

Critical Geopolitics In Strengthening Security And Defense In The Strait Of Malacca To Address Increasing Cases Of Ship Piracy

Annisha Destyanna Sari, Bayu Asih Yulianto, Moh Ikhwan Syahtaria, Panji Suwarno, Kristijarso, Herlina
Juni Risma Saragih, Pujo Widodo

Maritime Security Study Program, Faculty of National Security, University of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia

annisha.sari@kn.idu.ac.id



Abstract— Critical geopolitics in maritime security analyzes how geographic location, politics and power affect security at sea. The Malacca Strait, a strategic international shipping lane, is a key focus in the context of Geopolitics in Indonesia. It connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, providing an important shipping route to Asia. However, its strategic position makes it a target for armed pirates, as experienced by the Malaysian tanker Nepline Delima on June 14, 2005. These crimes emphasize the importance of interstate cooperation to address threats to maritime security, which have a significant impact on the region's economy. Therefore, a clear legal framework is needed to ensure security in the Malacca Strait. This paper explores the challenges faced in the Malacca Strait and analyzes strategies that can be implemented to enhance security and defense, including multinational cooperation and addressing the root socio-economic issues that trigger piracy, with the aim of reducing and eliminating the threat of piracy from a critical geopolitical perspective.

Keywords— Critical Geopolitics, Maritime Security, Strait of Malacca, International Trade, Piracy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Critical geopolitics in maritime security refers to an in-depth analysis of how geographical, political, and power locations affect security at sea. Discussing Geopolitics in Indonesia, the Strait of Malacca is the focus related to maritime security (Yudhanto, 2024). The Strait of Malacca, with its very strategic location, is one of the critical international shipping routes. It acts as a bridge connecting two large oceans, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, providing a shorter route for ships heading to Asia (Zohourian, 2020). Due to its role as a major gateway to Asian trade, the Strait of Malacca attracts the attention of armed pirates who often disrupt the security and safety of shipping in the region.

A Malaysian tanker, the Nepline Delima, carrying 6,300 tonnes of diesel into Myanmar, was raided by ten robbers armed with pistols at 4 a.m. on June 14, 2005. The attack occurred in the Strait of Malacca, about 30 nautical miles south of Langkawi Island. These cases show the importance of cooperation between various parties in tackling crimes that threaten maritime security. These crimes not only have an impact on security but can also harm the economies of countries around the strait if not addressed immediately.

This has a great effect on countries that want to trade in the Asian region. Therefore, it is important to agree on a clear and definite legal framework to ensure maritime security in areas such as the Strait of Malacca (Kraska & Pedrozo, 2013). Responding to this challenge, there is an urgent need to strengthen security and defense in the Malacca Strait. This action involves multinational cooperation and an effective maritime security strategy. This approach involves not only stricter law enforcement and enhanced security patrols, but also intelligence cooperation, diplomacy, and addressing the root causes of socio-economic issues that drive piracy. This paper aims to explore the challenges faced in the Strait of Malacca and analyze the strategies that can be applied to

improve security and defense in the region, with the aim of reducing and ultimately eliminating the threat of ship piracy reviewed from a critical geopolitical understanding.

II. METHODS

Research methods are procedures, techniques, and principles used in scientific research to collect, analyze, and interpret data systematically and objectively. The research method used is a qualitative method and approach through literature studies, namely looking for references from articles, books and others.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Critical geopolitics in strengthening the security and defense of the Strait of Malacca focuses on an in-depth understanding of how geographical, political, and economic factors affect maritime security in the region. The Strait of Malacca is one of the busiest and most important shipping lanes in the world, connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The large amount of trade that takes place through this strait makes it very vulnerable to security threats such as ship piracy. To address these problems, a critical geopolitical approach requires multilateral cooperation between countries directly bordering the Strait of Malacca, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, as well as major countries such as the United States that have interests in the region with support from China and Japan. Critical geopolitics emphasizes that geopolitics is not only a power play driven by objective interests, but also influenced by complex social constructs. As such, this approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of how power and politics function in an interconnected and diverse global context.

