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Maritime Security for Resilient Global Supply Chains in the Wider Indo-Pacific

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Foreword

Globalisation has profoundly reshaped global economies, forging unprecedented interdependencies through international trade. Over the last five decades, trade as a share of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) surged from 26% in 1970 to 63% in 2022.¹ Central to this growth is maritime transport, which underpins more than 80% of global trade.² By connecting domestic markets across continents, shipping lanes form the backbone of complex supply chains. The Indo-Pacific region, home to some of the world's busiest and most technologically advanced ports, epitomizes this dynamic as a critical hub for international commerce. This region is home to some of the world's most critical shipping routes, which carry the majority of energy, raw materials, and manufactured goods that fuel the global economy. As geopolitical tensions rise, the need to secure these waterways becomes increasingly urgent.³

Such maritime connectivity is in fact a double-edged sword, as reliance on shipping also exposes global trade networks to significant vulnerabilities. The Indo-Pacific, a region marked by geopolitical competition and strategic contestation, faces persistent threats to maritime stability. At the same time, as the Indo-Pacific hosts some of the world's busiest waterways, its maritime stability is a matter of global concern. Indeed, the interconnected nature of modern trade means that disruptions in one part of the system can have far-reaching consequences, underscoring the need for bilateral, minilateral, and multilateral frameworks and regional cooperation to manage risks and maintain the free flow of goods.⁴

Ensuring the resilience of global supply chains requires international and coordinated efforts among nations to address shared challenges, including combating transnational threats such as piracy and smuggling, mitigating the impacts of natural disasters, and reducing vulnerabilities to geopolitical threats. In addition to security measures such as naval diplomacy and signalling, enhancing port infrastructure, integrating advanced technologies like semiconductors, and ensure law enforcement are critical components of a more robust and resilient supply chain framework.

This volume thus explores the nexus between maritime security and global supply chain resilience, focusing on the Indo-Pacific as a pivotal region for international commerce and security. It examines the strategic importance of maritime routes, the evolving threats to their stability, and the innovative measures being implemented to enhance the resilience of global supply chains. Drawing on contributions from experts across disciplines, the volume addresses key themes such as the integration of emerging technologies in maritime logistics, strategies for mitigating supply chain vulnerabilities, and the role of international and regional collaboration between small and middle powers in securing supply chains.

¹ 'Trade (% of GDP) | Data', World Bank, accessed 19 November 2024, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?end=2023&start=1970>.

² '2024 Review of Maritime Transport', United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), October 2024, <https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2024>.

³ '2024 Review of Maritime Transport: Navigating Maritime Chokepoints.' (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), October 2024).

⁴ Benedetta Girardi, Paul van Hooft, and Giovanni Cisco, 'What the Indo-Pacific Means to Europe: Trade Value, Chokepoints, and Security Risks' (The Hague, Netherlands: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), November 2023), <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/What-the-Indo-Pacific-means-to-Europe-Trade-Value-Chokepoints-and-Security-Risks-HCSS-2023.pdf>.

By providing a comprehensive analysis of these issues, this book aims to deepen understanding of how nations can adapt to the complexities of an interconnected and often volatile global trade system. It highlights the importance of prioritizing maritime security in ensuring economic stability, fostering technological innovation, and building resilient global supply chains capable of withstanding the challenges of the 21st century. Through its focus on the Indo-Pacific, the volume underscores the region's critical role in shaping the future of global trade and maritime security.

Furthermore, the volume delves into how international cooperation can mitigate risks, advance technological innovation, and enhance the stability of global trade networks. By focusing in particular on the role of small and middle powers in facing maritime security threats, the volume explores broader lessons and strategies for strengthening global maritime supply chains amidst evolving challenges.

Part 1 delves into the necessity and means to uphold maritime security in the wider Indo-Pacific. This section highlights in particular the role of multilateral cooperation that includes not only regional actors, but also geographically distant partners, such as European states. What emerges from the collection of articles is that strengthening collaboration efforts starts in the region with organisation such as ASEAN, but extends beyond that to encompass naval diplomacy and signalling efforts from farther removed states.

The first article by **Ji Yeon-jung** provides the reader with a much-needed understanding of the growing maritime ambitions in the Indo-Pacific. In particular, the study discusses the intensity of the competition in response to conflicting strategy-building in the Indo-Pacific and the challenges related to a growing need for international investments and long-term planning for maritime security.

The second essay in this section, by **Jihoon Yu**, addresses challenges and opportunities for cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the European Union. It concludes that ROK and EU can forge a robust maritime security partnership that contributes to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific through a cooperation that will not only protect their respective interests but also strengthen global security.

Friso Dubbelboer discusses in the third article how ASEAN peculiar position within Sino-American competition creates room for Seoul and Brussels to cooperate in Southeast Asia. The research highlights how an emerging network of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral partnerships in the Indo-Pacific might lead to surprising cooperation venues for small-middle powers such as ROK and the EU.

The fourth article in this edited volume, by **Niels van Willigen** and **Nicolas Blarel**, highlights the potential for the EU to contribute to maritime capacity-building initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. In particular, it assesses the credibility of the EU as a maritime security provider in the region, concluding that Brussels is for now better off coordinating already existing initiatives rather.

Lastly, the research of **Henk Warnar** unveils the importance of naval diplomacy for small powers. His article focuses in particular on how the Netherlands, as a small power, manages Naval Diplomacy. Small powers need to manage specific risks with limited naval power but with risk of escalation or failure similar to that of larger powers. Insights gained from the analysis include that many constants exist, and that Naval Diplomacy is a valuable tool to support Dutch national interests with manageable and limited risks.

Part 2 of this volume then focuses on maritime supply chains in the wider Indo-Pacific. It explores the need to strengthen maritime supply chain resilience and how this can be achieved through cooperation among like-minded states in several focus areas, such as port countermeasures and infrastructure, semiconductors, and law enforcement.

In the first article, **Lee Na-young** presents four port countermeasures to mitigate the effects of supply chain risks. As essential international transportation hubs, ports need performant systems to assess and manage risks caused by events such as port congestion and disruption, natural disasters, political instability or strikes. Such events could lead to drastic price increases, ultimately impacting economies. To cope with these issues, ports should boost overseas investments, digitalisation and cybersecurity, inland transport networks connectivity, and extensive research and collaboration.

The resilience of supply chains can also be strengthened by interstate cooperation, as argued by **Kyunghoon Kim**, who includes India as a potential candidate for further cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands in the maritime and semiconductor industries. These three countries share interests in economic security, which entails upholding a free and stable multilateral order in the Indo-Pacific. Investments in India's development of maritime and semiconductor sectors could represent a way to diversify and reinforce the critical supply chains. The Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, and India would first need to establish high-level consultations to identify key sectors of cooperation in advanced technology and then collaborate on capacity building to strengthen industries.

The last article of Part 2, by **Benedetta Girardi** and **Julie Ebrard**, connects global trade and maritime security in the context of the cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands. The article argues how these two small-middle powers can cooperate in non-traditional maritime security areas, such as port infrastructure, law enforcement and anti-piracy efforts, and underwater critical infrastructure protection. Ensuring security in these areas is in fact vital for promoting stable maritime supply chains.

The volume is finally closed by a reflection on the topics discussed by the different authors, and highlighting the importance of maritime security for resilient global supply chains in the wider Indo-Pacific. The last chapter also summarises the key policy recommendations suggested by the authors.

PART 1

Maritime Security in the Wider Indo-Pacific

Maritime Security in Asia: Growing Maritime Ambitions in the Indo-Pacific

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Introduction

A regional framework can emerge in response to a changing international order. The advent of the Indo-Pacific as a region bears witness to the merging of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, two important regions. In this new regional framework, the 38 states have either a Pacific or an Indian coast, along with two inland states in Asia, have an opportunity to redesign their strategies and policies. The scope and depth in the strategy making of these countries are unambiguously expanded, distinct from those in previous Asia–Pacific eras. Furthermore, due to the intensity of the conflict and cooperation in the region, non-Indo-Pacific countries that have been only remotely involved in regional affairs or that have shared little historical baggage have begun to grasp the challenging security and strategic interests of this region. As the strategic space widens due to the arrival of the Indo-Pacific, the strategic and policy scope of consideration among the players involved in this region has expanded rather than diminishing.

That being said, the expansion of this strategic space among Indo-Pacific players calls for a burgeoning strategic perspective and increased strategic investment. Even if some countries, or a group of them, are resistant to acknowledge the Indo-Pacific as a conceptual basis, their strategic calculations, spatial understanding, and investments are nevertheless responsive, conforming to and uplifting the notion of the Indo-Pacific. In spite of the criticism that this geopolitical notion is too vague for use in regional studies or that its boundaries are understood differently among countries due to its exceedingly wide and ambiguous regional scope, the dynamics of this emerging regional concept correspond to international relations. As a result, not only the major powers but also the emerging players of this region are involved in novel strategy building on the merits of their national interests.

Thus, the exploration of the dynamics of security competition in the Indo-Pacific is pertinent, resulting from changing strategic ambitions, conflicting spatial understandings, and increasing national capacity. Analysing these points, this study discusses the intensity of the competition in response to conflicting strategy building in the Indo-Pacific—an area that is

⁵ The views expressed in this paper are personal and do not represent the views of any institutions, including the ROK government, navy, or naval academy. This draft includes a part of the author's presentations at the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, the Hague, the Netherlands, and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, Busan, South Korea in 2024.

centrally discussed in international relations at present. In particular, why some states have Indo-Pacific strategies but others do not remain among the critical questions that are related to how states' behaviours change in advance of the Indo-Pacific era. In other words, this study assumes states change their course of action and strategic calculations in response to the introduction of a new regional framework. Overall, this study analyses changes in the strategic understanding of and competition in the Indo-Pacific. The ongoing research discussed in this study has produced some early findings.

