

# Exploring Theoretical And Practical Contestations Over The Right Of Innocent Passage Of Vessels Through The Territorial Sea Of A Foreign Country

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## Abstract

This article examines the contested nature of the right of innocent passage of vessels through the territorial sea of a foreign country. It sheds light on the practice of innocent passage, on the one hand, and on the theoretical insights regarding the movement of ships through others states' territorial waters, on the other. Innocent passage is one of the fundamental principles of international maritime law. Although numerous conventions and treaties formally protect this right, its implementation frequently faces challenges and uncertainties. This article, therefore, explores the theoretical underpinnings of innocent passage, analyzing its historical development and its formalization in international law. There is a discussion herein on the pragmatic elements of putting this right into practice, delving into current concerns, real-life examples, and the consequences for the authority of states and the security of maritime areas. The aim of this study is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by conducting a thorough investigation and providing insights into the intricate aspects of innocent passage in the territorial seas of foreign countries.

**Keywords:** UNCLOS, Innocent Passage, Coastal States, Territorial Sea, International Waters .

## Introduction

The freedom of the seas has long been a cornerstone of international relations, and the

right of innocent passage in territorial seas stands as a testament to the delicate equilibrium between the sovereignty of coastal states and the

imperative of unimpeded navigation. This fundamental concept, deeply rooted in the annals of maritime history, has evolved over centuries and found codification in contemporary international law, most notably in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was adopted in 1982, and came into force in 1994 (Solski, 2022). As ships traverse the vast expanses of the world's oceans, the theoretical framework of innocent passage encounters practical challenges that shape the dynamics of state interactions, maritime security, and global commerce.

There are two predominant theoretical perspectives on how to govern the oceans. According to the first theory, there needs to be a complete freedom of navigation as the oceans belong to all human beings. Simply put, nobody can lay claim to a portion of international waters as its own, thereby restricting its use by other states. The second theory, on the other hand, is premised upon the notion that the seas are not only amenable to appropriation by coastal states, but the owners can also restrict their use for navigational purposes (Agyebeng, 2006). Innocent passage—that is, “passage is innocent so long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal state” (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982)—thus constitutes a compromise between the above-mentioned conflicting positions on the issue.

The legal foundation of innocent passage finds its most comprehensive expression in the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982), a landmark treaty that delineates the rights and responsibilities of states concerning the world's oceans. Within this legal framework, the right of innocent passage is enshrined, laying down the principles that govern the movement of ships through the territorial seas of coastal states. Every coastal state has the sovereign right to set

the breadth of its territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles from its baseline, which is to be determined according to UNCLOS. Additionally, littoral states can claim sovereign jurisdiction over the continental shelf—up to 200 nautical miles from the shore—for scientific exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the sea (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). The UNCLOS thus provides a mechanism whereby conflicts related to the oceans can be resolved peacefully.

However, as with any legal construct, the devil is in the details. UNCLOS, while providing a comprehensive foundation, leaves room for interpretation and adaptation to the complexities of the modern maritime world. To truly grasp the nuances of an innocent passage, it is imperative to dissect the conditions that define its legitimacy. UNCLOS delineates specific criteria that a passage must meet to be considered innocent, including refraining from activities not deemed innocent by the coastal state (Nasu, 2018). Navigating through these conditions requires a delicate balance between the interests of the coastal state, asserting its sovereign rights, and the navigating state, exercising its freedom of navigation.

The tension inherent in this balance becomes palpable in real-world scenarios, where disputes over the interpretation of UNCLOS provisions often arise. As we delve into the contemporary landscape, it becomes evident that innocent passage is not a static concept but one that must adapt to the evolving nature of maritime activities. Emerging technologies, military maneuvers, and economic interests add layers of complexity to the implementation of this right. Regional differences in interpretation and enforcement further muddy the waters, resulting in a patchwork of practices that can be perplexing to both seafarers and legal scholars (Bianco, Garcia, & Chand, 2023).