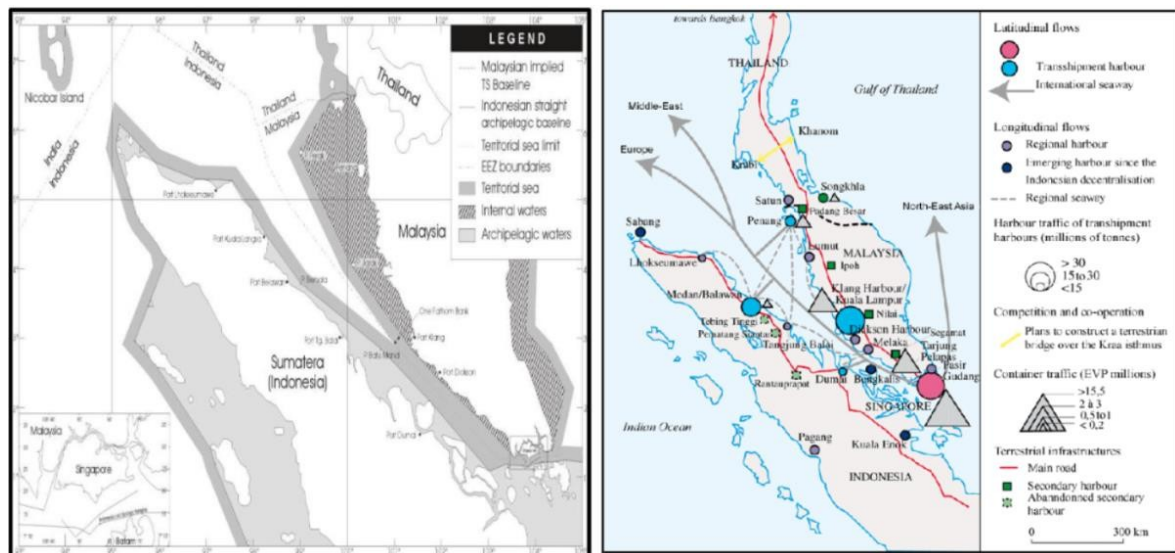
The use of sea lanes is an efficient method for inter-regional trade, but it also presents maritime security challenges and risks (Ibrahim & Husin, 2008). The Strait of Malacca is a wide body of water located between the island of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. The strait connects the Andaman Sea in the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea in the Pacific Ocean. It is about 600 miles long, or approximately 520 nautical miles, stretching from Tanjung Jambuaye in Aceh, Indonesia, to Tanjung Pergam on Bintan Island, Indonesia. Also, it can be measured from the Malay Peninsula in Pulau Perak to Taman Datok in Malaysia. The width varies from 126 miles at its widest point to 3.6 miles at its narrowest point. The strait is directly bordered by four coastal countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

Indonesia is located west of the Malacca Strait, stretching on the mainland of Sumatra Island from Sabang in Aceh to the Riau Islands. Malaysia is on the eastern side, crossing the Malay Peninsula from Perlis to Johor Bahru. Singapore is located at the southern gate of the strait, directly adjacent to the Singapore Strait. Meanwhile, Thailand is at the northern gate, bordering the Andaman Sea (Roach, 2005).

The critical geopolitical approach emphasizes that efforts to strengthen security and defense in the Strait of Malacca must involve a combination of military strategy, diplomacy, and economic cooperation. Joint maritime patrols and naval capacity building among coastal states are essential to suppress piracy activities. In addition, the real-time sharing of intelligence and information between these countries can improve the effectiveness of security operations. In the context of diplomacy, it is important to establish solid coordination mechanisms, such as regional forums and security cooperation agreements, to ensure a rapid and coordinated response to piracy threats.

Ensuring Navigation Safety and Security in the Strait of Malacca

Control of the Strait of Malacca is completely under the four countries based on their territorial maritime jurisdiction, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf boundaries, as explained by Bateman and Ho in 2006 (pp. 9-12). Despite having this control, maritime boundary conflicts still occur between these countries. This includes overlapping EEZ claims between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand at the northern entrance of the Malacca Strait, as mentioned by the Directorate of Public Diplomacy of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010 (p. 8). Figure 1 Shipping Navigation Route Area in the Strait of Malacca Source: (Oktavian, 2021)



Picture 1. Shipping Navigation Route Area in the Malacca Strait Source: (Oktavian, 2021)

In addition, there is a lack of mutual recognition between Indonesia and Malaysia regarding their EEZs in the One Fathom Bank area, and the ambiguity of territorial waters between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore at the southern entrance of the Strait, as noted by Agusman in 2018 (Oktavian, 2021).

This piracy activity occurs throughout the Strait of Malacca, including local and international shipping lanes, as well as coastal ports. There are three main areas that are often the location of piracy: (1) waters and ports on the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, including Belawan Port; (2) the northern area of the Malacca Strait which is an international shipping route to the Andaman Sea; and (3) the southern area at the gateway of the Singapore Strait and the waters around the Bintan Islands to One Fathom Bank (Bateman et al., 2008). In 2000-2005, piracy in the Strait of Malacca often targeted commercial vessels of various sizes. Based on the data, 22% of attacks hit ships under 5,000 GRT, 27% on ships between 5,000 and 10,000 GRT, 35% on ships 10,000 to 20,000 GRT, and 16% on ships above 20,000 GRT.