Some Changes in Strategy-Making for the Indo-Pacific

The wide circulation of the Indo-Pacific concept contributes to the rebuilding of strategic thinking. Expansion of the scope of regional and global affairs has stimulated greater interaction among the players involved.⁶ As Blachford noted in his article "Ocean Flows and Chains: Sea Power and Maritime Empires within IR Theory," oceans chain the players in the Indo-Pacific together, making them more interactive and emphasising their proximity.⁷ The more that seas are combined in a larger conceptual framework of the ocean and the region, the greater the possibility of allowing states to act correspondingly.

With fourteen seas and two important straits combined within the singular regional framework of the Indo-Pacific, all players involved are pushed to review their threat perceptions, understand extended spatial coverage, and consider the viability of effective sea control. The control of sea lanes and maritime networks and the possession of naval superiority are security policy goals among players in this region. Simply put, states that previously did not look to access the fourteen Indo-Pacific seas due to the separation of the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean now have an unrestricted ability to consider the expansion of their strategic coverage in the absence of external pressure. In fact, the situation has been reversed: major powers now expect rising powers or middle powers to expand the scope of their strategy building.

The advantages offered by the Indo-Pacific concept have been quickly embraced by several countries, including the United States (US), Australia, and Japan. These three powers have laid out some common features within their Indo-Pacific strategy, grounded in long-term strategic competition focusing on China's rise and on protecting their own interests.⁸ In response, the military command and other arrangements have corresponded to changes in their policies. The US Pacific Command, for instance, has been replaced by the Indo-Pacific Command, due to a growing emphasis on South Asia and India. Another example is a 2015 naval strategic document clarifying the growing importance of partnership with 15 countries, including Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Japan's Self-Defence Forces are also working to build tactical capabilities in the region, reinforcing cooperation with 17 Indo-Pacific partners.

⁶ Ben Bland, Veerle Nouwens, and Philip Shetler-Jones, 'The Indo-Pacific Diverges in Response to a Coordinated Transatlantic Approach' (The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 28 November 2023), <https://rusi.org>.

⁷ Kevin Blachford, 'Ocean Flows and Chains: Sea Power and Maritime Empires within IR Theory', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 37, no. 1 (9 November 2022): 44–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2022.2137466>.

⁸ 'Reinventing the Indo-Pacific', *The Economist*, 4 January 2023, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2023/01/04/reinventing-the-indo-pacific>.

However, China and its partners have also found that the notion of the Indo-Pacific has some limitations. Several countries neighbouring Chinese borders appear to seek to expand their strategic boundaries to intervene in China's ascent, control of the sea, and partnership in disputed waters. Therefore, China's denial of the Indo-Pacific as a geopolitical boundary is eminent. India's broadening strategic moves toward the South China Sea and Japan's strategic coverage of the Indian Ocean, for instance, are concerted and condensed actions on China. Broadening the spatial coverage of India's and Japan's strategies has generated domestic discussions in China regarding increased naval budgets and investments. The US partners' shared slogan—a free and open Indo-Pacific that is based on the freedom of navigation—clashes with China's advancing long-term strategy of taking a grip of the Indo-Pacific. Those who share security perspectives, maritime interests, and broad geopolitical interests join security partnerships.

In the meantime, certain states that have an influential role in this region are exploring the best positioning to avoid committing to the creation of a formal Indo-Pacific strategy. The Indo-Pacific concept has developed into an ambiguous and inclusive strategic network among states sharing similar concerns regarding joining either side.

Thus, from diplomacy to trade and military affairs, the maritime sphere of the Indo-Pacific provides zones of international and regional contestation. The South China Sea, for instance, a zone that has previously been remote from the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean but has become transformed into a central area in the Indo-Pacific era, invites all 40 countries to investigate the matter. Comparative military capabilities, legal grounds, de facto and claimed control of the area, and shared agenda based on multilateralism, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), befriends players in the region. It should be noted that the geography returns to the understanding of international politics, and with it, competition and cooperation coexist in a maritime-centric space.

Implications of the Strategies of the Players in the Indo-Pacific

Currently, twelve states recognise the Indo-Pacific regional framework and consider it in their policymaking. Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the US subscribe to the shared regional concept and respond to the regional dynamics accordingly.⁹ Of these twelve, seven have an independent Indo-Pacific strategy due to their international and regional position, strategic vision, and policy implementations. These four key states, Australia, India, Japan, and the US, share a compatible Indo-Pacific strategy and have drafted supporting policies, including a burgeoning defence policy and naval plan. As shown in Figure 1, states that are interested in increasing their influence in the Indo-Pacific, naval or otherwise, have a general scope of either developing a broad scope of Indo-Pacific strategy, develop an active naval plan corresponding to their visions, or plan both items stayed attuned. Among them, India has become a notable pivot state for most present and emerging Indo-Pacific players. Some states, such as South Korea, have developed an independent Indo-Pacific strategy, including a moderate

⁹ In its 2022 Indo-Pacific strategy, the White House announced that "The United States is an Indo-Pacific power." See, The White House, 'Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States' (The White House, Washington, February 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

naval expansion, playing a distinctive role in balancing competition by offering a buffer equation in regional dynamics.¹⁰ New Zealand has also become recognised as a pivotal state and key Indo-Pacific player, having introduced an Indo-Pacific strategy aiming at regional prosperity, safety, and sustainability.¹¹

However, nine states that are dispersed across South Asia and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Pakistan, and Thailand, rather appear to have an ambiguous strategic position, not taking bold steps to narrow their networks either with the US or China. These states prefer to keep a general separation of issues between security affairs and economic ties when connected to China and the US, dealing with military allies and trading partners separately and following the classic approach to corroborating risk-averse calculations. Singapore, for instance, remains restrained with respect to the US–China rivalry as part of a strategic move not to jeopardize its national interests by opting for the US or China exclusively. Thailand is a similar example, pursuing relations that are balanced between Washington and Beijing. While Thailand's historical baggage can cause some unwelcomed remind of distrust, Bangkok's diplomatic relations are seen more flexible.¹² A similar situation can also be found in Pakistan.¹³ The other states that are part of this group tend to behave in response to the major states' orientation in the Indo-Pacific. This careful approach generally leads them to take a muted independent Indo-Pacific strategy.¹⁴

¹⁰ South Korea, while being a moderate Indo-Pacific player, is included as a key partner in forging an Indo-Pacific regional order with four key players including the US, and Australia. See, Australian Government, 'Indo-Pacific Partnerships', Text, Foreign Policy White Paper (Foreign Policy White Paper, 9 November 2017), <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-three-stable-and-prosperous-indo-pacific/.../foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-three-stable-and-prosperous-indo-pacific/indo-pacific.html>; Also, EU sees South Korea as one of the key partner countries to deepen its engagement in the time of the Indo-Pacific. See, European Commission, 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific' (European Commission (Brussels), 16 September 2021), https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf.

¹¹ Derek Grossman, 'New Zealand Becomes the Latest Country to Pivot to the U.S.', 26 April 2024, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2024/04/new-zealand-becomes-the-latest-country-to-pivot-to.html>.

¹² Thitinan Pongsudhirak, 'Thailand between the US and China', *Bangkok Post*, 29 March 2024, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2767163/thailand-between-the-us-and-china>.

¹³ Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, 'US Indo-Pacific Strategy and Pakistan's Foreign Policy: The Hedging Option', *Strategic Studies* 42, no. 1 (July 2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.53532/ss.042.01.00153>.

¹⁴ Vietnam, while being a state to protest China mostly, also embrace selective cooperation with the U.S. Tung argues, Vietnam's embrace towards U.S. FOIP includes economic dimension. See, Nguyen Cong Tung, 'Uneasy Embrace: Vietnam's Responses to the U.S. Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy amid U.S.–China Rivalry', *The Pacific Review* 35, no. 5 (2 March 2021): 884–914, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1894223>.

Table 1. Countries' responses to the Indo-Pacific notion in Asia



Country (Number of countries)	Formal acknowledgment of the Indo-Pacific notion	Official Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS)	Responsive IPS	Responsive IPS based on a multilateral arrangement	Ambitious naval plan
Australia	O	O	X	O	O
Bangladesh	O	-	O	X	X
Bhutan	-	-	O	X	X
Brunei	-	-	O	X	X
Cambodia	O	-	O	X	X
China	X	O	X	X	O
DPRK	X	-	X	X	X
India	O	X	X	X	O
Indonesia	O				O
Japan	O	O	X	X	O
Laos	-	X	X	X	X
Malaysia	X			O	-
Maldives	-	X	O	X	X
Mongolia	-	X	X	X	X
Myanmar	-	X	X	X	X
Nepal	-	X	X	X	X
New Zealand	O	O	X	X	X
PICs (14)15	-	-	-	-	X
Pakistan	X	X	X	X	X
Philippines	O			O	-
Republic of Korea	O	O	X	X	X
Singapore	-	X	O	O	-
Sri Lanka	-	X	-	X	X
Taiwan	O	X	O	X	X
Thailand	O	X	X	X	-
Timor-Leste	-	X	X	X	X
Vietnam	-	X	O	X	-
US	O	O	X	X	O

Deepening Engagement from Europe

Present maritime ambitions that are rooted in the past, in particular from the Cold War, are observed in Europe. From the late 2010s, a strategic perspective and supporting policy design were shaped in major states in Europe.¹⁶ Together or independently, countries have commonly upheld the idea of increasing engagement and joining the ideas of the Indo-Pacific notion and its applications for maritime security.¹⁷ The current presentation of Indo-Pacific strategy is largely shaped by two multilateral arrangements including the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and by key states, including France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the UK. The critical feature of the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy sets seven priorities, including sustainable and inclusive prosperity for the regional economy, ocean governance, connectivity, and rule-based regional security architecture, while NATO applies the rule-based order to the strengthening alliance system, reinforcing its like-minded partners.¹⁸ Each of these key states shares common concept while their approaches deviated somewhat from the EU's and NATO's Indo-Pacific strategy. However, these independent approaches contain details that support their national interests, including divergent approaches to China.¹⁹

Table 2. Countries' responses to the Indo-Pacific notion in Europe



Country (Number of countries)	Formal acknowledgment of the Indo-Pacific notion	Official Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS)	Responsive IPS	IPS based on a multilateral arrangement	Ambitious naval plan
EU(27)	O	O	X	O	O
France	O	O	X	O	O
Germany	O	O	X	O	O
Italy	O	O	X	O	O
Russia	X	-	O	-	O ²⁰
Sweden	O	O		O	O
NATO(32)	O	O	-	-	O
Netherlands	O	O ²¹	X	O	X
UK	O	O	X	O	X

16 Pierre Morcos, 'The European Union Is Shaping Its Strategy for the Indo-Pacific', Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 19 April 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/european-union-shaping-its-strategy-indo-pacific>.

