

## **Domestic affairs influence on Malaysia's relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran**

### **ABSTRACT**

Recent development shows that diplomatic relations between Malaysia with the two biggest economic players in Arab-Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran, has been growing. There have been active engagements between Malaysian leaders with the leaders from Saudi Arabia and Iran. At the same time, leaders from those countries have also been giving particular attention to their diplomatic relationship with Malaysia. It is widely known that Saudi Arabia's relationship with Iran is constantly intense in the Middle East, with both countries are expanding their influence in the Middle East. Given the aforementioned background, this article seeks to analyse how Malaysia's domestic affairs influenced Malaysia's relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is argued that, the domestic affairs are very much related to Malaysia's high dependence on both countries' oil resources and the possible spread of Wahhabism and Shi'a ideologies among Muslim community in Malaysia. The article is constructed by answering the following questions; Does Saudi's and Iran's interests in Malaysia aim at expanding their influence in South East region, particularly over the Shi'a and Wahhabis' ideology? How Malaysia responds to it without jeopardizing its overwhelming relations with these states? On the other hand, this article will also analyse the presence of Saudi Arabia in Malaysia on how it affects the regional security threat. Overall discussion, the study findings have shown how Malaysia is able to maintain her relations with both countries by balancing between the needs for oil petroleum as well as containing the spread of Wahhabism and Shi'a ideologies in Malaysia.