Through the lens of case studies, this article will examine specific instances where the right to innocent passage has been put to the test. These case studies, drawn from diverse regions and contexts, illuminate the practical challenges faced by states and entities navigating the intricate waters of international maritime law. From disputes over military activities during innocent passage to the impact of technological advancements, these cases underscore the need for a nuanced and adaptable approach to innocent passage. The notion of innocent passage, which originates from established international customary law, has been officially documented in several international agreements, most notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This right confers upon ships the liberty to traverse territorial seas, contingent upon specific rules and regulations. Nevertheless, the theoretical foundations of innocent passage and their practical implementation have been open to interpretation. The following section examines the historical progression of innocent passage, starting from traditional practices to the establishment of specific legal regulations. Analyzing significant milestones in the development of this right offers a framework for comprehending its current importance (Kraska, 2018).

The evolution of innocent passage is a journey through the maritime traditions and practices that have shaped our understanding of the freedom of navigation. From the earliest customs that recognized the necessity for ships to traverse coastal waters for trade and exploration to the codification of these practices in modern international law, the concept has weathered the tides of time. Exploring this historical trajectory not only provides insights into the origins of innocent passage but also sets the stage for comprehending its contemporary relevance and challenges.

From early customs shaped by the necessities of trade and exploration to the formalization of these practices in modern international law, the journey of innocent passage unveils narrative rich in complexity and historical significance. In the pre-modern era, when maritime exploration and trade were burgeoning, coastal waters were often seen as extensions of territorial control. (de Sousa Fernandes, 2022). States, recognizing the economic and strategic importance of coastal areas, asserted authority over these waters. However, as seafaring nations expanded their reach and engaged in transoceanic trade, the need for unimpeded navigation became increasingly apparent (Yinan, 2017). So, the evolution of innocent passage traces its roots through centuries of maritime traditions, embodying the intricate dance between the rights of coastal states and the freedom of navigation.

The roots of innocent passage can be traced back to customary practices that allowed ships to traverse coastal waters under certain conditions. These conditions were often based on the necessity of navigation for trade, access to ports, and exploration. Early maritime codes and practices reflected a pragmatic acknowledgment that coastal states had legitimate interests in controlling access to their waters, but at the same time, there was a recognition of the shared benefit derived from unhindered passage. The emergence of innocent passage as a formalized concept gained momentum during the 17th and 18th centuries. European maritime powers, driven by economic imperatives and the desire for global exploration, began to articulate principles that recognized the rights of non-coastal states to navigate through territorial seas for purposes such as trade, diplomacy, and scientific expeditions (Burgess, et.al., 2017).

These principles, however, were often subject to the vagaries of bilateral agreements and the evolving norms of customary international law.

The 20th century marked a pivotal moment in the codification of innocent passage. The First Hague Conference in 1899 and the subsequent Second Hague Conference in 1907 laid the groundwork for the establishment of rules governing the conduct of naval warfare (Hayashi, 2017). While these conferences did not explicitly address innocent passage, they reflected a growing awareness of the need to regulate maritime activities to prevent conflicts at sea.

The crystallization of innocent passage as a well-defined concept had to wait till the mid-20th century. The 1958 United Nations Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone marked a significant step, providing a framework for innocent passage but leaving room for ambiguity. The subsequent UNCLOS negotiations, which spanned nearly a decade and concluded in 1982, represented a watershed moment. UNCLOS not only clarified and expanded the rights of innocent passage but also incorporated a comprehensive legal regime for the world's oceans (Østreng, 2018). Article 17 of UNCLOS outlines the conditions for innocent passage, emphasizing the non-threatening nature of the passage and the prohibition of activities incompatible with the right. UNCLOS, with its widespread adoption, has become the primary instrument shaping the contemporary understanding of innocent passage. The historical evolution shows that the foundations of innocent passage are deeply rooted in the ebb and flow of maritime interactions, reflecting the ever-evolving balance between coastal state sovereignty and the imperative of open navigation on the high seas (Mertens & Wilson, 2018).

The legal framework surrounding innocent passage in territorial seas is primarily defined by international agreements, with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) serving as the principal document. Adopted in 1982, UNCLOS provides a comprehensive and

universally accepted set of rules governing the use of the world's oceans. The relevant provisions related to innocent passage are primarily found in Part II of UNCLOS, specifically in Articles 17 to 32. Article 17 of UNCLOS defines innocent passage as "continuous and expeditious" navigation through territorial seas. It outlines the specific conditions that must be met for a passage to be considered innocent, including refraining from any threat or use of force against the coastal state, complying with the laws and regulations of the coastal state regarding navigation and safety at sea, and not engaging in any activities deemed prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal state (Hebbar, 2020).

