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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MALACCA STRAITS TO JAPAN: COOPERATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD LITTORAL STATES

KEPENTINGAN SELAT MELAKA KEPADA JEPUN: KERJASAMA DAN SUMBANGAN KEPADA NEGARA PESISIR

Due to the Malacca Straits' strategic centrality in contemporary regional shipping routes, the Japanese have become very concerned about the passage of ships through the area as they have increasingly attracted the attention of maritime criminals such as pirates and smugglers. This study has two objectives, namely to 1) describe the background and the importance of the Malacca Straits to Japan; 2) discuss Japan's contribution and its cooperation with the littoral states. Significantly, this study has found that, in order for Japan to protect its own national interests, it has had to take the necessary steps to strengthen diplomatic relations with littoral states as well as assisting in improving maritime security in the Malacca Straits. Based on empirical evidence, this study proposes several approaches toward improve current regional cooperation mechanisms by addressing common regional security issues.

Keywords: *Economy, Japan, national interest, security, Malacca Straits*

Kedudukan Selat Melaka sebagai kawasan yang strategik kapal dagang menyebabkan Jepun sangat mengambil berat terhadap laluan tersebut. Ini kerana bukan sahaja kapal-kapal dagang yang melaluinya tetapi ia telah menarik perhatian pihak yang melakukan jenayah maritim seperti pelanunan dan penyeludupan. Kajian ini mempunyai dua objektif, iaitu untuk 1) menerangkan latarbelakang kepentingan laluan Selat Melaka terhadap Jepun; 2) membincangkan sumbangan Jepun melalui kerjasama maritim dengan negara pesisir. Dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa demi menjaga kepentingan nasionalnya, Jepun mengeratkan hubungan diplomatiknya dengan negara pesisir selain menambahkan peruntukan serta bantuan untuk meningkatkan tahap keselamatan pelayaran dan maritim di Selat Melaka. Berdasarkan bukti empirik, kajian ini mencadangkan

beberapa pendekatan untuk menambah baik mekanism kerjasama dalam menangani isu keselamatan bersama di Selat Melaka.

Katakunci: *Jepun, Kepentingan Nasional, Keselamatan Selat Melaka.*

Introduction

In 1960, the Malacca Straits had become a major route for large tankers and the number had been increasing each year. However at that time, the environmental conditions in the Straits was still short of many tools for use in navigation. This is due to lack of country or organization in distributing monetary assistances to undertake studies or replace old and broken navigational equipments. As littoral states were concerned- Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore were still considered as newly independent countries and were struggling with problems in their respective countries. Japan was the only country rapidly developing in the industrial field and required a lot of resources and imported materials such as oil from the Middle East and Africa. At this time, Japanese national interests in the Malacca Strait had increased and this had made Japan to be more involved and committed in assisting the littoral states through the safety of navigation. The aim of this paper is to describe the background and the importance of the Malacca Straits to Japan and discuss Japan's contribution and its cooperation with the Littoral States. These two questions are important as they let us know the reason why Japan contributes a lot in term of money and assistant in Malacca Straits.

Importance of the Malacca Straits to Japan

National interest is one aspect that has always been the axis of the actions of nations to pursue sustainability in the international system. For the Japanese, their national interests in the Malacca Straits are based on three factors: economic, safety of navigation and maritime security.

Economic Factors

Geographically, the Malacca Straits is a strait that connects the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It is Japan's main routes for trade from Europe and the Middle East (Rodrigue 2004). Japanese used the Malacca Straits to import 80 per cent of the energy resources and 60 per cent of the food (Muttaqiem 2007). The pace of economic development and energy sector in Japan has increased demand for energy resources in the country. According to statistics in 2010, the use of energy by Japan in the year 2010 was 42 per cent oil, 22 per cent coal, 18 per cent gas, 13 per cent nuclear and other sources of 5 per cent (Siti Zubaidah

Ismail & Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani 2010).

Until the year 2010, Japan had oil reserves of 44 million barrels per day (bbl/d) and gas reserves of 738 billion cubic (Umana 2012). But the amount was insufficient to cover the daily needs of the country. Thus the Japanese oil producing's companies had to engage in oil exploration in other countries such as Indonesia, Papua New Guine, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Congo. Nowadays, Japanese-owned companies will invest and hold equity shares in these countries for certain periods. Often the oil and gas produced will be sent to Japan as unprocessed oil. Due to these factors, Japan has made large amount of investments to improve security in the Straits as it wants to ensure the maritime security in the area (Energy Information Administration 2011).