17 The joint communication of the EU Parliament and the Council indicates that "The EU and the Indo-Pacific are natural partner regions". See, European Commission, 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific'.

18 Gorana Grgić, 'Redefining NATO's Indo-Pacific Partnerships: Cooperative Security Meets Collective Defence and Deterrence', *Asian Security* 20, no. 1 (12 April 2024): 39–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2024.2339213>.

19 Chung-yan Chow and Pinghui Zhuang, 'France, Europe Engage with China on Their Terms, in Their Own Interests: Envoy', *South China Morning Post*, 9 April 2024, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3258215/france-europe-engage-china-their-terms-their-own-interests-envoy>; Federiga Bindi, 'Why Did Italy Embrace the Belt and Road Initiative?', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 20 May 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2019/05/why-did-italy-embrace-the-belt-and-road-initiative?lang=en>; Yuchen Li, 'Germany-China Talks: Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Juggling Act', *Deutsche Welle (DW)*, 13 April 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-china-talks-chancellor-olaf-scholz-juggling-act/a-68804357>; Matthew Karnitschnig, 'Why Germany's Scholz Is Bowing to the Chinese Dragon', *POLITICO*, 12 April 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/why-germanys-scholz-is-bowing-to-the-chinese-dragon/>.

20 Peter Suci, 'The Russian Navy Has Big Plans to Stage a "Comeback"', Text, *The National Interest* (The Center for the National Interest, 18 August 2024), <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russian-navy-has-big-plans-stage-comeback-208994>; Kwan Wei Kevin Tan, 'Putin Says Russia Plans to "comprehensively Upgrade" Its Navy', *Business Insider*, accessed 4 October 2024, <https://www.businessinsider.com/putin-russia-plans-to-comprehensively-upgrade-its-navy-2024-6>.

21 Maaike Okano-Heijmans, 'Towards Meaningful Action: The Netherlands and the EU Turn to the Indo-Pacific – NUS Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS)', accessed 4 October 2024, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/towards-meaningful-action-the-netherlands-and-the-eu-turn-to-the-indo-pacific/>.

What Increasing Indo-Pacific Ambitions Mean

Briefly, the Indo-Pacific has become an increasingly important regional factor for most of the important players in international relations. Its strategic focus has shifted to create a space for forging or redesigning a state's strategy from the highest to the lowest levels. The formulation of an independent Indo-Pacific strategy indicates that a state is revamping its strategic scope and the following action plans. More than 20 countries are reported to include the Indo-Pacific regional factor in their strategy-making, which implies that the core of their international relations approach has undergone a major change. However, tactical approaches, including whether to have an announced Indo-Pacific strategy are divergent. The US, Australia, Japan, and South Korea have a formal Indo-Pacific strategy for indicating their shared vision and a cooperative goal. Some states, including India, have developed extensive cooperation with Indo-Pacific players but keep their path independent. Many countries in this region are observed to actively reinforce their diplomatic and economic networks to maintain their tactical evasion for announcing their Indo-Pacific strategies. The interconnections among the regional players in the Indo-Pacific have generated a certain positive impact of growing the region together while tensions also grow. The increasing interest in the Indo-Pacific is witnessed in Europe as well. The intersection of these growing ambitions to engage the Indo-Pacific nurtures the increasing investment and long-term plan, which are likely to call cooperation and conflict in a more intensive shape. Some ambitious maritime plans that have been introduced by single players or a multilateral platform support this analysis. Overall, the next few decades will likely concentrate on the Indo-Pacific, which will invite intense political, economic, and military engagement.

Strengthening the ROK-EU Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Partnership

YU Jihoon

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Introduction

The Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a strategic epicentre in global geopolitics, characterised by its vast economic importance and increasingly complex security challenges. Comprising critical sea lanes, dynamic economies, and geopolitical hotspots, the region plays a vital role in global trade, energy supply, and military strategy. However, the region is also marked by escalating tensions, territorial disputes, military buildups, and deepening rivalries between major powers, particularly between the United States and China. The competition for dominance in the Indo-Pacific has led to growing instability, making maritime security a critical concern for the global community.

For both the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the European Union (EU), maintaining stability and promoting a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific is essential. While geographically distant, both share significant interests in ensuring the security of this vital region. The ROK, with its trade-dependent economy, relies heavily on the security of sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific for energy imports and exports, while the EU, whose foreign trade flows through these maritime routes, has economic and political stakes in maintaining regional stability.

This paper explores the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific for the ROK and EU, evaluates the current maritime security environment, and examines the importance of ROK-EU maritime security cooperation. Furthermore, it assesses the challenges and opportunities for deepening cooperation in this region, offering a comprehensive analysis of how the ROK and EU can navigate the complexities of the Indo-Pacific's evolving security landscape.

Strategic Importance of the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region is central to global trade and economic security, home to some of the most crucial maritime routes that facilitate approximately 60% of global maritime trade. Vital sea lanes such as the South China Sea, the Malacca Strait, and the Indian Ocean connect the world's largest economies, including China, India, Japan, and South Korea, to markets in

Europe, the Americas, and beyond.²² These routes are not only integral to the flow of goods but also to energy supplies, with a significant proportion of global oil and natural gas passing through these waters. The security of these sea lines of communication (SLOCs) is essential for the economic prosperity of countries both within and beyond the region.

For South Korea, the Indo-Pacific's importance extends beyond economic considerations. As a trade-dependent nation, South Korea is acutely aware of the risks posed by instability in the region. Any disruption to the maritime routes that carry its energy imports and exports could severely impact its economy and national security. Additionally, the Korean Peninsula's proximity to critical areas such as the East China Sea and South China Sea makes regional stability an immediate concern for Seoul. North Korea's presence, along with broader regional rivalries, further amplifies the importance of maritime security for South Korea.

Similarly, the European Union, despite being geographically distant, has significant stakes in the Indo-Pacific. Over 40% of the EU's foreign trade passes through the region, making the security of these maritime routes a critical priority. As the world's largest trading bloc, the EU's economic interests are closely tied to the free and open movement of goods through the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, the EU's commitment to upholding international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), aligns with its broader foreign policy goals of promoting multilateralism, human rights, and a rules-based global order. The EU's involvement in the Indo-Pacific is thus not merely economic but also strategic, as it seeks to ensure regional stability and uphold the principles of international law.²³

Evaluating the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Environment

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific is increasingly shaped by both traditional and non-traditional security threats.²⁴ A key factor contributing to regional instability is the intensifying rivalry between the United States and China.²⁵ China's aggressive expansion of its maritime presence, combined with its rapid naval buildup, has raised concerns among its neighbours and global powers alike. China's growing naval capabilities are closely tied to its ambition to secure control over vital maritime routes, particularly in the South China Sea, where it has asserted sweeping territorial claims.

From an offensive realist perspective, as articulated by scholar John Mearsheimer, China's actions can be seen as part of its broader strategy to maximise power and achieve regional hegemony.²⁶ China's naval buildup is a reflection of its desire to challenge the United States (US)' dominance in the Indo-Pacific and assert its influence over key sea lanes.²⁷ In response, the United States has shifted a significant portion of its naval forces from the Atlantic to the

²² Bateman, S. (2010). "Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges and Prospects." *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 2(1), 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2010.487417>

²³ European Union. (2021). *EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*. Available at: <https://eeas.europa.eu>

²⁴ Rahman, C. (2017). "The Evolving Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Environment." *Maritime Studies*, 19(1), 15-31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2017.1156247>

²⁵ Green, M. J. (2022). *The Indo-Pacific: Strategies of Cooperation Against China's Assertiveness*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). <https://www.csis.org>

²⁶ Mearsheimer, J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company.

²⁷ O'Rourke, R. (2022). *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities*. Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>

Indo-Pacific, aiming to counterbalance China's growing influence.²⁸ This great power competition has transformed the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait into potential flashpoints, where the risk of military conflict looms large.²⁹

In addition to US-China rivalry, North Korea remains a persistent security threat in the region. Pyongyang's focus on developing asymmetric capabilities, particularly its submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), represents a significant challenge to regional stability. North Korea's potential to arm SLBMs with nuclear warheads could dramatically alter the regional balance of power, heightening the risk of nuclear conflict. Pyongyang's continued efforts to modernise its navy and enhance its nuclear capabilities further destabilise the already fragile security environment in the Indo-Pacific.

Beyond state-based rivalries, transnational security threats have also escalated in the Indo-Pacific.³⁰ Piracy, terrorism, and illegal fishing are growing concerns, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. Maritime piracy threatens commercial vessels and disrupts trade flows, while terrorism, especially in the maritime domain, poses a direct threat to global security. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing not only depletes marine resources but also fuels regional tensions, as competition for dwindling resources intensifies. Additionally, climate change is emerging as a major security challenge, with rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation threatening coastal communities and maritime infrastructure across the region.

The Importance of ROK-EU Maritime Security Cooperation

In this increasingly complex security landscape, maritime security cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the European Union is more critical than ever. Both actors have shared interests in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, ensuring the security of maritime routes, and promoting a rules-based international order. While their geographical positions may differ, the ROK and EU have much to gain from closer cooperation in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security threats in the region.

For South Korea, maritime security in the Indo-Pacific is directly linked to its economic and national security interests. As a major trading nation, the protection of sea lanes is crucial for Seoul's continued economic growth. At the same time, North Korea's military activities, particularly in the maritime domain, present ongoing security challenges that require constant vigilance. Cooperation with the EU, a key global player in multilateral diplomacy and international law, would enhance South Korea's ability to respond to these challenges and contribute to regional stability.