Moreover, Article 18 of UNCLOS elaborates on the rights of innocent passage, emphasizing the right of ships to traverse territorial seas without any interruption although subject to the conditions set forth in Article 17. Coastal states are, in turn, granted the right to adopt laws and regulations for the prevention of any infringement of their customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary laws within their territorial seas. It's essential to note that UNCLOS not only establishes the rights and obligations of states but also provides mechanisms for dispute resolution. Part XV of UNCLOS outlines the procedures for the settlement of disputes related to the interpretation and application of the convention, offering a legal recourse for states involved in disagreements over issues such as innocent passage (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982).

Beyond UNCLOS, regional agreements and customary international law also contribute to the legal framework surrounding innocent passage. States may enter into additional treaties or agreements to further define or clarify specific aspects of innocent passage, ensuring a more tailored approach to regional maritime issues. In conclusion, UNCLOS, with its specific

provisions balancing the rights of coastal and navigating states, primarily shapes the legal framework for innocent passage. Regional agreements and customary practices complement this framework, contributing to a comprehensive system that governs the lawful and peaceful navigation of ships through territorial seas.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and Additional Measures: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ratified in 1982, is a significant agreement that comprehensively deals with the entitlement to innocent passage. This section examines the applicable provisions of UNCLOS and investigates how subsequent developments and regional agreements have impacted the legal framework concerning innocent passage (Mueller, 2020).

Criteria for Innocent Passage through Territorial Seas, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), are subject to specific criteria designed to ensure the peaceful and non-threatening nature of maritime navigation while respecting the sovereignty of coastal states (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). For a vessel to be considered innocent, it must adhere to several key conditions. Firstly, the passage should be continuous and expeditious, indicating a seamless transit without undue delay. Simultaneously, vessels are strictly prohibited from any threat or use of force against the coastal state, emphasizing the imperative of maintaining a non-aggressive stance. Importantly, the passage must involve no prejudicial activities that could disrupt the peace, good order, or security of the coastal state, such as military exercises or weapons testing.

Furthermore, vessels must comply with the laws and regulations of the coastal state pertaining to navigation and safety at sea, underscoring the

importance of respecting domestic rules. The purpose of the passage must be innocent, focusing on lawful objectives like reaching the high seas or navigating through straits. While UNCLOS does not explicitly mandate notification, some regional practices may require vessels to inform coastal states of their intention to pass through territorial seas. Additionally, innocent passage does not extend permission for activities like fishing, marine research, or pollution, emphasizing a commitment to separate regulatory frameworks. Adherence to these criteria is fundamental to the recognition of innocent passage, contributing to the harmonious coexistence of coastal and navigating states in the maritime domain.

Although UNCLOS provides a broad framework for innocent passage, specific conditions must be satisfied in order for a passage to be considered innocent. This section explores the aforementioned conditions, which encompass the prohibition of activities that are not considered innocent and the entitlement of coastal states to regulate innocent passage. Present-day difficulties and uncertainties: In spite of explicit legal regulations, the actual execution of innocent passage encounters obstacles and uncertainties. This section discusses current concerns, including military actions during innocent passage, the influence of new technologies, and disagreements regarding the understanding of UNCLOS provisions. Case studies offer valuable insights into the practical challenges faced by states and maritime entities by analyzing specific instances where innocent passage has been contested. Case studies from various regions exemplify the varied viewpoints on this entitlement and the consequences for global affairs. Sovereignty Concerns: The concept of innocent passage gives rise to inquiries regarding the equilibrium between the concerns of coastal states and the unrestricted movement at sea. This section examines the conflict arising from the

concept of sovereignty and the rights of international navigation, taking into account the viewpoints of both coastal states and navigating states (Ratcovich, 2019).

The issue of navigating international waters, particularly concerning the theory and practice of innocent passage in territorial seas, encompasses a multitude of complexities within the realm of international maritime law. One primary challenge lies in the potential for differing interpretations and ambiguities surrounding the legal framework governing innocent passage. These variations in interpretation can give rise to disputes and difficulties in enforcement as coastal states grapple with reconciling the rights of innocent passage with their inherent sovereignty. Security issues make it even more difficult to strike a delicate balance because it may be necessary to ensure the security of coastal states while also facilitating unhindered navigation.

