**Piracy in Southeast Asia - An Analysis of the threat for the political players involved and for the commercial shipping**

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**Abstract**

The present study analyses maritime piracy in Southeast Asia from 1994 to 2003. During this time Southeast Asia was the prime focus of piracy attacks: 1.329 of 2.874 attacks worldwide took place in Southeast Asian waters. An essential aspect of this study is the analysis of the role of political actors in the context of piracy. This includes a discussion of the impacts of piracy for governments, government agencies, local administrations, the navy, marine police, coast guard and port authorities on the one hand and the shipping industry on the other hand. The analysis is based upon a reflection of the spatial structure of this threat.

Victims of piracy in Southeast Asia are small fishing vessels as well as tankers and container ships. Because there are unreported attacks the real number of piracy incidents is expected to be considerably higher than officially known. Inconsistent definitions of "piracy" and sea boundaries are only two of many issues, which increase the problem of determining the real threat of piracy. Though ships are hit in ports, at anchor and at sea there is a spatial concentration of piracy incidents in certain regions – mostly along the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs): Malacca Straits, Gaspar Straits, Makassar Straits and Sunda Straits. The fact that the Straits of Malacca is one of the busiest sea-lanes worldwide results in piracy not only being a problem of Southeast Asian countries but also developing a global dimension.

Piracy has severe spatial consequences and forms at the same time a risk for national and international shipping. The counteractive measures of the Southeast Asian countries and of the ship owners are not sufficient yet to solve the problem. A planned cooperation of the Southeast Asian countries concerning this matter is just in a rudimentary stage. Countries outside Southeast Asia have only a limited bearing on fighting piracy even though the perils of piracy at sea are often already recognized. The deployment of foreign security forces like US Forces is mostly rejected by the states concerned.

This study combines a spatial analysis of maritime piracy and its evaluation. It also identifies maritime threats and preventive and subsequent measures against a menace of international trade and affected countries.