Malacca Straits is the most important routes in continuing trade between East and West. This led Japan to take active steps to ensure that the route is always safe from the threat of maritime crimes such as piracy, robbery or terrorist. Malacca Straits is not only important to Japan but also to other countries like China, USA and India (Energy Information Administration 2012). This is because the safety of navigation that starts from the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca, the South China Sea and into the Pacific Ocean is a major factor that will determine whether a commercial activity can be done effectively or vice versa. According to records released by the Marine Department of Malaysia (2013), a total of 70,718 ships passed or traversed through the Straits in 2007 and 73,538 ships in 2011. From these numbers, 13.8 million bbl./d of crude oil through the Malacca Straits in 2007 and the number had been increased to 15.2 million bbl./d in 2011 (Inderjit 2012). 90 per cent of the energy is carried petroleum. From these statistics, the increasing demand for energy increases each year is in line with the increase in industrial activities in Japan.

Malacca Straits is also considered the closest convenient routes to bring goods from the Middle East to Japan instead of using two alternatives through Straits of Sunda and the Straits of Lombok. There are two main reasons why the Malacca Straits is often the preferred choice for Japanese trading companies. First, it can reduce costs and save time travel (Feldhoff 2011). If the shipping companies chose to use the Straits of Sunda or the Straits of Lombok, they should add 30 yen per kilometre for travel (Sien 1998), or USD 1.2 billion to add travel time to 2 weeks of using oil tankers (Wan Siti Adibah, Zinatul Ashiqin, Noor Inayah & Noridayu 2012). Second, the Straits of Sunda is also a relatively shallow for large ships (Evers & Gerke 2005). The situation is not ideal and can pose a risk to ships such as being stuck or bumping into objects that are floating in the sea. Along the Straits of Malacca, there are also many ports for ship docking, repair or refuelling.

Table 1: Japan Crude Oil Import-Export from January to September 2013

Type/ Activities	Petrol (kl)	Naphtha (kl)	Jet Oil (kl)	Gas Oil (kl)	F u e l O i l B + C (kl)	Lubricants (kl)	Asphalt (kl)	Paraffin W a x (kl)	LPG (kl)	LNG (kl)
Import	199,835	1,992,445	11,387	21,991	544,047	7,161	10,869	192	814,307	6,367,044
Ekspor	63,658	-	879,008	1,198,351	551,727	69,409	-	3,562	20,298	-

Note: 1kl (kilolitre) = 6.29bbl; LPG = Liquefied petroleum gas; *LNG = Liquefied natural gas

Source: Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry 2013

Table 1 shows the type of crude oil imported and exported by Japan during the year 2013. LPG is the most widely imported oil and gas oil is the most abundant oil exports. Based on the figure, Japan is importing crude oil more than exporting. Japan has to import the oil as the growing demands for use in the country have increased and supply in the country is not able to meet the numbers.

Along the Malacca Straits there are several ports equipped with various facilities including refueling, docking, ship repairing and warehouse for storing goods. Among the available ports in the Straits of Malacca are the port of Singapore in Singapore, Port Klang, Johor and Penang in Malaysia, and Belawan in Indonesia (Pillai 2005). The existence of ports along the Straits have indirectly attracted many more ships to pass through the area. It was found that the ships that have gone through a long journey often require to be anchored for few hours due to ship maintenance and logistic purposes.

Penang Port is located in the west side of Malaysia. This port is one of the important ports in this country as it is one of the larger ports with 120 metres depth. The Port also has various terminals for different ships carrying different goods/items like dangerous goods (DG), large items, bulk and oil. Port Klang is situated in the southwestern part of the Peninsula Malaysia. It is the largest and most important port in Malaysia. The port is divided into two parts, North Port and West Port. North port terminal is provided to receive ships carrying goods that are fragile and dangerous. In addition, it also provides a terminal for dry bulk handling. West Port is the terminal for oil and transshipment cargo. Johor Port is situated on the East side (through the entrance port of Pasir Gudang or Port Tanjung Langsat). Johor Port consists of two entry points east and west. The entrance from the west side is through the Tanjung Pelepas (a tax-free zone). Johor Port provides various facilities to the traders. This port is the second most important port after Port Klang. This port has a depth between 9 to 15 meters and its terminal width measured between 60 to 183 meters in length.