The rapid advancements in maritime technology introduce an additional layer of complexity, requiring legal frameworks to adapt to the use of unmanned vessels and autonomous technology during innocent passage. Dispute resolution mechanisms outlined in international law, while theoretically available, may face practical challenges in resolving conflicts arising from differences in interpretation or application of innocent passage. Environmental concerns, the conduct of military activities, and the necessity for global cooperation compound these challenges, underscoring the need for ongoing dialogue, education, and concerted efforts to enhance the effectiveness and clarity of innocent passage in international waters (Albert, 2022).

The Implications of Innocent Passage in Territorial Seas for Maritime Security: Finding Solutions to Obstacles and Ensuring Stability According to international maritime law, and more specifically the United Nations Convention

on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the right of innocent passage in territorial waters has major consequences for maritime security. This right is established in international maritime law. The purpose of this article is to investigate the many facets of maritime security that are associated with innocent passage. Specifically, the article will investigate how this fundamental right intersects with issues such as piracy, transnational crime, terrorism, military activities, technological advancements, environmental concerns, and the necessity of regional cooperation. Providing a complete grasp of the problems and possibilities involved with innocent passage, as well as the ways in which international players may work together to guarantee maritime stability, is the goal of this essay, which will do this by looking into a variety of different areas.

When it comes to the free and legitimate movement of vessels in territorial waters, the right of innocent passage, which is a concept that is firmly ingrained in the fabric of international maritime law, serves as the keystone. In spite of the fact that this privilege is essential to the promotion of peaceful navigation, it also brings up some important concerns about maritime security. In the fight against piracy and other transnational marine crimes, the concept of innocent passage is a very important component of the international effort. Coastal governments, by giving the right to innocent passage, contribute to the collective security of the seas by easing the movement of naval troops and law enforcement agencies involved in counter-piracy operations (Cai, 2022).

This has the effect of furthering the collective security of the seas. This part of the article addresses the complexity of coordinating international responses to maritime criminal activity by analyzing the connection between innocent passages and attempts to combat piracy.

When it comes to combating acts of marine terrorism and illegal trafficking, the right to innocent passage is an essential component. It is necessary for coastal nations to strike a compromise between the requirement to enable vessels to legitimately sail through territorial waters and the aforementioned security issues in order to maintain their sovereignty.

Additionally, international frameworks that are designed to prohibit the exploitation of innocent transit for illegal operations are analyzed. The concept of innocent passage is a legal framework that enables immediate and unfettered access to boats that are in difficulty, which in turn supports prompt search and rescue activities. This part digs into the significance of innocent passage for the purpose of safeguarding the safety of maritime traffic and humanitarian efforts. It places an emphasis on the need for international collaboration in order to facilitate search and rescue operations and guarantee the safety of marine traffic. To guarantee that boats traveling through their territorial waters comply with the requirements of innocent passage, coastal nations engage in actions that include surveillance and monitoring (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982).

This part of the article discusses the technical breakthroughs that have been made in maritime surveillance, the difficulties that arise when trying to strike a balance between security and privacy, and the significance of keeping situational awareness in order to avert security concerns. The presence of armed vessels during the passage of innocent shipping generates strategic considerations for governments that are located along the coast. This section explores the delicate balance that exists between the freedom of passage for armed vessels and the security interests of coastal governments. It places an emphasis on the need for diplomacy and respect for international rules in order to avoid

misunderstandings or escalations (Froman, 1984).

Due to the fact that technology improvements are becoming more prevalent in marine operations, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that navigation systems are secure throughout innocent transit. Within the scope of this part, we investigate the incorporation of cutting-edge technology into marine operations, the dangers that are linked with cyber-attacks, and the precautions that are necessary to protect vital maritime infrastructure. The passage of innocents requires a dedication to environmental security, with a particular focus on the avoidance of pollution and the observance of international standards for the preservation of the marine environment.

