

**PIRACY THREAT AND THE UNITED STATES INTERESTS IN THE STRAITS
OF MALACCA**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on piracy threat and the United States strategic interests in the Straits of Malacca. The United States is the most powerful country in the world in terms of economy, technology and military capability. It has identified Asia Pacific as one of the vital region in the world. The United States nonetheless has shown its interests to patrol the Straits of Malacca. This research is designed to study the major powers involvement in the Straits of Malacca and the littoral states interests. This paper mainly aimed to analyse the United States strategic interests in the Straits of Malacca. The final objective of this research is to discuss the United States initiatives in maintaining its strategic interests in the Straits. This paper argues that the piracy concern in the Straits of Malacca is only as a means to legitimise the United States involvement in preserving its strategic interests in the Straits of Malacca. Qualitative approach was adopted while undertaking this research. Interview and secondary data such as books and journals were used the most for the purpose of this research. This study identifies three major strategic interests of the United States in the Straits of Malacca. The Straits of Malacca is recognised as one of the most critical Straits in the world. Thus, the United States has to protect its allies and trading partners in Asia Pacific particularly Japan and South Korea which heavily reliant on the critical waterway for their commercial and strategic mobility. Furthermore, since September 11 piracy has been linked to the threat of maritime terrorist attacks. The United States is feared that its ships might be hijacked by terrorists. Hence, the United States justifies that its naval presence in the Straits of Malacca is vital in enhancing the security of the Straits. Even though Singapore welcomes the United States naval presence, the United States has so far failed to convince the littoral states of Malaysia and Indonesia to support its proposal to patrol the Straits of Malacca. Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) are the initiatives proposed by the United States to preserve its strategic interests in the vital waterway and further to assert its power in the Asia Pacific region.

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