Singapore Port also offers a lot of facilities for traders who passed

through the Malacca Straits. Although Singapore is a small country but it has the international standard facilities and is recognized as among the best port in the world (Bustelo 2005). There are three main areas that provide a variety of services, namely Jurong, Sembawang and Pasir Panjang. For example, at Jurong Port, it can accommodate up to 23 berths with each area covering 4,545 meters. Maximum depth for anchored ships is 16 meters and a maximum size of 150,000 metric tones (DWT). The port also provides warehousing facility which has an area of 280,000 square meters. Belawan Port is situated in Medan. It is a medium-sized port. Ships that enter this port can reach up to 150 meters in length. The route has a depth of 9.4 meters, and the port has a depth of 11.0 meters. Depth at the terminal is 9.4 meters while the depth at the jetty reaching 11.0 meters. This port offers repairing of electrical and electronic parts of a ship. The port also offers other logistics such as refueling, water adding, engine repair, yard (deck) and other navigation equipments.

Japan is the third largest country in vehicles manufacturing in the world after the USA and China. Japan issued a total of 7,934,057 vehicles in 2009, 9,942,711 in 2012 and 4,660,946 units of vehicles in the first six months of 2013 (Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles 2013). Japan is also a producer of high-tech electronic products such as optical, semiconductor, fiber, biotechnology and robotics.

Table 2: Japan Import-Export and KDNK-KNK 2001 – 2012

Year	The value of merchandise (Import billion \$USD)	The value of merchandise (Export bilion \$USD)	GDP (\$USD TRILION)	GNP (\$USD TRILION)
2001	348.6	402.6	26 195	26 593
2003	383.5	472.0	27 487	27 965
2006	579.1	646.7	31 796	32 700
2009	552.0	580.7	32 119	32 980
2012	792.9	856.9	35,855	36,938

Notes: GDP-Gross Domestic Product; GNP- Gross National Product

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2013)

Table 2 shows the import-export trade of Japan from 2001 to 2012. Each year the exports of Japan are high and increasing. Although the value of import of goods is less but it still shows that many transactions has taken place. Based on the import-export occurring in Japan, it can be assumed that this activity depends on the use of the maritime route based on the yield of Japan to produce goods like cars that need sea transport to bring to importing country.

Safety of navigation

As a country that has important commercial interests in the Straits, Japan must ensure that the safety of navigation in the area is in the best condition. Safety of navigation is:

“... concerned with aids to navigation, construction and equipment of vessels, manning from the safety standpoint, rules for the prevention of collision, handling of dangerous cargoes, marine safety procedures and requirements, hydrographic information, log books and navigational records, marine casualty investigations, salvage and rescue and any other matters directly affecting maritime safety”.(Article 29, IMO 1948)

According to Arikawa (2014), the safety factor of the navigation has prompted the Japanese government and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to give assistance to the littoral states that have constraints in terms of financial as well as expertise (Arikawa 2014). Among the matters that had been problem in the 1960s – 1990s is were to ensure that the shipping equipments were in good condition, the removal of the identified wrecks from the sea lanes, lack of Emergency Towing Vessels (ETV), exercise ships and hydro-graphic maps that are not completed. In addition there are also timeworned and damaged buoys as well as beacons that are not working and need to be replaced with new ones. Without it, the risks for large ships due to the risk of stuck in shallower water would be high.

In the era of 1960s to 1980s, many of the technologies that have yet to be fully utilized such as Automatic Identification System (AIS), a tracking system and Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRITS) to facilitate the ships to identify each other. The lack of these tracking devices may turn out disastrous. For instance, a distress boat in the ocean would face difficulties in getting assistance because the boats are not equipped with the communication devices. These situations would make the aid could not be reached on time and they are likely to be swept away on the high seas that would eventually make the distressed boat overturned, leaked, lost, damaged, collisions, fire or sink for that matter. This scenario would often happen to a small-sized tow and fishermen’s boat due to lack of sophisticated and modern navigational facilities.

