

**SECURING TRANSNATIONAL OIL:
ENERGY TRANSIT STATES IN THE MALACCA STRAIT**

BY

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DECLARATION

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These references include:

Allison Casey and Matthew Sussex, 'Energy Transit States and Maritime Security in the Malacca Strait: The Case of Singapore,' *Australian Journal of Maritime and Oceans Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2012), 25-36.

Allison Casey, 'Southeast Asia's Energy Transit States,' *Asian Conflicts Reports* 16, Mar-Apr (2011), 6-7.

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STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Allison Casey

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the roles of Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia as ‘energy transit states’ for Middle Eastern oil flows, with specific reference to their efforts to ensure the Malacca Strait’s safety, security and environmental protection. The Malacca Strait is one of the world’s major chokepoints for oil shipped from the Arabian Peninsula to East Asia. While many scholars focus on the producers and consumers involved in this transnational energy supply chain, few have considered the third party countries that are located between them, or how they might contribute to supply chain security. And while a growing number of contributions seek to understand such ‘energy transit states’ for oil and gas pipelines in the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions, those in Southeast Asia are under-evaluated.

Appraisals of Singaporean, Indonesian and Malaysian foreign policies tend to assume that the three states have ‘common interests’ in upholding Strait security, and hence a sound basis for cooperation. Balance of Power expectations about alliance formation, and claims that Southeast Asian countries engage in consensus decision making practices and avoid interference in each others’ affairs, often referred to as the ‘ASEAN Way,’ also support this view. It is certainly the case that Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia have engaged in a variety of efforts to protect the Malacca Strait, which accelerated in intensity following Admiral Thomas Fargo’s (at the time Commander, United States Pacific Command) announcement in 2004 that a Regional Maritime Security Initiative would be established. Yet this was an initiative that Indonesia and Malaysia in particular saw as encroaching on their respective jurisdictions in the sea lane. More generally, assumptions about the likelihood of cooperation do not accord with less optimistic predictions that states will increasingly compete where strategic energy resources—such as oil—are involved.

This thesis therefore evaluates Singapore’s, Indonesia’s and Malaysia’s interests and policy choices toward the Malacca Strait with respect to their energy transit state status. It does so in order to better understand whether claims about their common interests engendering cooperation in the sea lane actually hold, and offer a more cogent explanation of their interactions than arguments based on the Balance of Power or the ASEAN Way. To assess this, I develop a framework based on three types of energy transit states: the ‘enmeshed energy transit state,’ the ‘fledgling

energy transit state' and the 'rising energy transit state.' I find that the three countries under review have markedly different stakes in Middle East-East Asia oil flows, and that this has shaped the scope of their agendas as well as the intensity of their security cooperation. In addition, I find that competition among the three has also been important, as each state seeks to capitalise on the supply chain for their own advantage. Thus, viewed through the lens of oil, a better account of the countries' interactions is one that recognises their converging and diverging interests. With Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia all expected to maintain, if not increase, their involvement in the transit oil supply chain, their motivations to both cooperate and compete in the Malacca Strait could be exacerbated in what is already a complicated maritime environment.

Keywords: Southeast Asia, oil, energy security, maritime security, Malacca Strait, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia.

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