The EU, for its part, views the Indo-Pacific as central to its global trade and foreign policy objectives. The EU's "Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific" reflects its long-term commitment to the region, emphasising the importance of upholding international law,

²⁸ Scott, D. (2018). "The Indo-Pacific in US Strategy: Responding to China's Rise." *International Affairs*, 94(2), 285-303. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy213>

²⁹ Strangio, S. (2020). *In the Dragon's Shadow: Southeast Asia in the Chinese Century*. Yale University Press.

³⁰ Bateman, S. (2010). "Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges and Prospects." *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 2(1), 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2010.487417>

ensuring freedom of navigation, and fostering multilateralism.³¹ By cooperating with South Korea, one of the region's most advanced naval powers, the EU can strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific and enhance its ability to contribute to regional security.

Maritime security cooperation between the ROK and EU can take various forms. Joint naval exercises would improve the interoperability of their naval forces, allowing both sides to respond more effectively to threats such as piracy, terrorism, and potential conflicts in the region. Intelligence sharing, particularly in the area of maritime domain awareness (MDA), would enable the ROK and EU to monitor and track illicit activities such as smuggling, illegal fishing, and maritime terrorism. Furthermore, defence industry collaboration, particularly in the area of Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services, would benefit both parties by enhancing their naval readiness and operational capabilities in the Indo-Pacific.

Challenges to the ROK-EU Maritime Security Cooperation

Despite the clear benefits of ROK-EU maritime security cooperation, several challenges must be addressed to fully realise the potential of this partnership. One significant challenge is the divergence in strategic priorities between the two actors. South Korea's security concerns are predominantly focused on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, where the primary threat comes from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. The South Korean military's posture is heavily centered on deterring North Korean provocations and ensuring the stability of the region. As a result, South Korea's defence strategies are highly localised, with its naval forces tasked primarily with safeguarding its immediate maritime borders and protecting vital sea lanes in the surrounding areas. This narrow regional focus could limit Seoul's capacity and willingness to engage in broader Indo-Pacific security initiatives that extend beyond Northeast Asia, especially given the country's resource constraints and competing defence priorities.³²

In contrast, the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy encompasses a much broader geographic scope, ranging from Southeast Asia to the Indian Ocean. The EU's interests in the Indo-Pacific are not solely security-related but also revolve around economic stability, trade, and upholding international laws such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The EU's emphasis on multilateralism and diplomatic engagement aligns with its broader foreign policy goals of promoting human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable development. This difference in regional focus and strategic priorities could complicate efforts to align ROK-EU security policies. South Korea may prioritize direct security threats, such as North Korean missile launches and territorial disputes in Northeast Asia, while the EU may focus on global and regional security issues like piracy, maritime crime, and climate change impacts on small island states in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Bridging these differences will require both sides to reconcile their immediate security interests with the need for a more cohesive and comprehensive approach to Indo-Pacific maritime security.

Another critical challenge lies in navigating the complex dynamics of the US-China rivalry, which has become one of the defining features of Indo-Pacific security.³³ As a close ally of the

³¹ European Union. (2021). *EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*. Available at: <https://eeas.europa.eu>

³² Park, H. J. (2021). "Maritime Security Cooperation between South Korea and Europe: Opportunities and Challenges." *Asia-Pacific Maritime Journal*, 5(2), 39-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23456408.2021.1159077>

³³ Wirth, C. (2021). "Regional Security Complexes and Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific." *The Pacific Review*, 34(4), 573-599. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2020.1859377>

United States, South Korea faces increasing pressure to align more closely with US efforts to contain China's growing maritime assertiveness. The United States has been urging its allies in the region, including South Korea, to take a more proactive role in countering China's militarisation of disputed territories in the South China Sea and its strategic ambitions in the Taiwan Strait.³⁴ However, South Korea's situation is further complicated by its deep economic interdependence with China. China is South Korea's largest trading partner, and any deterioration in Sino-Korean relations could have severe economic repercussions for Seoul. Therefore, South Korea must carefully balance its security alliance with Washington against its need to maintain stable diplomatic and economic ties with Beijing. This delicate balancing act can lead to hesitancy in taking strong stances on maritime issues that may antagonise China, making it difficult for South Korea to fully align with Western maritime security policies in the region.

On the other hand, the EU, while also concerned about China's rise and its maritime ambitions, has traditionally adopted a more diplomatic and multilateral approach toward Beijing. Many European nations are reluctant to become deeply involved in the US-China rivalry, preferring to maintain open dialogue and trade relations with both powers. The EU tends to prioritise rule-of-law initiatives and diplomatic engagement, which can sometimes be at odds with the more security-oriented strategies favoured by the US and its allies, including South Korea. This divergence in how South Korea and the EU approach China could create friction in coordinating their maritime security policies, particularly in the contested waters of the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. Aligning their positions on managing US-China competition in the Indo-Pacific will require careful diplomatic navigation and the development of a shared framework for engaging with China on maritime issues.

Operational and logistical challenges also pose significant obstacles to deepening ROK-EU maritime security cooperation. The vast geographic distance between Europe and the Indo-Pacific makes it difficult for EU member states to maintain a sustained and robust naval presence in the region. Although countries like France and the United Kingdom have dispatched naval forces to the Indo-Pacific as part of their commitment to ensuring freedom of navigation, maintaining such deployments over extended periods is both logistically demanding and expensive. The operational costs of keeping European naval vessels in the Indo-Pacific for prolonged missions, along with the need for regular maintenance and refuelling, create practical challenges for EU member states that lack permanent military bases in the region. Furthermore, the EU's naval presence in the Indo-Pacific is significantly smaller compared to that of regional actors like the United States, Japan, and Australia, which maintain well-established and strategically located naval facilities.

Similarly, South Korea's naval forces are largely concentrated around the Korean Peninsula, where they are primarily focused on deterring North Korean threats and protecting key maritime routes. Although South Korea has actively participated in international anti-piracy operations, such as the EU's Operation Atalanta off the coast of Somalia, and has contributed to global maritime security efforts, its ability to project naval power across the broader Indo-Pacific is constrained by its defence priorities in Northeast Asia. Coordinating joint naval operations or regular exercises with European forces in distant waters such as the Indian Ocean or the South China Sea will require substantial logistical coordination, resource allocation, and sustained political commitment. These operational challenges may limit the frequency and scale of ROK-EU joint exercises and maritime missions, particularly in areas beyond Northeast Asia.

³⁴ Till, G. (2018). "The South China Sea Disputes: States, Military Modernization, and Maritime Security." *Naval War College Review*, 71(2), 17-35. <https://www.usnwc.edu>

Opportunities for ROK-EU Maritime Security Cooperation: Paths Forward

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for strengthening ROK-EU maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Expanding joint naval exercises that focus on counter-piracy, anti-submarine warfare, maritime terrorism, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HADR) would greatly enhance the operational capabilities of both South Korean and European naval forces. Such exercises would not only improve interoperability between their fleets but also demonstrate a shared commitment to maintaining security and stability in the Indo-Pacific. For instance, South Korea could collaborate with European navies on exercises aimed at protecting freedom of navigation in contested waters like the South China Sea and conducting joint patrols to counter illegal fishing or maritime smuggling activities. Furthermore, the EU's experience in organising multinational naval missions, such as Operation Atalanta, could provide valuable lessons for coordinating complex maritime operations in the Indo-Pacific.

Enhanced collaboration on maritime domain awareness (MDA) represents another key opportunity for ROK-EU cooperation. MDA involves the continuous monitoring and management of maritime activities to detect and respond to potential threats, such as smuggling, piracy, illegal fishing, and environmental hazards. Given the vastness of the Indo-Pacific, achieving comprehensive MDA requires significant investment in satellite surveillance, intelligence gathering, and the use of advanced maritime technologies. By sharing real-time intelligence, satellite imagery, and surveillance data, South Korea and the EU can improve their ability to monitor and respond to illicit activities across key maritime regions. Joint efforts in MDA would not only enhance the security of vital sea lanes but also help address broader regional challenges, such as environmental degradation and climate-induced risks to maritime infrastructure.

Defence industry cooperation, particularly in Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) capabilities, offers further opportunities for strengthening ROK-EU maritime security cooperation. South Korea's advanced shipbuilding industry, combined with its state-of-the-art naval repair and maintenance facilities, positions it as a global leader in MRO services.³⁵ European defence firms, renowned for their expertise in maritime technologies, naval systems, and surveillance equipment, complement South Korea's strengths in this area. By pooling their capabilities, South Korea and Europe could embark on joint development projects aimed at enhancing naval readiness and resilience. Establishing MRO hubs in key locations throughout the Indo-Pacific would increase the operational flexibility of both ROK and EU naval forces, allowing them to maintain and repair their vessels without relying on external providers. Such collaboration would improve the sustainability and effectiveness of long-term naval deployments in the region.

Engaging more deeply in multilateral frameworks offers yet another opportunity for enhanced ROK-EU cooperation. Both South Korea and the EU are active participants in regional organisations such as ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). By coordinating their positions and aligning their efforts within these multilateral institutions, the ROK and EU can amplify their influence on key security issues, including freedom of navigation, peaceful dispute resolution, and climate security. Their joint engagement

³⁵ Jihoon Yu, 'Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul Operations: Strengthening the ROK-US Alliance', The Diplomat, 8 July 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/tag/maintenance-repair-and-overhaul-mro-operations/>.

in these forums would also reinforce the message that both South Korea and Europe are committed to upholding the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, their collaboration on non-traditional security issues, such as climate change and humanitarian assistance, would demonstrate their shared commitment to addressing the region's broader security challenges.

Conclusion

The Indo-Pacific region is of significant strategic importance to both South Korea and the European Union, making their maritime security cooperation essential. Rising geopolitical tensions, especially the US-China rivalry, along with challenges like piracy, illegal fishing, and environmental threats, underscore the need for a coordinated approach to maintaining maritime security. Although there are challenges, including divergent strategic priorities and logistical constraints, both sides share a commitment to preserving a rules-based international order and ensuring freedom of navigation.