At present, Japan is still continuing its contribution towards the betterment of the littoral states. This is because of the increasing ships passing through the Malacca Straits had created problems of traffic congestion. There are times when some ships docked for several days before being allowed to pass through the Straits. (Sometimes it will cause delays and may affect trade

in which the exporter has to pay to the importers due to delays. In addition, due to the increased awareness for rescue victims who were involved in the case of drowning in the ocean, Japan and the littoral states need to cooperate. As for this, the efficiency of the Coast Guard from Japan and as well as other maritime enforcement agencies from the respective littoral states needs to be shared, learned and enhanced.

Maritime Security

According to Till (2009) maritime security is:

“Good order at sea,” whereby the sea as a resource, as a medium for trade and information exchange, and as an environment, faces “risks and threats to the good order on which their continued contribution to human development depends”.

Dishonesty in the ocean is a crime of concern to the merchants as criminal motives are diverse even though their mode of operation is quite similar. Incidents such as robbery, piracy and launching attacks on ships were among the crimes that are common at the sea. The number of incidents had increased tremendously especially after the Tsunami calamity in 2006. According to the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), most of the pirates who were captured are Indonesian who are affected by natural disasters as well as other hardships that they suffered. Thus they were involved in criminal activities to support their families back home. In spite of this, there are also few incidents involving tankers that had been attacked by pirates and this had made littoral states' governments and organizations to seek for solutions in curbing the problem. Although the incident was not as frequently happens in the other sea lanes but precautions should be taken at all times to avoid such case to recur as it will definitely involve ransom demands and maintenance costs.

In this modern era, attempted attacks by pirates are becoming more terrifying when it comes to the use of dangerous weapons. There are cases the pirates act more drastically by taking over the ship and leaving the victims in a secluded area. For example, the pirates attacked on the ship *MT Nautica Kluang* in 2002 near the small Iyu Island, in the south of the Malacca Straits (Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia 2010) and a tug boat *Usda Jaya* near Dumai (Sabirin Ja'afar 2007). Attackers used an M16 rifle, an AK47 and a knife reefer. According to a report issued by ICC-IMB a total of 28 attacks took place at Malacca Straits in 2003, 37 attacks in 2004 and dropped to 12 attacks in 2005.

There are also other crimes in the straits such as human trafficking, illegal immigration, smuggling of animals and prohibited goods (Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia 2009). According to Adon (2014) maritime crimes

occur on a small scale, but it should be obdytucted before these activities become unable to control in the future. There are also cases where illegal migrants would make Malaysia as their transit point before proceeding to other countries such as Australia.

Japan maritime Partnership with the littoral states

Japan commenced its assistance to the littoral in 1969 with the establishment of the Malacca Straits Council (MSC). Since that year, the Japanese has continued to be active in supporting Littoral States to manage Malacca Straits wisely. There are several agencies that directly play a role in Malacca Straits and related to the Japanese government. These agencies would be in great assistance in the issue of safety of navigation and those that are helpful in addressing the maritime security issues.

Safety of navigation

There are several agencies from Japan that are involved directly in assisting the littoral states in maintaining security in the Malacca Straits.

- 1) Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Japan

The Ministry has a special bureau to maintain the issues related to maritime affairs and Malacca Straits. This special bureau established as a result of the increasing number of ships passing through the Malacca Straits every day and the facilities of navigation was insufficient around 1950s. At that time, the navigation charts were not fully functional as the Littoral States do not have the capabilities in terms of technology and finance to conduct research on the areas. According to Fukuhara (2014), the Japanese government is very committed to assist the Littoral States as the Straits is so important to their economy.

Table 3: Japan’s contribution to the Safety of Navigation in the Malacca Straits.