Piracy methods include theft, hostage taking, takeover of ships, and attempted assaults. From 2000 to 2007, theft cases occurred the most, followed by hostage-taking, takeover of ships, and attempted assaults. Piracy generally occurs between 1 and 6 a.m. by more than one armed perpetrator. This situation forced ships crossing the Malacca Strait to take precautions such as closing windows, turning off lights, and increasing speed to avoid pirate attacks (Frecon, 2005).

Piracy in the Strait of Malacca poses a serious threat to the maritime security of coastal states such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as non-coastal user states including Japan, South Korea, China, India, and the United States. Indonesia, as a coastal country, considers the Strait of Malacca as a waters within their sovereignty that serves as the main and outermost gateway in the western part of the country, as if it were a 'front door' to Indonesia (Maya, 2018). Indonesia faces major challenges in tackling piracy in the Strait of Malacca, a very important trade route. This piracy not only harms the Indonesian economy but also threatens regional security, especially in

Batam, Bintan, and Riau Islands areas. Another danger that arises is the risk of foreign intervention, such as the US, China, India, and Japan, which can interfere with Indonesia's sovereignty in the region (Pailah, 2005). Improving Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) is also important for regulating busy maritime traffic in the Malacca Strait and reducing the risk of piracy, as explained by (Nofandi et al., 2022). The norm-based approach of subsidiarity and institutional cooperation, emphasized by (Lee & McGahan, 2015), underscores the importance of regional regulation by littoral states while safeguarding their sovereignty. Legal and policy adaptations, such as those proposed by (George, 2014), include amendments to international and national laws to address maritime piracy and terrorism more effectively.

Development of regional and multilateral cooperation with ASEAN countries and international partners.

International cooperation is a framework constructed by actors in international relations to bridge problems related to relationships between actors. This effort is carried out as an effort to realize security stability which is the main task for actors such as the state. In the course of discourse on the framework of cooperation both at the local and international levels, it often finds an impasse to unite common points in understanding the mechanism that occurs in the framework itself (Besir, Liesbet, Gary, & Alexandr, 2023). In addition to attracting pirates to come to the Strait of Malacca, this trade route also attracts several other countries whose economic life can be said to depend on this strait.

Developing a strategy that focuses on prevention, surveillance, and rapid response to security threats.

Indonesia has pocketed cooperation related to the threat of pirates in the Strait of Malacca. The first is the cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore called MALSINDO. This cooperation is more of a cooperation in the field of patrols in the Strait of Malacca. This collaboration was held to respond to armed robbery crimes in the Malacca Strait which are increasing in number. This cooperation is further emphasized by the existence of joint patrols between countries (Wijaya, 2017). MALSINDO cooperation, indeed, in its implementation is still relatively strict in the sense of trying to avoid things that can cause sovereignty problems, such as military forces are prohibited from entering the territory of other countries even though they are pursuing the enemy, anticipating this, the country coordinates with the country to which the enemy is going (Gilmartin, 2008).

MALSINDO has two products under MALSINDO as an effort to secure the Strait of Malacca from external threats. These two products are Eyes in the Sky or EIS and Malacca Strait Sea Patrol (MSSP). MSSP itself was launched by the three countries in 2004 and the cooperation focuses on joint patrols and mutual openness in terms of information obtained between countries (Panduwinata, 2016). This MSSP collaboration can be said to be successful because after the MSSP was held, the level of piracy in the Malacca Strait decreased drastically, although in 2011 to 2013 it had increased. The Eye in the Sky (EIS) program, is a joint program between sea and air conducted by MALSINDO.

This collaboration was carried out in 2005 utilizing aircraft technology and the like to conduct air patrols around the Malacca Strait (Wijaya, 2017). EIS is only for surveillance issues, meaning that the technology used is only intended for patrolling and monitoring the Malacca Strait and not to pursue targets or threats (Gilmartin, 2008). Indonesia and Malaysia firmly believe that with the Malacca Strait Sea Patrols (MSSP), coastal states are able to provide security in the Strait of Malacca without any foreign military operating in the Strait. (Panduwinata, 2016). In addition, connectivity and placement at the nearest base or land that can be quickly mobilized to support security in the Malacca Strait area need to be considered. The role of law enforcement in supervising and maintaining safety and security in the Strait of Malacca must be strengthened through regulations and facilities that can support their duties and performance. As we all know, Indonesia has a body in charge of maritime security. Bakamla, which is the Indonesian Coast Guard, needs its existence and circumstances are considered by the Government of Indonesia considering the complexity that occurs in the territory of Indonesia's maritime jurisdiction.

The Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) has the task of conducting security and safety patrols in Indonesian waters. Bakamla is the revitalization and strengthening of the institutional capacity of Bakorkamla. In carrying out security and safety patrols, Bakamla has an operational concept. The concept of Bakamla marine security operations aims to integrate patterns and operating systems, technology, maritime intelligence, integrated logistics, to be able to provide legal review assistance handled by the Bakamla Law Enforcement Unit. Bakamla's role in carrying out maritime security operations in the Malacca Strait can be increased by having a good coordination pattern between security agencies.

Enhancement of Naval and Police Capabilities

- Acquisition of Surveillance Technology:

In overcoming the increase in ship piracy cases in the Malacca Strait, increasing the capabilities of the Indonesian Navy and Polairud through the acquisition of advanced surveillance technology is a crucial strategy. The use of an automated maritime surveillance system enhanced with visual information can significantly strengthen surveillance capabilities. Bloisi et al. (2017) explain that automated maritime surveillance systems, which are capable of bringing together information from heterogeneous sources including radar and camera-based systems, provide a significant improvement in dense area monitoring. This advantage is particularly relevant in areas where radar-based systems are limited in use due to high electromagnetic radiation emissions. In

addition, the integration of data from automatic identification systems (AIS) with satellite image processing and UAVs offers the potential to improve maritime situational awareness by effectively tracking ships, including non-cooperative targets (Liu et al., 2019).

The integration of information systems for maritime monitoring through radar/AIS combined surveillance technology, as proposed by Chen et al. (2022), shows an improvement in the accuracy and reliability of surveillance systems maritime. This technology ensures the surveillance system is more stable in adverse sea conditions by compensating for the weaknesses of air-based radar. Graziano et al. (2019) further emphasized the importance of combining AIS and SAR data, with the use of SAR-based ship speed estimation to improve the accuracy of ship identification and tracking in the context of maritime situational awareness.

- Maritime Patrol Force

Increasing the strength of maritime patrols in the Strait of Malacca is a crucial step in dealing with increasing cases of ship piracy. This strategy includes the addition of a fleet of patrol boats with better navigation capabilities as well as increased presence and ability of fast boats to respond to piracy incidents. Research by Pulungan (2021) states the importance of cooperation between coastal states to overcome piracy and maritime terrorism in the Strait of Malacca, suggesting the establishment of a 'joint patrol area' where more than one coastal country has the right to patrol and arrest perpetrators or vessels in piracy incidents. The above research shows the importance of increasing the strength of maritime patrols through cooperation between countries, improving navigation and surveillance technology, as well as developing the capacity and rapid response capabilities of patrol boats to overcome piracy in the Malacca Strait. Addition of a fleet of patrol boats equipped with technology sophisticated and Increased ability Operational ship Quickly form a comprehensive strategy in strengthening maritime security in the region strategically.

- Quick Response Capability

Improving the ability to respond quickly to piracy situations at sea is a vital step in the global maritime security strategy. The establishment of a specially equipped Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to address piracy situations, anti-piracy training for personnel, and improved communication and coordination between national and international security forces are key aspects of this effort. Varol and Gunal (2015) highlight the importance of using simulations to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-piracy operations, including the important role of helicopters in prevention and the importance of patrol boats or escorts that equipped with helicopters for effective prevention. This study shows the important value of preparation and response tailored to the hijacking situation. Murphy (2015) proposed the establishment of an international rapid response force under the auspices of the United Nations as a multilateral effort to maintain peace and promote regional stability, highlighting the added value of international cooperation and multilateralism in responding to the threat of maritime piracy. Security Infrastructure Development

- Port Security Facilities

The construction of a maritime security operations center for monitoring and command as well as the provision of landing facilities and logistical support for patrol operations is a critical step in improving maritime security. Jeevan et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of Emergency Logistics Centres (ELCs) as part of maritime disaster preparedness in the Strait of Malacca. Such a center can prevent major losses in the event of a disaster at sea. Factors such as resource availability, risk management, and geographical factors are key attributes needed to transform the Kuala Linggi port into an ELC, emphasizing the need for robust logistical support and safety procedures to improve the operational efficiency of the port as an ELC.