Opportunities for stronger cooperation are substantial. Expanding joint naval exercises will enhance operational interoperability, while collaboration on maritime domain awareness (MDA) will improve monitoring of illicit activities. Defence industry partnerships, especially in Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO), offer a promising path to enhancing naval readiness in the region. Additionally, joint engagement in multilateral forums like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit will allow the ROK and EU to amplify their influence on key security issues.

By addressing challenges and seizing these opportunities, the ROK and EU can forge a robust maritime security partnership that contributes to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. This cooperation will not only protect their respective interests but also strengthen global security in this increasingly critical region.

Restructuring Alliances in East Asia: Towards a New Convergence?

From a US Hub-and-Spoke Alliance System to Networked Multilateralism — But Don't Count on ASEAN

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A Restructuring of Alliances

In North and Southeast Asia, under pressure from China's growing military power and concerns about a potentially more isolationist US president post-Joe Biden, a restructuring and expansion of existing alliances is underway. This already existing trend has been significantly accelerated since 2022 by the war in Ukraine and the crisis surrounding US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August.

Besides Taiwan, both the Philippines and Japan - being neighboring countries - are most directly affected.³⁶ Both countries can be observed adopting a similar strategy, engaging in bi- and multilateral alliances and collaborations within the region and beyond. Additionally, among the Southeast Asian countries united in ASEAN, only the Philippines is participating in this new multilateral network.

The American Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin explained this development during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in 2024 as stemming from a 'new convergence' he observed: "*And this new convergence is producing a stronger, more resilient, and more capable network of partnerships. (...) This new convergence is not a single alliance or coalition, but*

³⁶ Andrew Sharp, 'China's 3-Pronged Maritime Threat Rattles Japan, Philippines and Taiwan', *Nikkei Asia*, 11 June 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Asia-Insight/China-s-3-pronged-maritime-threat-rattles-Japan-Philippines-and-Taiwan>.

*instead something unique to the Indo-Pacific—a set of overlapping and complementary initiatives and institutions, propelled by a shared vision and a shared sense of mutual obligation.*³⁷

The 2022 American Indo-Pacific Strategy describes a 'lattice-work of strong and mutually reinforcing coalitions'.³⁸ And, in this context, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida referred to a 'multi-layered defence network'.³⁹

The Philippines: A Pivot to China – and Back Again

The Philippines stands out as the only ASEAN country and as an example of the observed shift from bilateral alliances with the US to 'network multilateralism'.⁴⁰ The previous Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte made a 180-degree geopolitical shift away from its traditional ally, the United States, and towards China. Less than two weeks into his presidency, in July 2016, the Philippines achieved a significant legal victory over China in an international arbitration case initiated three years earlier under the leadership of Duterte's predecessor Benigno Aquino III.⁴¹

Three months later, however, prior to a state visit to Beijing in October 2016, Duterte called the high-profile arbitration award "a scrap of paper" and stated that he had no intention of bringing up the award during his visit with Xi Jinping.⁴² A day later, Duterte even dramatically announced his 'divorce from the US'.⁴³ With \$24 billion in pledged loans and investments secured, the president returned home.⁴⁴ In December, president Duterte even explicitly declared his intention to "set aside" the arbitration award.⁴⁵

³⁷ Lloyd J. Austin III, "The New Convergence in the Indo-Pacific": Remarks by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III at the 2024 Shangri-La Dialogue (As Delivered), U.S. Department of Defense, 1 June 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/3793580/the-new-convergence-in-the-indo-pacific-remarks-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j/> <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/3793580/the-new-convergence-in-the-indo-pacific-remarks-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j/>; Seong Hyeon Choi, 'Shangri-La Dialogue: US Defence Chief Pushes Partnerships, Pledges China Talks', South China Morning Post, 1 June 2024, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3264992/us-defence-chief-lloyd-austin-pledges-hold-more-talks-china-says-dialogue-not-reward-necessity>.

³⁸ The White House, 'Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States'.

³⁹ William Choong, 'Japan-US Alliance Upgrade: When a Spoke Becomes a Hub', *The Straits Times*, 15 April 2024, <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/japan-us-alliance-upgrade-when-a-spoke-becomes-a-hub>.

⁴⁰ Gabriel Dominguez, 'U.S. and Allies Race to "Trump-Proof" Biden Security Deals by Year-End', *The Japan Times*, 25 June 2024, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/06/25/asia-pacific/politics/donald-trump-alliances-fear-factor/>.

⁴¹ The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of the Philippines v. The People's Republic of China) (Permanent Court of Arbitration 12 July 2016).

⁴² Benjamin Kang Lim, 'Philippines' Duterte Says China Sea Arbitration Case to Take "Back Seat"', *Reuters*, 19 October 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/philippines-duterte-says-schina-sea-arbitration-case-to-take-back-seat-idUSKCN12J1QJ/>.

⁴³ 'Duterte: Philippines Is Separating from US and Realigning with China', *The Guardian*, 20 October 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/20/china-philippines-resume-dialogue-south-china-sea-dispute>.

⁴⁴ Andreo Calozon and Cecilia Yap, 'China Visit Helps Duterte Reap Funding Deals Worth \$24 Billion', *Bloomberg*, 21 October 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-21/china-visit-helps-duterte-reap-funding-deals-worth-24-billion>.

⁴⁵ Nestor Corrales, 'Duterte Says He'll "set aside" Arbitral Ruling on South China Sea | Global News', *Inquirer*, 17 December 2016, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/150814/duterte-says-hell-set-aside-arbitral-ruling-on-south-china-sea>.

Faltering US - Philippine Defence Ties: The VFA and EDCA

While Duterte strengthened ties with China, relations with the US deteriorated after he verbally insulted US President Obama.⁴⁶ This occurred in response to American criticism of the many innocent victims who had fallen victim to the highly controversial nationwide ‘war on drugs’ that Duterte had initiated.⁴⁷

Duterte postponed the implementation of the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which was agreed upon in 2014. This agreement allows the US to store military equipment at five (and later even nine) locations in the Philippines and to station troops there on a rotational basis. Furthermore, in February 2020 Duterte announced the cancellation of another crucial defence agreement, the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Little goodwill in Beijing

But in practice, the Philippine rapprochement with China earned Manila little goodwill in Beijing. Despite the rapprochement, an increasing number of incidents took place in the South China Sea involving vessels of the Chinese paramilitary maritime militia and the China Coast Guard. The most serious incident occurred in 2019 when a Chinese vessel – believed to be from the maritime militia – rammed a Philippine fishing boat in the middle of the night and left the 22 Filipino crew members in the water to fend for themselves. Ultimately, the Filipinos were rescued by Vietnamese colleagues.⁴⁸

The intimidating presence of the Chinese maritime militia near the islands claimed by the Philippines also visibly increased. Moreover, little came to fruition from the Chinese financial commitments.⁴⁹ Therefore, near the end of his six-year term, Duterte felt compelled to seek rapprochement to the US. Ultimately, the defence agreements with the US were not terminated; instead, they were even expanded.⁵⁰ The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 reportedly played a role in this, particularly due to concerns that the crisis could spill over into East Asia.⁵¹

Wake-up call for Manila

Through the aftermath of Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan, the new president, Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. saw how a crisis around Taiwan could suddenly become imminent. Specifically, the intimidating Chinese missile launches toward Taiwan, which landed both in the Japanese EEZ

⁴⁶ Paul Dallison, ‘Philippines Leader to Obama: “Son of a b—Ch, I Will Swear at You”’, POLITICO, 5 September 2016, <https://www.politico.eu/article/philippines-leader-to-obama-son-of-a-bitch-i-will-swear-at-you-rodri-go-duterte/>.

⁴⁷ Jodesz Gavilan, ‘TIMELINE: The International Criminal Court and Duterte’s Bloody War on Drugs’, Rappler, 26 June 2022, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/timeline-international-criminal-court-philippines-rodri-go-duterte-drug-war/>.

⁴⁸ Jaime Laude, ‘Philippine Fishing Boat Hit by China Ship, Sinks’, The Philippine Star, 13 June 2019, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/06/13/1926016/philippine-fishing-boat-hit-china-ship-sinks>.

⁴⁹ Andreo Calonzo, ‘China Yet to Deliver Promised Billions Despite Duterte’s Pivot’, Bloomberg, 4 July 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-04/duterte-s-pivot-to-china-yet-to-deliver-promised-billions-in-infrastructure>.

⁵⁰ Derek Grossman, ‘Duterte’s Dalliance With China Is Over’, *Foreign Policy*, 2 November 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/02/duterte-china-philippines-united-states-defense-military-geopolitics/>.

⁵¹ Renato Cruz de Castro, ‘The Philippines’ Evolving View on Taiwan: From Passivity to Active Involvement’, Brookings, 9 March 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-philippines-evolving-view-on-taiwan-from-passivity-to-active-involvement/>.

and near Philippine waters, were a wake-up call. Given that the northernmost Batanes Islands of the Philippines are only two hundred kilometers from Taiwan, President Marcos now fully recognised the risks for Manila in the event of a Taiwan contingency.⁵²

Network of alliances

In addition, the US - already during Duterte's presidency - skilfully capitalised on the Duterte administration's failed rapprochement with China through a charm offensive and vaccine diplomacy.⁵³ Since President Marcos took office, the Philippines has established a network of defence agreements and cooperation with countries in Northeast and Southeast Asia, such as Japan and Australia, as well as with nations outside the region, including Canada, several European countries, and the EU.⁵⁴ Furthermore, cooperation with the US was also intensified. The mutual assistance treaty was modernised and four additional locations were opened to the US military based on the EDCA.⁵⁵

Nowadays, Manila is not only focusing on the security situation in the South China Sea, to the west of the archipelago, but is also prioritising the defence of the northern part of the country, closer to Taiwan. This shift is evident from the fact that the annual Balikatan exercise between the Philippines and the US in 2024 predominantly centered on the northern Philippines.⁵⁶

Maritime escalation from 2023

This process of alliance building was further strengthened in 2023 by the escalation in the South China Sea between Manila and Beijing, particularly at Scarborough Shoal and concerning the resupply of Philippine marines stationed on the BRP Sierra, an old naval vessel deliberately grounded on the shallow atoll of Second Thomas Shoal.⁵⁷ Since February 2023, China has attempted to block supplies to Filipino fishermen at Scarborough Atoll and the crew of the Sierra Madre at Second Thomas Shoal. This involved the use by the China Coast Guard

⁵² Cliff Venzon, 'Marcos Says "hard to Imagine" Philippines Can Avoid Taiwan Conflict - Nikkei Asia', Nikkei Asia, 12 February 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Marcos-says-hard-to-imagine-Philippines-can-avoid-Taiwan-conflict>.