Hydrographic Survey and Production of Navigational Charts (1969 - 1975, 1978, 1996 - 1998)
Installation and maintenance of Aids to Navigation (1969 – now)
Clearance of navigable Channels (1973- 1981)
Donation of an oil skimming vessel and buoy tenders (1975, 1976, 2002, 2003)
Tide and current observation (1976 – 1979)

Donation of Revolving Fund for combating oil spill from ships (1981)

Source: MLIT 2014

Table 3 shows the contribution by Japanese Government to help the Littoral States to enhance the safety of navigation in Malacca Straits. There are two types of contribution: financial and advisory assistants. According to Fukuhara (2014), since 2008- 2012, Japanese Government had provided funds in the amount of USD 0.92 million for the navigation facilities in the Straits. Most of the funding had been used to change the navigational aids like buoys, beacons and maintenance of lighthouse. MLIT had done two to three surveys every year to help the Littoral States in doing research about hydrographic. This survey had been conducted together with Malacca Straits Council (MSC) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Hydrographic survey is essential to the voyages and traders as this will provide the Navigational Charts that would provide them with the appropriate informations about the depth, geographical structure and winds in that area. On the other hand, Japan had also donated 41 *buoys* and *beacons* at 30 different locations which cost 5.4 billion yen (Kato 2014). To enhance the efficiency of technical staffs of Littoral states, MLIT had conducted several workshops to help them to gain knowledge about the new navigation technologies.

Table 4: Preliminary Surveys by MLIT in Malacca Straits

2010	<i>One Fathom bank Resilient Light Beacon (South-West), Gosong Pasir Light Buoy, Sepat Resilient Light Beacon</i>
2011	<i>Raleigh Shoal Light Beacon, Rob Ray Bank Light Beacon</i>
2012	<i>One Fathom Bank Resilient Light Beacon (North- South)</i>
2013	<i>Off Tanjung Medang Light Bouy, Pyramid Shoal Light Buoy</i>
2014	<i>Helen Mars Light Beacon, Batu Berhanti Light Buoy</i>

Source: MLIT 2014

Table 4 shows that the preliminary survey in the Malacca Straits before the decision to change the new navigation aids occurred. From the result of this survey, the 10 years Plan Maintenance Program – PMP have been built. PMP plan is to support the other maintenance plans that had already been done. The personnel from the Littoral States that are involved in this plan are enhancing their abilities to conduct the future plan. Japanese Government also had conducted various technical workshops to give more knowledge to them so that they would be more effience. This effort hopefully will help the Littoral States manage their own facilities in the future.

2) Nippon Foundation

Nippon Foundation is a Non- Governmental Organization (NGO). It was established in 1962 by Ryoichi Sasakawa with the mission to enhance the maritime development in the aspect of navigation. In 1969, the Nippon Foundation decided to give donation to Malacca Straits Council (established in 1969) as a mission to improve this vital sea lanes in term of safety of navigation and maritime security. Sasakawa believed the improvement in safety of navigation along the lanes will protect Japanese economy as 80 per cent of its oil imported using this channel. But not only maritime aspect, the Nippon Foundation had widened its focus to the social development, healthy and education (Arikawa 2014). At the beginning of it establishment, the Nippon Foundation has funded the navigation facilities in the Malacca Straits about USD155.3 million (Nippon Foundation 2014).

Table 5: Funding by Nippon Foundation (USD Million)

No	Items	Sum of funding
1	Installation/ Replacement/ Maintenance of Navigational Aids	USD26.7
2	Construction of Buoy, Tender Ships, Training Ship	USD28.2
3	Clearance of Navigable Channels	USD11.5
4	Research & Development (Hydrographic survey and production of navigational Charts)	USD26.2
5	OSPAR Project (<i>Oil Spill Preparedness and Response</i>)	USD8.0
6	Network Building (Meeting of Heads of Asian Coast Guards)	USD1.6
7	Others (Nippon Maritime Center)	USD53.1
Total		USD155.3

Source: Nippon Foundation 2014

Table 5 shows the funding from Nippon Foundation. This body had not prepared any expert as assistant to the activities in the Malacca Straits. This is because they do not want to interfere in the Littoral States affairs. In 2002, the Nippon Foundation had provided Buoy Tender Vessel (PEDOMAN) to Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). In 2003, the Nippon Foundation had given the same vessel to Indonesia. The vessel was called as JADAYAT. These two vessels had been used for the emplacement, maintenance and management of the aids to navigation in the Straits. In 2006, once again Nippon Foundation had given a training ship called MARLIN to Malaysia. This is one of the larger assets that belong to MMEA. The purpose of this ship to was to be a training and education ship for MMEA.