In this part, there is a discussion on the environmental repercussions of innocent passage and investigate the ways in which coastal governments monitor and enforce rules in order to reduce the likelihood of ecological catastrophes and to encourage environmentally responsible marine activity. Establishing effective regional collaboration and information sharing is necessary in order to address maritime security problems associated with innocent passage. The purpose of this part is to investigate the significance of regional efforts, collaborative frameworks, and intelligence-sharing systems in order to improve situational awareness and jointly react to new security threats. At the same time as it upholds the ideals of peaceful navigation, innocent passage over territorial waters navigates a complicated sea of security issues.

As demonstrated in this article, the ramifications of innocent passage transcend beyond the confines of the legal system to embrace a wide range of important topics, including but not limited to piracy, transnational crime, terrorism,

military actions, technical breakthroughs, and environmental concerns. In order to guarantee maritime stability, it is necessary to strike a careful balance between the rights of coastal and navigating governments, to encourage international cooperation, and to adapt to the ever-changing issues that are present in the marine domain. It is possible for the international community to collaborate in order to navigate the seas of innocent passage and to build a marine environment that is safe and stable if it addresses the diverse aspects of maritime security (Pfisterer & Van Tulder, 2020).

The concept of innocent passage intersects with larger concerns related to maritime security. This involves the endeavors to counteract piracy, terrorism, and other transnational dangers and the necessity of collaboration to successfully tackle these challenges. To bridge the divide between theory and practice, it is necessary to make deliberate efforts to improve the clarity and consistency of how we understand and implement the concept of innocent passage. This section below explores potential strategies for enhancing comprehension, collaboration, and mechanisms for resolving conflicts.

### **Navigating the Complexities of Innocent Passage in Territorial Seas**

The theory and practice of innocent passage in territorial seas present a tapestry of challenges within the realm of international maritime law. From differing interpretations and sovereignty concerns to security challenges, technological advancements, and environmental considerations, the landscape is intricate and multifaceted. The delicate balance required between the rights of innocent passage and the sovereign interests of coastal states underscores the need for nuanced solutions and cooperative frameworks. As the maritime domain continues to evolve, addressing these challenges demands a commitment to international collaboration,

ongoing education, and the development of adaptive legal frameworks that can effectively respond to emerging issues.

### **Recommendations: Navigating Towards Clarity and Cooperation**

#### **Harmonizing Interpretations:**

Efforts should be made to foster a common understanding and interpretation of innocent passage among states. Diplomatic initiatives, workshops, and forums can facilitate dialogue and promote a shared interpretation of the legal principles governing innocent passage.

#### **Enhancing Dispute Resolution**

##### **Mechanisms:**

Strengthening and streamlining dispute resolution mechanisms, as outlined in international law, can contribute to the swift resolution of conflicts arising from innocent passage issues. States should actively engage in the improvement and utilization of existing dispute resolution frameworks.

#### **Security Cooperation:**

Coastal states and navigating states should collaborate to address security challenges associated with innocent passage. Cooperative frameworks for intelligence-sharing, joint patrols, and coordinated responses can enhance maritime security while respecting the rights of innocent passage.

#### **Adapting Legal Frameworks to**

##### **Technology:**

Given the rapid advancements in maritime technology, legal frameworks should be adaptive and capable of addressing the challenges posed by unmanned vessels and autonomous technology during innocent passage. Regular reviews and updates can ensure relevance in a technologically evolving environment.

**Environmental Protection Measures:**

Coastal and navigating states should collaborate to develop and enforce robust environmental protection measures during innocent passage. This includes strict adherence to regulations, the use of environmentally friendly technologies, and swift responses to mitigate any potential ecological risks (Liu et al., 2023).

**Promoting Education and Awareness:**

A concerted effort should be made to educate seafarers, coastal states, and international stakeholders about the principles and nuances of innocent passage. Promoting awareness through training programs, workshops, and informational campaigns can contribute to better compliance and understanding.

**Global Cooperation Initiatives:**

Encouraging global cooperation initiatives, perhaps under the auspices of international organizations like the International Maritime Organization (IMO), can foster a collaborative approach to addressing innocent passage challenges. Regular forums for dialogue and the sharing of best practices can contribute to a more harmonized international maritime environment.

**Robust Diplomacy:**

Diplomatic channels should be actively engaged to resolve issues arising from innocent passage. Bilateral and multilateral discussions can facilitate the establishment of clear guidelines and protocols, reducing the potential for misunderstandings and disputes.