⁵³ Poppy Mcpherson, Karen Lema, and Devjyot Ghoshal, 'How the U.S. Courted the Philippines to Thwart China', Reuters, 29 November 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/us-china-philippines-marcos/>; Joshua Kurlantzick, 'Marcos Jr. Moves the Philippines Dramatically Closer to the United States | Council on Foreign Relations', Council on Foreign Relations, 29 January 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/article/marcos-jr-moves-philippines-dramatically-closer-united-states>.

⁵⁴ Aaron-Matthew Lariosa, 'U.S., Japanese and Australian Warships Join Philippine Forces in South China Sea Patrol', US Naval Institute News, 8 April 2024, <https://news.usni.org/2024/04/07/u-s-japanese-and-australian-warships-join-philippine-forces-in-south-china-sea-patrol>; 'France and the Philippines to Start Talks on a 'visiting Forces Agreement'', French Envoy Says', Associated Press, 26 April 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/france-philippines-defense-agreement-c63eeb-735d7a907c5da5a1ad815f9dee>; Priam Nepomuceno, 'AFP Eyes Heightened Defense, Security Ties with Sweden', Philippine News Agency, 16 May 2024, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1224838>; Frances Mangosing, 'Canada Holds First Joint Patrol with PH, Japan, US in SCS', Inquirer, 18 June 2024, <https://www.inquirer.net/406610/canada-holds-first-joint-patrol-with-ph-japan-us-in-scs/>.

⁵⁵ 'FACT SHEET: U.S.-Philippines Bilateral Defense Guidelines', U.S. Department of Defense, 3 May 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3383607/fact-sheet-us-philippines-bilateral-defense-guidelines/> <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3383607/fact-sheet-us-philippines-bilateral-defense-guidelines/>; Matthew Lee, 'US and Philippines Step up Strategic Partnership as China Threats Loom in South China Sea | AP News', Associated Press, 13 April 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/united-states-philippines-china-b8110edc6e2555190eeac4e07485d3f0>.

⁵⁶ Richard Javad Heydarian, 'Philippines Fortifying a Taiwan Front Line against China', Asia Times, 26 February 2024, <https://asiatimes.com/2024/02/philippines-fortifying-a-taiwan-front-line-against-china/>.

⁵⁷ Cabato, 'Philippines Signs Security Deals as Tensions Rise in South China Sea', The Washington Post, 9 March 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/09/philippines-south-china-sea-security/>.

of water cannons, tear gas, laser beams, and even ramming and damaging Philippine Coast Guard ships, culminating in an escalation on June 17th in which a Filipino soldier lost a finger. This incident for the first time sparked serious discussions in Manila about whether to seek American assistance based on the Mutual Defence Treaty.⁵⁸

In these confrontations, Manila received very limited political support from the other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is internally divided.⁵⁹ Only Vietnam, which has overlapping claims with both China and the Philippines, implicitly supported Manila by calling for the parties involved to respect the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Info Box 1: 2016 South China Sea Arbitration

The immediate trigger for the arbitration was China's occupation of the previously Philippine-controlled Scarborough Atoll in 2012, following a weeks-long maritime standoff between Philippine and Chinese vessels. The underlying issue, however, stemmed from China's contentious 'historical' claim over nearly the entire South China Sea, depicted on Chinese maps by the controversial nine- or ten-dash line. Apart from China, Brunei, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia have competing claims on (parts of) the South China Sea.

The arbitration tribunal in The Hague in 2016 overwhelmingly ruled in favour of the Philippines on nearly all counts. Among its findings, the tribunal determined that China's assertion of historical rights within its nine-dash line in the South China Sea lacked a legal basis under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, that no feature in the Spratly islands chain is entitled to an 200 NM Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) . Additionally, the tribunal concluded that China unlawfully restricted Filipino fishermen's access to Scarborough Atoll since 2012, and affirmed that Second Thomas Shoal is part of the Philippine continental shelf and EEZ.

⁵⁸ Laura Zhou, 'Philippines Removes Chinese Barrier at Contested South China Sea Shoal', South China Morning Post, 26 September 2023, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3235772/philippines-re-moves-chinese-barrier-contested-south-china-sea-shoal>.

⁵⁹ Richard Javad Heydarian, 'The Philippines in a Lonely Fight with China', Asia Times, 15 November 2023, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/11/the-philippines-in-a-lonely-fight-with-china/>.

Taiwan: Increasing Chinese Pressure on Taiwan

In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, representing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), assumed the presidency of Taiwan, succeeding Ma Ying-jeou of the more China-friendly Kuomintang (KMT). Beijing regards Taiwan as an integral part of China and closely monitored Tsai's rise to power, fearing she might pursue a path towards formal independence for Taiwan. Tsai's emphasis on Taiwan's democratic achievements and subsequent rejection of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle further strained cross-Strait relations. Additionally, China's stringent crack-down on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong in 2019 exacerbated tensions.

Pelosi's Taiwan visit

With her visit to the island, Pelosi aimed to bolster the democratic forces, which found themselves under significant pressure, partly due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier that year. (In the spring, Pelosi made a similar but much less controversial visit to Kiev.⁶⁰) China viewed the visit by the high-ranking American politician as a provocation and reacted with days of military exercises around Taiwan, leading to a partial de facto blockade of the island. Ballistic missiles were launched, with five landing in Japan's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone. Additionally, a few landed south of Taiwan, near Philippine waters.⁶¹

The aftermath of Nancy Pelosi's 2022 visit marked a new low point in relations. Chinese military exercises around Taiwan resumed in 2023 and 2024, coinciding with President Tsai Ing-wen's meeting with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy during a stopover in the US and the election of her party colleague Lai Ching-te as her successor.

Taiwan Strait: Freedom of Navigation

Another point of tension between China and the US involves the US Navy's routine "Freedom of Navigation operations" (FONOP) through the Taiwan Strait to assert that these waters are international. While it has regularly been suggested that China 'claims the Taiwan Strait,' China always maintained a level of ambiguity - until June 2022.⁶²

On June 13, 2022, China - for the first time - appeared to explicitly claim that the Taiwan Strait is Chinese: "*Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory and China has sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the Taiwan Strait,*" Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson

⁶⁰ Ellen Knickmeyer, 'EXPLAINER: Why Pelosi Went to Taiwan, and Why China's Angry', Associated Press, 3 August 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-biden-asia-united-states-beijing-e3a6ea22e004f21e-6b2a28b0f28ec4c5>.

⁶¹ Alys Davies and Yaroslav Lukov, 'China Fires Missiles near Taiwan after Pelosi Visit', BBC, 4 August 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62419858>; 'Series: The Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis', China Power, 26 April 2023, <https://chinapower.csis.org/series-fourth-taiwan-strait-crisis/>.

⁶² Jill Goldenziel, 'China Claims To Own The Taiwan Strait. That's Illegal', Forbes, 28 June 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jillgoldenziel/2022/06/28/china-claims-to-own-the-taiwan-strait-thats-illegal/>; David Common, 'China Claims Ownership of the Taiwan Strait. Canada Just Sailed a Warship through It | CBC News', CBC, 9 September 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-taiwan-strait-ownership-1.6961816>; Magdalene Fung, 'Debrief: US-China Spat over Legal Status of Taiwan Strait', The Straits Times, 21 June 2022, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/st-explains-the-us-china-spat-over-the-legal-status-of-the-taiwan-strait>.

Wang Wenbin stated at a regular press conference, while citing the division of the Taiwan Strait into various maritime zones according to UNCLOS.⁶³

The remarks were prompted by a report from Bloomberg a day earlier, stating that Chinese military officials, in various meetings with their American counterparts, asserted that the waters of the Taiwan Strait are not international waters and that the Americans should avoid them.⁶⁴

Upon careful reading, the statement leaves open the possibility that China asserts sovereignty only over a portion of the Strait, namely the Territorial Sea up to 12 nautical miles from the coast, in accordance with UNCLOS. But Beijing has never explicitly clarified this ambiguity and remains silent about the exact nature of its claim over the strait.

This is not merely an academic discussion, as became apparent in June 2023 when a Chinese navy vessel reportedly cut off a US navy vessel during a FONOP in the Taiwan Strait.⁶⁵ This incident fits seamlessly into a series of earlier 'EEZ incidents' but it was unprecedented in the Taiwan Strait.

In another unprecedented move, China announced inspections of civilian shipping 'on direct cargo ships and construction vessels on both sides of the Taiwan Strait' in April 2023.⁶⁶ Moreover, since February 2024, the China Coast Guard has been challenging the existing status quo and the informal maritime boundaries near the Taiwanese Kinmen (Quemoy) archipelago, located close to the Chinese mainland. This escalation followed an incident in February where two Chinese fishermen drowned while being pursued by the Taiwan Coast Guard.⁶⁷

⁶³ 'Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on June 13 2022', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 13 June 2022, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zy/jj/diaodao_665718/mn/202206/t20220613_10702460.html.

⁶⁴ Peter Martin, 'China Alarms US With Private Warnings to Avoid Taiwan Strait - Bloomberg', Bloomberg, 12 June 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-12/china-alarms-us-with-new-private-warnings-to-avoid-taiwan-strait>.