Besides that, the Nippon Foundation had funded several conventions and meetings such as the Meeting of Heads of Asian Coast Guards (HACGAM) in 2004 and 2013. To enhance the ability of Coast Guards personnels in the ocean, the training had been given to the new officers. These officers will be attending maritime courses in Japan, together with the presence of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG). The aims of this course are to build the networkings among the young officers, to improve the safety of navigation and to enhance capacity building for youth in the developing countries.

In 2007, Nippon Foundation had announced that it will establish a new fund known as the Aids of Navigation Fund (ANF). This fund is to provide financial assistance to cater for the 1/3 of the cost for the first five years plan after its establishment. In the first ANF meeting at Penang in 2008, an amount of USD 1.351 million had been contributed for the conduct of the assessment survey. In 2009, the Nippon Foundation had contributed USD 2.5 million to ANF, USD 1.39 million in 2010, USD 1.0 million in 2011, USD 0.66 million in 2012 and USD 0.4 million in 2013. According to Arikawa (2014) Nippon Foundation may be not contribute anymore in the ANF after 2013 as this fund had received a fundings from other stakeholders such as UAE, Saudi Arabia and Korea.

3) Malacca Straits Council (MSC)

Malacca Straits Council was established in 1969 because of four reasons. First, due to the lack of navigation aids in the Malacca Straits in 1960s. Second, in 1960s, the Malacca Straits had become the center and focus for maritime activities and had led many tankers by using this route to send oil to Japan. Third, the demand from the Japan Captains' Association & Juganichi Kai, who requested for the Japanese Government to find a solution to handle navigational problem along the Malacca Straits. They urged the government to establish a special body to conduct a survey for navigation in the Malacca Straits. This is due to the difficulties they encountered during their sail from Japan to Middle East using this straits. Fourth, the Torrey Cangyon accident that occurred in 1967. The tanker had caused the huge scaled of water pollution around England coast and as a result, a huge amount of crude oil flowed out to the sea where the layer of the oils in the surface thickens about 30 metre (Malacca Straits Council 2014). After discussing the problem, the government and the Maritime Industrial Owner had agreed to establish a Non- Governmental Organization council to handle this safety of navigation issues namely known as the Malacca Straits Council.

Figure 1 shows the establishment of the Malacca Strais Council. The fundings are received from the Nippon Foundation, Japan Maritime Foundation and other stakeholders like The Japanese Ship Owners Association, Petroleum Association of Japan, The General Insurance Association of Japan

and The Shipbuilders Association of Japan (Ho 2009). Through the MSC, a lot of navigation aids had been replaced and upgraded. The activities conducted by MSC involved surveys, grill operations, clearance of navigable channels, replacement and maintenance of buoy (Rakish 2008). MSC is also discussing with the Littoral States for the future plan of the Malacca Straits. According to Blair, Chen & Hagt (2006), Malacca Strait Council need to be an organization that is not only managing issues of safety on navigation but also on the economy and security in the Malacca Straits as well .This will make the users of the Straits to participate and contribute to the Malacca Strait Council in every aspect such as monetry funding, provide training and facilities. It is hoped that with this cooperation among the user states, this will build the capacity building among themselves. In addition to this, the sharing of informations will make the joint operations more effectively to obstruct smuggling or piracy activities easier.

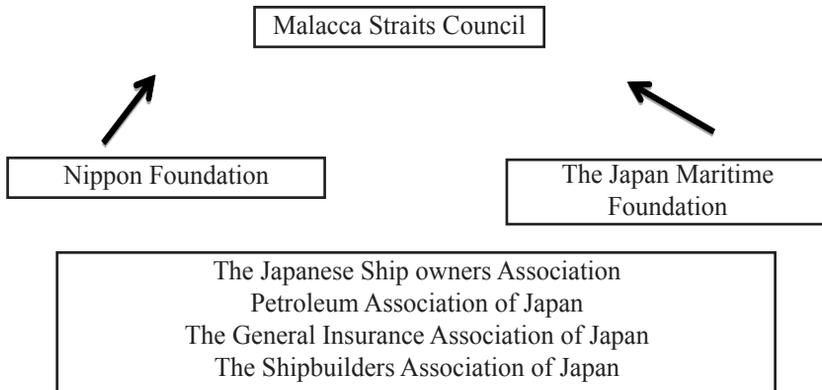


Figure 1: Structure of Malacca Straits Council
 Source: Malacca Straits Council 2014

4) Other Agencies

There are two other agencies which are involved in the Malacca Straits namely Japan Association of Marine Safety (JAMS) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). JAMS was established in 1958 as a Non Governmental organization but strictly receives its command under the Ministry of Transportation and Japan Coast Guard. JAMS is an organization which focusing on marine accidents and pollution. Nippon Foundation had supported JAMS to conduct a study related on that issues. The result of the study would hopefully enhance the marine traffic problem in the Straits and prevent marine pollution in the area. JICA is a Non governmental organization. It is a supporting agency that helps the Littoral States if they need assistances.

