology.

This research established that both Malaysia and Indonesia securitize similar non-state threats in the Malacca Strait. In this context, there is a foundation for the two countries to increase bilateral cooperation, in particular intelligence sharing. Effective intelligence sharing allows countries to maintain an up-to-date security picture by exchanging information on security threats and criminal activities through real-time intelligence, such as that provided by IFC. Furthermore, secure communication is also crucial for government and military applications to protect confidential information, utilizing secure communication channels like UHF. This encrypted approach enhances their maritime security posture, enabling a more coordinated and timely response to emerging threats. By pooling resources and insights, nations that are part of a security community can strengthen their collective defence, improve situational awareness, and ensure a more robust and resilient maritime security framework.

Bilateral cooperation, and intelligence sharing, in particular, is essential to over-

coming the limitations of cross-territorial patrols caused by unclear jurisdiction, ensuring effective coordination and enforcement efforts across shared waters. Through intelligence sharing, Malaysia and Indonesia can build a more secure and stable maritime region, benefiting both national interests. Moreover, intelligence sharing fosters mutual trust by promoting transparency, enabling both countries to address urgent maritime security issues. This exchange of information not only strengthens maritime security but also promotes trust between the two nations, creating a conducive environment for making progress in unresolved territorial disputes.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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