⁶⁵ Mackenzie Gray, 'Chinese Warship Nearly Hits U.S. Destroyer in Taiwan Strait during Joint Canada-U.S. Mission', Global News, 3 June 2023, <https://globalnews.ca/news/9743650/china-warship-nearly-hits-us-destroyer-taiwan-strait/>.

⁶⁶ 'China to Inspect Ships in Taiwan Strait, Taiwan Says Won't Cooperate', Reuters, 6 April 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-inspect-ships-taiwan-strait-taiwan-says-wont-cooperate-2023-04-06/>.

⁶⁷ 'Taiwan and China's Dispute over the Waters around Kinmen', Focus Taiwan - CNA English News, 19 February 2024, <https://focustaiwan.tw/cross-strait/202402190007>; Helen Davidson, 'China Coast Guard Boards Taiwan Tourist Boat in Escalation of Tensions', The Guardian, 20 February 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/20/china-coast-guard-boards-taiwan-tourist-boat-king-xia-kinmen-islands>; Matthew Sperzel, Daniel Shats, and Joseph Su, 'China-Taiwan Weekly Update, February 29, 2024', Institute for the Study of War, 29 February 2024, <http://dev-isw.bivings.com/>; Mike Firn and Taaejun Kang, 'Record Number of Chinese Ships Enter Taiwan Waters near Kinmen Island', Radio Free Asia, 10 May 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/southchinasea/china-kinmen-intrusion-05102024034553.html>; Davidson, 'China Coast Guard Boards Taiwan Tourist Boat in Escalation of Tensions'.

Info Box 2:

Rights and Obligations in the EEZ under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

The Taiwan Strait is also part of a long-standing maritime law dispute between China and, particularly, the US. This dispute revolves around differing interpretations by both countries regarding the rights and obligations of foreign navies in the EEZ under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).⁶⁸ China claims that, according to UNCLOS, it has the authority to ban foreign ships from its own EEZ. In contrast, the US and the vast majority of countries that are parties to UNCLOS believe that a country's authority in its own EEZ is limited to the exploration and exploitation of natural resources.⁶⁹

A long series of near-collisions and other confrontations has already occurred, the most notorious being the Hainan Island incident in 2001, where a Chinese warplane collided with an American spy plane, forcing it to make an emergency landing on the Chinese island of Hainan due to the damage sustained. The Chinese pilot was killed in the collision.⁷⁰

According to UNCLOS, the Taiwan Strait encompasses various maritime zones, including the Territorial Sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of both China and Taiwan. The Territorial Sea extends up to 12 nautical miles (Nm) from the coastline, granting coastal states almost complete sovereignty. The EEZ theoretically extends up to 200 nm from the coast. Given the strait's narrow width (125 km or 67 Nm at its narrowest point), both countries' EEZs overlap in the middle of the strait -- regardless of Taiwan's political status vis-à-vis China.

Under the traditional interpretation of UNCLOS, countries exercise specific and limited sovereign rights and jurisdiction over their respective EEZs, primarily concerning the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, rather than absolute sovereignty. According to UNCLOS article 56 and 58, freedom of navigation and overflight apply in the EEZ and even foreign military activities are generally permissible within the EEZ according to this widely accepted interpretation.

⁶⁸ Jeff M. Smith and Joshua Eisenman, 'China and America Clash on the High Seas: The EEZ Challenge', Text, The National Interest (The Center for the National Interest, 22 May 2014), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/china-america-clash-the-high-seas-the-eez-challenge-10513>; Jing Geng, 'The Legality of Foreign Military Activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone under UNCLOS', *Merkourios: Utrecht Journal of International and European Law* 28, no. 74 (9 March 2012): 22–30.

⁶⁹ Lynn Kuok, 'Narrowing the Differences between China and the US over the Taiwan Strait', International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 13 July 2022, <https://www.iiiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2022/07/narrowing-the-differences-between-china-and-the-us-over-the-taiwan-strait/>; Friso Dubbelboer, 'LAC Shorts: Ook in de Straat van Taiwan botsen China en de VS over internationaal recht', Leiden Asia Centre, December 2023, <https://leidenasiacentre.nl/lac-shorts-ook-in-de-sstraat-van-taiwan-botsen-china-en-de-vs-over-internationaal-recht/>.

⁷⁰ Ronald O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress' (Congressional Research Service, 26 August 2024).

Japan: From Spoke to Regional Hub

The 'Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow' sentiment in Taiwan also resonated in Japan. This concern intensified when Chinese missiles landed in Japan's EEZ in August 2022, making the threat from China palpably real.⁷¹ Since then, Japan has prioritised expanding security cooperation with its neighbors in both Northeast and Southeast Asia, as well as beyond.⁷²

In December 2022, Japan unveiled a new National Security Strategy, outlining its commitment to increase defence spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2027, thereby aligning itself with the NATO spending pledge set in 2014.⁷³

But already prior to 2022, Japan perceived a growing threat from China's expanding military capabilities. The concept of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific', advocated by late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since his 2007 speech in the Indian Parliament, was primarily devised to counterbalance China. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a strategic security and economic consultation mechanism involving Australia, India, Japan, and the US, also emerged in response to these concerns.

According to Japan's 2021 Defence White Paper, particularly concerns were raised regarding the substantial expansion of the Chinese navy, the heightened presence of the Chinese Coast Guard around the Senkaku (J) or Diaoyu (C) Islands in the East China Sea, which are controlled by Japan but claimed by China, and new Chinese maritime laws permitting the use of force by the Coast Guard. Furthermore, Taiwan was referenced no fewer than fifteen times in the document. And already in June of that year, Japanese Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi explicitly linked Taiwan's security to Japan's national security.⁷⁴

'JAPHUS' and 'sQuad': Japan as an Asian 'hub'

Japan has strengthened its bilateral cooperation with the Philippines and also established trilateral cooperation with the Philippines and the US, sometimes referred to as JAPHUS.⁷⁵ In May 2024, Japan further expanded its partnerships by forming a quadrilateral alliance with the US, the Philippines and Australia, informally known as the 'Squad', in reference to

⁷¹ Paul O'Shea and Sebastian Maslow, 'Japan Has Abandoned Decades of Pacifism in Response to Ukraine Invasion and Increased Chinese Pressure on Taiwan', The Conversation, 19 March 2024, <http://theconversation.com/japan-has-abandoned-decades-of-pacifism-in-response-to-ukraine-invasion-and-increased-chinese-pressure-on-taiwan-225098>.

⁷² 'Japan Seeks to Work with South Korea, Philippines to Boost Regional Security', Reuters, 5 April 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/cooperation-with-south-korea-philippines-important-regional-security-says-japans-2024-04-05/>; Swati Arun, 'Japan's Role in Shaping the Security Landscape of Southeast and East Asia', E-International Relations, 7 May 2024, <https://www.e-ir.info/2024/05/07/japans-role-in-shaping-the-security-landscape-of-southeast-and-east-asia/>.

⁷³ Murata Koji, 'Kishida's "Realism" Diplomacy: From the Yoshida Doctrine to Values-Based Diplomacy?' (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 8 June 2023), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/kishidas-realism-diplomacy-yoshida-doctrine-values-based-diplomacy>.

⁷⁴ Brian Waidelich and Elizabeth Barrett, 'Japan Elevates Security Concerns Over Taiwan Strait', Centre for Naval Analyses, 22 July 2021, <https://www.cna.org/our-media/indepth/2021/07/japan-elevates-security-concerns-over-taiwan-strait>; 'Defense of Japan' (Ministry of Defense of Japan, 12 July 2021).

⁷⁵ Richard Javad Heydarian, 'A Wave of US Trilaterals Sends a Clear Message to China | Lowy Institute', The Interpreter, 2 April 2024, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/wave-us-trilaterals-sends-clear-message-china>; Gabriel Dominguez and Jesse Johnson, 'Japan and Philippines Ink Key Military Pact in Defense Ties Upgrade - The Japan Times', The Japan Times, 8 July 2024, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/07/08/japan/politics/japan-philippines-raa-two-plus-two/>.

the Quad.⁷⁶ And despite lingering historical sensitivities stemming from Japan's long-term occupation of Korea, ties with South-Korea have also been strengthened, particularly through trilateral cooperation with the US.⁷⁷ This simultaneous modernisation and expansion of Japanese alliance structures, coupled with Japan's significant economic and diplomatic influence in the region, positions Japan as a future Asian 'hub' in its own right.

In addition, the US is also significantly expanding its alliances, modernising and deepening defence cooperation with Japan, Australia and South Korea and even the United Kingdom.⁷⁸

AUKUS

Great Britain is already part of security cooperation in the region through the AUKUS alliance, together with Australia and the US AUKUS provides for cooperation for the purchase of nuclear-powered submarines and - through a second 'pillar' - in technological cooperation in the field of quantum computers and rocket technology, among other things. Furthermore, there are discussions about expanding AUKUS cooperation to include other interested countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Japan, and South Korea.⁷⁹ All in all, amidst these shifting alliances, Japan stands out as a key regional player, leveraging its strategic partnerships, economic strength and soft power to reinforce its influence in the region.

⁷⁶ Maria Siow, 'New "Squad" Bloc Could Allow Philippines to "Borrow Strength" of Australia, Japan, US to Counter China', South China Morning Post, 9 May 2024, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3261905/new-squad-bloc-could-allow-philippines-borrow-strength-australia-japan-us-counter-china>; Audrey McAvoy, 'Defense Chiefs from US, Australia, Japan and Philippines Vow to Deepen Cooperation', Associated Press, 3 May 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/us-australia-japan-philippine-defense-chiefs-hawaii-1dd66b43808ce-2b513f18c2729fd760c>.

