

Both documents represent the American standpoint. While the first one is mostly about the economy (in the age of globalization), the 2nd one deals with strategic / naval issues. It is about geopolitics.

Both documents mention the Strait of Malacca (with Singapore), the strait that links the Indian Ocean to the Pacific through the South China Sea.

We can argue that 85% of the world trade is made by sea. *The South China Sea*

❶ More than 30% of global maritime crude oil trade moves through the South China Sea. Source: **US Energy information administration**, 27 August 2018.

In the narrow waters of the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, there is a choke point or bottleneck. Hence the need for naval assets (to prevent the shipping from being blocked).

The South China Sea is a major trade route for crude oil, and in 2016, more than 30% of global maritime crude oil trade, or about 15 million barrels per day (b/d), passed through the South China Sea. More than 90% of crude oil volumes flowing through the South China Sea in 2016 transited the Strait of Malacca, the shortest sea route between suppliers in Africa and the Persian Gulf and markets in Asia, making it one of the world's primary oil transit chokepoints. In addition, a significant amount of crude oil (about 1.4 million b/d) passes through the strait on its way to Singapore and the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, where it is refined before transiting the South China Sea in the form of petroleum products.

10 The South China Sea is a major trade route for the Middle East, which accounted for more than 70% of total South China Sea crude oil shipments in 2016. Saudi Arabia is the largest source of crude oil, making up almost one-fourth of crude oil volumes traversing the South China Sea. More than half of Saudi Arabia's global crude oil shipments traveled through the South China Sea in 2016.

About 90% of China's 2016 maritime crude oil shipments were transported through the South China Sea. About 90% of the crude oil imported by Japan and South Korea was shipped through the South China Sea in 2016. Most of Japan's and South Korea's imports are from Middle Eastern suppliers and are transported 15 through the Strait of Malacca and then the South China Sea.

<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=36952>

❷ The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt transiting the strait of Malacca on 1 April 2018.

This nuclear-powered carrier is one of eleven American aircraft carriers. It carries up to 80 state of the art fighter-bombers, that make it the strongest air force base in any area where it cruises.

Fighter-bombers to defend the carrier and to strike the enemy (China ?) from the sea.

Early-warning aircraft carrying a radar to detect any incoming threat.

Similar to the fighter-bombers, electronic warfare aircraft to jam enemy communications and detection.

Helicopters to rescue ditched aircraft or to fight against submarines.



Usually, aircraft are not lined-up on the flight deck. It's a "photex", a propaganda picture.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, discuss the importance of the South China Sea in the world economy and its geopolitical consequences.