

Maritime piracy along the malacca straits in southeast asia

[History](#)



Piracy along the strait of Malacca appeared towards the end of eighteenth century, much driven by a booming economic activities across the Asian region, which led to an increase in the flow of goods between the South East Asia, China and the West (Warren, 4). The culture of ship raiding was increased by the involvement of western countries in China trade and the founding of Singapore as a strategic trade center for the two fronts. The value of Singapore's trade by 1833 was valued at about two million Spanish dollars with the settlement that was to become Singapore acting as a central point to redistribute goods in the South East region, and for the West to acquire return goods for trade (9). Singapore therefore became a typically different settlement with both European and Asian elements and interests, leading to development of the numerous maritime trading companies that attracted English ships trading in this region with a passion leading to heavy losses and marginally contributed to declining trade in Singapore at this time (Wong Lin Ken, 1960 82-83). Singapore as explained was created as a redistribution center by western forces Mills (1966, 223) argue that European powers employed draconian approaches to reduce local competition in the area and enjoy a complete monopoly destroying the indigenous systems, which impoverished the local population and the merchants, who developed a sense of rage and a sense of legitimization attacks on ships along the strait. The Malay and the Dutch were bitter rivals and piracy continued through attacks on ships and was at its peak between 1826 and 1836 (Freeman, 180). There the fact that Singapore was a destination for the west heightened pirate attacks on ships towards the country and had almost choked the port of Singapore (Freeman, 182). The 1849 bid to eliminate piracy along the strait led by the British through a

theassialnts (Freeman, 183) 0was reamrble in crating divides between Sinaopre and the restof the region as a choise fo the westen forces (Mitchel 1976, 178).

Piracy thrives ina area where it is culteurally acceptable and in ASoutegeh east asia, it has been aemvbraced as as an acceptable way oflivfe eaimed at profvding support for poor local villages (Murphy, 17). This explinsw hry teerosimis more rampant along Indonesian coast whre poverty is much higher (Young, 61) and is not considered as a global problem (). M, oroever, closelnessof the sttes has been a factrt to heighten sensitvuity ion stte soverignty, which has hampred efforts for cordiotna nd intergraton in coabatig the piracy meannce over the time (Onn, 2003), leaeing to indiviaul efforts htah have not been very successful (Bradford, 73). Muchof the rivalryand the difernces between Singapre and the teo te tow coutneriwes stems back tot eh colonial deramcations of bounderies between teh British and he Dutch. Eh Anglo treaty o 1824 saw the Duth cadn Britons agreeing to to irrevocably divde the prevaius Riau-johor kingdom d severed te cultural unityof the eastcaost soutof Singapoare (Andaya and Andays 122). While Riau'seconmy was disrupted by many i= eyarsof itenal strife and declined, Singapore preosoered greatly udner the Britons(Andaya and Matheson 1979, 109-10)the Durtch rule fute eh weakend the regions (Bernard, 24). The Indonesian state comprised of a heterogenous populaiothn in a unitary terotoryfrcibly rlued by colonialist, leading to clerey defiend bouderoies (Smith 1976, 5). On the oteh hand a stonge andsolid Singaopre governemt and a scmall sizeof the country led to stoeger racial integration while indonesawas less ambitious in manging racial integraton and the goveremnt

had no capacity to cope with the large resource deprived country (Fee, 1973). Malaysia's position was in between the strength of Singapore and the weakness of Indonesia. The differences in social economic and political dimensions in the region made it hard to fight piracy (Christensen, 2004) as more Indonesians viewed piracy as a way to support their communities (Vavaro), while Singapore suffered greatly under the threat of piracy. However, Malaysia like Singapore embarked on growth strategies in tourism and industries, though Malaysia encouraged a unitary approach towards regional issues to preserve state identity (Derek 2002) unlike the more westernized Singapore that preferred multilateral approach and even favored inclusion of western countries.

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Adam K Christensen for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Political Science, History, and Anthropology presented on May 12, 2011. Oregon State University Title: *Modern Piracy: Regional Cooperative Security: Southeast Asia and the Middle East*

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