


Chapter 2

Securing Energy Supply Through Maritime Security: The European Union's Strategic Approach in the Indo–Pacific Region

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ABSTRACT

The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly playing a strategic role in the global energy supply chain, particularly for EU. In the context of critical maritime routes such as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea handling the majority of trade flows and energy transportation, the EU regards maritime security in this region as a prerequisite for ensuring energy security and maintaining economic connectivity with the area. From the perspective of geopolitics and green politics, this chapter analyzes the EU's strategic approach to securing energy supply through safeguarding maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. This study focusing on the relations between the EU and regional states and multilateral organizations. The research findings indicate that, by promoting the green transition, strengthening ocean governance, and enhancing maritime security cooperation, the EU not only protects its energy interests but also elevates its status as a strategic actor, thereby contributing to reshaping the regional order toward sustainable governance and compliance with international law.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4470-6.ch002

1. INTRODUCTION

Classical geopolitical approaches identify geography as a foundational factor shaping foreign policy, power potential, and national positioning. Control over geographical areas equates to access to resources, maintenance of transportation routes, and resource distribution systems, thereby conferring global strategic advantages (Conant & Gold, 1976). Building on this foundation, Alfred Thayer Mahan's Sea Power theory (1890) emphasized that national strength and prosperity are intrinsically linked to maritime control, including the use of seas for peacetime trade and wartime route control to protect national interests (Manship, 1964). Control over strategic maritime routes represents "long-term global power," as nations achieving this maintain sustainable geostrategic advantages. The significance of seas and oceans has been further extended in modern geopolitical theories, where blue geopolitics expands the approach to reveal the oceans' increasing role in national power. Blue geopolitics positions oceans at the center of environmental issues, ecological security, migration, and climate change, demonstrating a shift from land-based to ocean-based perspectives and expanding maritime geography's scope regarding national security, including economic, social, and environmental dimensions of maritime space. All geopolitical spaces—maritime, terrestrial, and atmospheric—are interconnected, each influencing and being influenced by the others through countless flows, exchanges, and linkages (Jones, 2024). Consequently, control over oceans and the capacity to exploit and protect marine energy resources significantly determine the balance of international power, climate change adaptation capacity, and the green economy transition process (Jones, 2024).

Additionally, Green Politics theory demonstrates that humans are no longer the absolute center but exist in relational interconnection with nature, future generations, and non-human beings. Environmental concerns have fostered cooperative efforts among states, leading to the formation and implementation of international agreements and conventions on environmental protection and pollution control, becoming a driving force in global politics closely tied to national interests (Nam, 2015). The environment has become the paramount concern in international relations theory and practice, driving the vigorous expansion and development of Green Theory since the 1990s. For states pursuing development, the environment cannot be separated from the space of existence; it cannot be regarded as a sphere detached from human action, ambition, and needs, nor defined as a concept separate from humankind (Malnes, 1993).

Prominent Green Theory representatives such as Robert E. Goodin, John Barry, Andrew Dobson, Robyn Eckersley, Hugh Dyer, and Peter Christoff have expanded various dimensions of this theory within international relations scholarship. Robert Goodin established the foundation for normative political arguments and green

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