- Database Security

The development of databases for vessels entering and exiting the Strait of Malacca as well as a system for verifying and monitoring ship loads is an important step in managing maritime traffic and improving security. Zaman (2016) discusses the use of Automatic Identification System (AIS) to improve navigation safety in the Malacca Strait. AIS enables accurate investigations of actual ship encounters, ship collisions, and marine traffic management systems. The study shows that ship safety can be significantly improved if ships follow the guidelines set out in the study, which emphasizes the importance of accurate and up-to-date databases for maritime traffic management and security.

- Investing in technology

In the face of the growing threat of maritime piracy, investment in prevention technology and research and development (R&D) initiatives is a key in the global maritime security strategy. The use of non-lethal devices such as Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD) has proven effective in combating piracy by providing directional communication and powerful warning tones remotely, as described by Alecu (2018). This approach not only improves security but also minimizes the risk of physical damage to perpetrators and security personnel. Varol and Gunal (2015) added that simulation of preventive operations can evaluate the effectiveness of various strategies against piracy, allowing for a better understanding of resource allocation and efficient tactics.

On the other hand, cyber threats to maritime infrastructure require serious attention. Karahalios (2020) highlights the importance of developing methodologies for evaluating cybersecurity threats, pointing out that significant security gaps are often caused by a lack of awareness from operators and mariners. The implementation of a cyber surveillance system is very important in securing sensitive information and ship operations from digital attacks. Emergence of Community Awareness and Partnership by Increasing Awareness and Participation of Local Communities and Maritime Industry in Security Efforts Increasing awareness and participation of local communities and the maritime industry in security efforts in the Straits of Malacca requires an inclusive and collaborative approach. Governments should play an active role in developing programs that encourage local community engagement, facilitate dialogue between the public and private sectors, and establish effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The maritime industry, as a key stakeholder, needs to be proactively involved in supporting security initiatives through investments in surveillance technology and security training. Collaboration between governments, communities, and the maritime industry can strengthen security systems and ensure that all elements of society work together to support security and defense policies in the Straits Malacca. This initiative will not only raise awareness but also facilitate the active participation of all parties in maintaining the security of the maritime area (Liss, 2012).

A whole-of-nation approach is key, combining resources and expertise from different sectors to create comprehensive security solutions. Local communities, with their in-depth knowledge of their maritime environment, can provide valuable information for the early detection of threats and suspicious activity. The maritime industry, through its business practices and day-to-day operations, must play a critical role in implementing strict security practices and sharing intelligence with authorities. This cooperation allows governments to optimize the use of resources, respond quickly to security incidents, and build resilient defense systems. Through strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors, and with the active participation of local communities, the Strait of Malacca can be maintained as one of the most vital and safe shipping lanes in the world (Suproboningrum & Kurniawan, 2017). Critical geopolitics offers a deeper perspective to understand these dynamics and drive the development of more effective and sustainable policies. As such, a critical geopolitical approach allows us to look beyond short-term military solutions and explore more comprehensive strategies. Only by combining security efforts with economic development and institutional strengthening can we hope to create a safer and more stable environment in Somali waters and in other maritime regions facing similar challenges. This approach will not only reduce piracy but also contribute to regional and global stability and prosperity (Sartono, 2019),.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Indonesia is seen as a strategic country where it has international trade shipping routes such as the Strait of Malacca which has more economic value. The Strait of Malacca is a waterway with the privileged status of being the "main heart of the ocean," which plays an important role in the global economy and politics. The Strait of Malacca plays a role in various aspects. Because of the large amount of shipping traffic that passes through the route, this route is prone to crime, such as piracy, arms smuggling, drugs, and human trafficking. In a critical geopolitical context, the security of the Strait of Malacca is largely determined by the extent to which the active contribution of coastal states and the international community affects the security of the strait. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of how various actors and socio-political forces contribute to the security dynamics on this crucial shipping lane.

As the main trade route, the Strait of Malacca is known to be very vulnerable to external and internal disturbances. Disturbances or threats to security at sea such as piracy and armed robbery and terrorism are not a new problem. It is one of the oldest crimes that has existed for thousands of years. In the Strait of Malacca, this sea crime has existed for a long time and has always brought problems to the rulers at that time, although it was not as sophisticated and complete as it is today. Future maritime security

enhancements depend on a strategic combination of advanced anti-piracy technologies, strong cyber defenses, and an ongoing commitment to research and development. This collaboration promises to be a major step in protecting the global maritime industry from various threats, ensuring safe and efficient navigation around the world. To increase the awareness and participation of local communities and the maritime industry in security efforts, it is necessary to develop collaborative programs between the government, the community, and the private sector to strengthen surveillance and reporting systems.

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