In navigating the future of innocent passage in territorial seas, the international community has an opportunity to reinforce the principles of peaceful navigation while addressing the evolving challenges of the maritime domain. Through collaborative efforts, adaptive legal frameworks, and a commitment to education and awareness, the global maritime community can navigate these complexities with clarity and cooperation, ensuring the continued effectiveness

of innocent passage as a cornerstone of international maritime law.

**Conclusion:**

The innocent passage through territorial seas is an important element of international maritime law, which demonstrates the careful equilibrium between the sovereignty of states and the freedom to navigate. In order to promote cooperation and maintain peaceful use of the world's oceans, it is crucial to have a detailed comprehension of innocent passage, considering both its theoretical complexities and practical difficulties. This article aims to facilitate the connection between theory and practice in the domain of innocent passage, thus contributing to the ongoing discussion.

Innocent passage through territorial seas, a principle rooted in centuries of maritime traditions and codified in contemporary international law, presents a nuanced tapestry of challenges and opportunities for the global maritime community. As vessels traverse coastal waters, asserting their right to peaceful navigation, the implications of innocent passage ripple through diverse realms of maritime security. This exploration has illuminated the multifaceted dimensions of these implications, ranging from combating piracy and transnational crime to addressing environmental concerns and technological advancements.

The combat against piracy and transnational crime stands as a testament to the critical role innocent passage plays in fostering collective security. By facilitating the movement of naval forces and law enforcement agencies through territorial seas, coastal states contribute significantly to the global effort to secure the high seas. However, the intricacies of coordinating international responses underscore the need for enhanced cooperation and information sharing to effectively combat emerging threats. In

preventing terrorism and illicit trafficking, innocent passage emerges as a delicate balancing act between national security imperatives and the preservation of navigational freedoms. The international community must grapple with the challenge of fortifying security measures without compromising the legitimate movement of vessels. Robust frameworks and collaborative approaches become imperative to prevent the exploitation of innocent passage for nefarious activities. The legal framework that innocent passage provides supports search and rescue operations, a humanitarian aspect of maritime security. The seamless and swift access to distressed vessels underscores the importance of this right in preserving lives and ensuring the safety of maritime traffic. Yet, challenges persist in establishing comprehensive international mechanisms that guarantee effective and timely responses to maritime emergencies (Rawlinson et al., 2021).

Surveillance and monitoring, propelled by technological advancements, reshape the landscape of maritime security during innocent passage. The use of cutting-edge technologies introduces unprecedented capabilities for coastal states to enforce regulations and maintain situational awareness. However, the ethical dimensions of privacy and the need for a delicate balance between security and individual rights warrant careful consideration. The presence of military vessels during innocent passage underscores the strategic considerations that permeate the maritime domain. Diplomacy and adherence to international norms become essential to prevent misunderstandings and avoid potential escalations. As nations navigate their security interests, a delicate equilibrium must be struck to ensure the peaceful coexistence of military and civilian vessels in shared waters. Technological advancements and the advent of the digital era introduce new dimensions to innocent passage, placing a premium on

cybersecurity. Safeguarding navigation systems and critical maritime infrastructure becomes paramount to preventing cyber threats that could compromise the safety and security of vessels transiting territorial seas. Environmental security, an increasingly urgent concern, finds resonance in the commitment to prevent pollution and promote sustainable maritime practices during innocent passage. Coastal states play a pivotal role in enforcing regulations that mitigate the risk of ecological disasters, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental health and maritime security. Regional cooperation and information sharing emerge as linchpins in addressing the myriad challenges associated with innocent passage. Collaborative frameworks, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and shared maritime awareness bolster the collective capacity to respond to emerging security threats, fostering stability in regional and global waters.

Last but not least, the right to innocent passage in territorial seas represents not only a legal principle but a dynamic force shaping the future of maritime security. As the international community continues to navigate the evolving challenges and opportunities associated with innocent passage, a commitment to collaboration, adherence to international norms, and adaptability to emerging complexities will be essential. By fostering a holistic understanding of the implications surrounding innocent passage, nations can work together to ensure the peaceful and secure coexistence of coastal and navigating states in the vast expanse of our shared oceans.

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