JICA was established in 1974 and had offered various technical assistance and development funding, known as the Official Development Assistant- ODA. JAMS and JICA is not an organization which are established to focusing on Malacca Straits issues but as a organization who related with the maritime activities, these organization indirectly will conduct a research and assist the littoral states in some relevant issues only.

Maritime Security

Under this theme, Japanese government had assigned the Japan Coast Guard – JCG to assist the Littoral States's Coast Guard namely Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), Indonesia maritime Security Coordinating Board (BAKORKAMLA) and Singapore Police Coast Guard (SPCG). Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) had given funding to enhance the maritime security in 2006 especially in the issues of terrorism. Under this programme, Indonesia had received three ships in 2007 and Malaysia had also received 473 million Yen I terms of funding to increase the MMEA facilities (Tsukekawa 2009). A lot of facilities had upgraded from this funding such as repairing patrol boats as well as purchasing new boats. Singapore is the only Littoral States that do not need assistance or aids from Japan because as a develop country which has strong economy, Singapore can prepare its facilities by on its own (Kato 2014). But Singapore still cooperates with other states in Search and Rescue (SAR) training in Malacca Straits. Indonesia is a country that really needs help from Japan in many aspect (Fukuhara 2014). Because of this reason, an expert from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) helped Indonesia to enhance its efficiency in BAKORKAMLA.

Japan Coast Guard got a better attention from the Littoral States as it was not military body (Simon 2011). Japan Coast Guard had a lot of experiences to settle of maritime cases in the ocean. Because of this reason, this agency became the suitable body to help the Littoral States's Coast Guard (Samuel 2007). To begin with, the Japanese Government had offered a course and training to officers before they were appointed to do some exercise on their own. The courses that they are required to be involved consists of *Counterpart Training, Maritime Law Enforcement, CP Training for Operations of Aircraft, Training and Education Of Air Rescue, Maritime Search AND Rescue And Disaster and Preventive For Policy Planner* (Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia 2010). As only a user country, Japan might not be able to give full focus on the Malacca Straits activities because of the sovereignty of the Malacca Straits under the Littoral States. Yet, Japan still can help the Littoral States if the countries asked Japan for their assistance.

According to Adon (2013), Littoral States will receive aids from Japan as long as Japan does not interfere in the internal affairs of the countries. The Littoral States are always welcoming the user states to assist or increase

the safety of navigation in Malacca Straits with certain conditions. As Japan has a huge economic interest on that area, it is wise for Japan to feel concerned about the safety of the Malacca Straits as well.

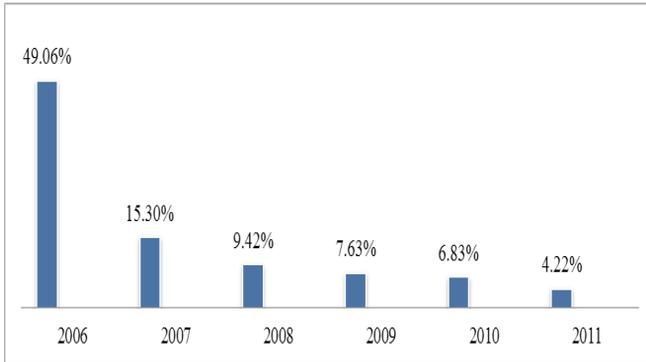


Figure 2: Maritime Crimes in Malacca Straits (2006- 2011)

Source: APMM (2012)

Figure 2 shows the maritime crimes in Malacca Straits from 2006 to 2011. According to the figure, there are signs of deflations in the crimes. However, there are still cases that occur such as sea robbery, piracy, smuggling, and illegal migrants. For the case of piracy, the pirates would always attack vessels that are anchoring and among other thing that would be in their interest are such as spareparts, laptops and money, communication equipment like echo sounder and Global Positioning System-GPS (Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia 2013). Eventhough the statistics of crimes that occurred in Malacca Straits is not high compared to other straits in the world but the Coast Guard should take into account of the threat posed by the pirates as they are in possession modern weapons such as AK47 and M16 *Rifle* used during the attacks.

For the Search and Rescue operations (SAR), it consists of two parts – lost of person and problem from vessel. The escalation of assets and facilities had become a main factor to rescue the victims instantly. The SAR's operation in this straits became high as a lot of small boats especially used by fishermen are not in the proper standard and this however, increased the risk for accidents to occur. Small boat would be in danger if they are near to any tankers or bulk ships that may result in collision by these huge vessels.

Table 6: Distress Status from 2006 – 2011 in Malacca Straits

CASE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	TOTAL (BY CASE)
SAFE	342	305	226	424	442	441	2180
LOST	15	42	60	110	113	50	390
DEAD	8	36	34	40	22	36	176
TOTAL (BY YEAR)	365	383	320	574	577	527	2746

Source: Modified from APMM Annual Report 2012

Table 6 shows that the victims involved in the distress in Malacca Straits from 2006 to 2011. Compared to the lost and dead cases, the victims had being rescue increasing by year. The escalation of technology and maritime facilities has caused the SAR became easier. The case of lost or dead in the ocean usually had involved the victims who had no communication equipment and navigation aids like safety jackets and buoy.

Conclusion

Japanese government and its subsidiaries had put a lot of efforts to enhance the safety of navigation in the Malacca Straits. The importance of Malacca Straits to Japan in terms of economy aspect cannot be denied. As for this, Japan had been funding a lot of projects to make sure that its national interests will continue to be adhered, realized and met, and Japan would also continuously provide the necessary fundings, trainings and assistances for the Littoral States to ensure the navigation safety of the Straits. At the beginning, the Littoral states were sceptical to receive any aids provided by Japan. But as Japan proclaimed that the importance of their economy is very much dependable on the safety of the straits for its energy route, littoral States had agreed to accept the aids with condition that is for Japan not to interfere in the countries internal affairs. Yet, it is still uncertain on how far and how long will Japan keep providing aids to the Littoral States.

Cooperation between Government or Non Governmental organization (NGO) from Japan is in a good stakes. But some approaches need to be ractified in order to increase the mutual understanding between Japan and Littoral States. Japan had been cooperating with the Littoral States since 1960s but of course, there are always some issues on the rise. For example, a lot of NGO offices like JAMS and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) had been located in Singapore. This however, had become a puzzle why only Singapore had been nominated as a strategic location for those agencies.

Malacca Straits Council (MSC) as a representative of Japanese government for the Littoral States still has no office in any of the three countries. MSC should consider the needs for office in these countries as well. To have an office in one of the Littoral States will make the coordination of the activities smoother. The regular meetings could be conducted at one of the Littoral States vicinity and this would save a lot of cost by not having it in Tokyo. Besides that, Japan has many agencies and NGOs that could offer contributions for the betterment of the Malacca Straits. For some particular reason, this could always caused confusions towards other parties. For example, when the Japanese Government had allocated some fundings to the Malacca Straits Council, the Japanese Government would directly confer the money to MLIT and MOFA and this would defeat the purpose of MSC for not receiving the fund directly. Anyway, it is hoped that this issue could be readdressed again for the Japanese Government to consider allocating the fundings through one channel to avoid misunderstanding in the future.

The differences of interest between the Littoral States and Japan had caused a problem for sometimes. As a user states, Japan will always be eminent regarding its national interests. But for the Littoral States, the question of sovereignty should become the prime avenue that should be highlighted. For example in 2004, Japan had shown its full support of the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) where military ships would be used to counter against the terrorism activities at sea. The thoughtlessness of Japan about this issue had caused Malaysia and Indonesia to view Japan as a belligerent nation. As a matter of fact, Japan should realize on how to distinguish its national interest according to various situations. Japan should also be more thoughtful about the Littoral States policies which are more conservative regarding the issue. Cooperation and mutual understanding need to be strengthened as these countries are depending on each other in terms of safety of navigation and maritime security.

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