⁷⁷ Amer Madhani, Darlene Superville, and Matthew Lee, 'US, Japan and South Korea Agree to Expand Security Ties at Summit amid China, North Korea Worries | AP News', Associated Press, 18 August 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/camp-david-summit-biden-south-korea-japan-0bc36bb3705a3dc1b69dc8cd47b-35dd3>; Dzirhan Mahadzir, 'U.S., Japan and Korea Commit to New Multi-Domain "Freedom Edge" Exercise Series', US Naval Institute News, 3 June 2024, <https://news.usni.org/2024/06/03/u-s-japan-and-korea-commit-to-new-multi-domain-freedom-edge-exercise-series>; Christopher B. Johnstone and Victor Cha, 'South Korea and Japan Cement Bilateral Security Ties', Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 4 June 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-korea-and-japan-cement-bilateral-security-ties>.

⁷⁸ Veerle Nouwens, 'US Allies in the Indo-Pacific Align on China', International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 1 June 2023, <https://www.iiiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/05/us-allies-in-the-indo-pacific-align-on-china/>; Noah Robertson, 'US, Japan Announce Generational Upgrade to Alliance amid China Threat', Defense News, 10 April 2024, <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2024/04/10/us-japan-announce-generational-upgrade-to-alliance-amid-china-threat/>.

⁷⁹ Lewis Jackson, 'South Korea Discusses Joining Part of AUKUS Pact with US, UK and Australia', Reuters, 1 May 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/south-korea-confirms-talks-aukus-pact-with-us-uk-australia-2024-05-01/>; Eva Corlett, 'New Zealand Steps up Interest in Aukus as Pacific Security Concerns Grow', The Guardian, 2 February 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/02/new-zealand-aukus-alliance-membership>; The editorial board, 'Aukus Is Gathering Momentum and Adherents', Financial Times, 11 April 2024.

Info Box 3: The East China Sea disputes

China and Japan dispute sovereignty over a group of uninhabited islets known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and the Diaoyu Islands in China. These islets are situated at the southwestern end of the Ryukyu (or Nansei) island chain. Taiwan also claims these islets, referring to them as Diaoyutai. While under effective Japanese control, Tokyo's nationalisation of the islands in 2012 prompted Beijing to establish a continuous coast-guard presence, often within the islets' territorial waters, to assert Chinese sovereignty. This has frequently led to tense encounters between Chinese and Japanese coastguards.

In 2013, China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the archipelago and part of the East China Sea. Although an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) primarily covers international airspace, aircraft are expected to adhere to directives from national authorities. However, China's new ADIZ overlaps with existing Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese ADIZ's.

Furthermore, Japan and China dispute the delineation of their respective EEZs and Continental Shelves in the East China Sea. This disagreement has been a point of contention since the discovery of oil and gas in the disputed area in 1995. A 2008 plan for joint exploration never materialized.⁸⁰

From Hub-And-Spoke Model To Networked Cooperation

The Washington-led 'Hub-and-Spoke' system is being replaced by what National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan calls a 'lattice-work of cooperation', a framework of multilateral collaborations and alliances in which the US plays a less central role. This shift is particularly pertinent in anticipation of a possible isolationist post-Biden presidency.⁸¹ And while Washington continues to play a role in numerous new multilateral contexts, countries along the western edge of the Pacific are increasingly pursuing deeper cooperation among themselves.

ASEAN's absence

Conspicuously absent from this expanding defence network are Taiwan and nine out of ten Southeast Asian countries united in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Taiwan's political and diplomatic isolation largely prevents the island from participating in new alliances and other forms of cooperation, despite strengthened military ties between the

⁸⁰ Rebecca Strating, 'Maritime and Sovereignty Disputes in the East China Sea | The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)', The National Bureau of Asian Research, 9 February 2021, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/maritime-and-sovereignty-disputes-in-the-east-china-sea/>.

⁸¹ Jake Sullivan, 'The Sources of American Power', Foreign Affairs, 24 October 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/sources-american-power-biden-jake-sullivan>; Yasuhiro Izumikawa, 'Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia', *International Security* 45, no. 2 (1 October 2020): 7–50, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00389.

US and Taiwan through arms deliveries and military cooperation. Besides the US, Japan is cautiously enhancing its military contacts with Taipei too.⁸²

The trilateral defence cooperation among Washington, Manila, and Tokyo represents the first collaboration involving countries from both North and Southeast Asia in this field.⁸³ Simultaneously, the Taiwan issue and the South China Sea disputes have become more closely interlinked.⁸⁴

Hedging instead of Pledging

The Philippines currently stands out as the exception to the general rule that ASEAN countries are reluctant to align decisively with either China or the US.⁸⁵ The reasons for this reluctance lie in significant political divisions among these countries and their deep economic interdependencies with China. These divisions manifest in various forms, including religious differences, disputes over the South China Sea, conflicts over Mekong River water management, and differing approaches to Myanmar's civil war. Additionally, the ASEAN nations operate under diverse political systems and have divergent economic interests.

While countries like Cambodia and Laos have strong ties with China, the Philippines, particularly under its current president, has aligned itself closely with the United States. The other ASEAN countries - Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam - employ varying degrees of a hedging strategy. For instance, Indonesia positions itself as an informal but non-aligned leader within ASEAN ('bebas aktif', i.e., free and active), while Vietnam practices 'bamboo diplomacy', maintaining equidistance from major powers too.

And while the US primarily focuses on enhancing military cooperation and arms sales, China is strengthening its ties with the region through economic relations. These dynamics together create a complex picture. For instance, Singapore balances its strong economic ties with China alongside longstanding military cooperation with the US. Thailand, despite being a formal military ally of the US, has experienced two coups and subsequent democratic

⁸² Kaori Kaneko et al., 'Exclusive: Japan Elevates Taiwan Security Ties in Move Likely to Rile China', *Reuters*, 13 September 2023, sec. Asia Pacific, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-elevates-taiwan-security-ties-move-likely-rile-china-2023-09-12/>; Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, 'The US Is Quietly Arming Taiwan to the Teeth', *BBC*, 6 November 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-67282107>; 'U.S. and Taiwan Navies Quietly Held Pacific Drills in April', *The Japan Times*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/05/14/asia-pacific/us-taiwan-navies-pacific-drills/>; John Feng, 'US Army Special Forces Train Taiwan Troops Near China's Coast', *Newsweek*, 8 February 2024, <https://www.newsweek.com/american-special-forces-train-taiwan-soldiers-penghu-kinmen-china-coast-1868009>.

⁸³ Lucas Myers, 'Filling in the Indo-Pacific Latticework in Southeast Asia - The US-Japan-Philippines Trilateral Summit', *Wilson Center* (blog), 4 April 2024, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/filling-indo-pacific-latticework-southeast-asia-us-japan-philippines-trilateral-summit>.

⁸⁴ Seong Hyeon Choi, 'Taiwan or South China Sea: Which Is the Riskier Flashpoint for US-China Ties?', *South China Morning Post*, 16 January 2024, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3248289/taiwan-or-south-china-sea-which-riskier-flashpoint-us-china-ties>; Stephen Kuper, 'What Is More Dangerous? Taiwan or the South China Sea?', *Defence Connect*, 14 December 2023, <https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/geopolitics-and-policy/13317-what-is-more-dangerous-taiwan-or-the-south-china-sea>.

⁸⁵ Notwithstanding close military relations between for instance Cambodia and China or a formal military alliance between Thailand and the US that is however becoming increasingly outdated. Also see: Joshua Kurlantzick, 'The U.S.-Japan-Philippines Trilateral Was a Success, but Other Southeast Asian States Are Unlikely to Follow | Council on Foreign Relations', *Council on Foreign Relations* (blog), 12 April 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/us-japan-philippines-trilateral-was-success-other-southeast-asian-states-are-unlikely-follow>; 'US, Japan, Philippines Trilateral Deal to Change Dynamic in South China Sea, Marcos Says', *Reuters*, 13 April 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-japan-philippines-trilateral-deal-change-dynamic-south-china-sea-marcos-says-2024-04-13/>; Erin L. Murphy and Gregory B. Poling, 'A "New Trilateral Chapter" for the United States, Japan, and the Philippines', *Centre for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS), 15 April 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/new-trilateral-chapter-united-states-japan-and-philippines>.

setbacks, and is currently showing interest in joining the BRICS.⁸⁶ Malaysia, that has also shown an interest in joining BRICS, is a case in point as well. Driven by rising energy needs but employing a low-profile and cautious assertiveness, it has managed to exploit South China Sea gas reserves within the nine-dash line without outright antagonising Beijing.⁸⁷

Southeast Asia: space for South Korea and Europe to engage with the region and each other

Precisely because Southeast Asia wants to remain aloof from the US - China rivalry, there is space for the Republic of Korea and Europe to engage with Southeast Asia. Both Europe and South Korea have expressed a desire to expand and deepen relations with Southeast Asia and ASEAN.⁸⁸ However, both are primarily preoccupied with a war or the threat of war in their own regions.

Given this focus on their own region and the limited military capabilities of European countries, their engagement with Southeast Asia will predominantly - though not exclusively - emphasise civilian aspects. This includes capacity building in areas such as coastguards and maritime domain awareness, and providing expertise in maritime law.⁸⁹ The EU and ASEAN are already engaged in similar initiatives.⁹⁰ Japan has been a leader in this field and has

⁸⁶ Gavril Torrijos, 'Arms and Influence in Southeast Asia: The Link between Arms Procurement and Strategic Relations', *Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)* (blog), 22 September 2022, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/arms-and-influence-southeast-asia-link-between-arms-procurement-and>; Evan A. Laksmana, 'Southeast Asian States, Defence Cooperation and Geopolitical Balancing', *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, 30 May 2023, <https://www.iiiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/05/southeast-asian-states-defence-cooperation-and-geopolitical-balancing/>; Norman Goh, 'Malaysia and Thailand Keen to Join BRICS: 5 Things to Know', *Nikkei Asia*, 24 June 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Malaysia-and-Thailand-keen-to-join-BRICS-5-things-to-know>.

⁸⁷ Rebecca Tan, 'Malaysia's Appetite for Oil and Gas Puts It on Collision Course with China', *The Washington Post*, 11 May 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/11/china-malaysia-south-china-sea/>.

⁸⁸ 'ASEAN-Republic of Korea Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)' (ASEAN, 26 November 2019); 'Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia - Publication - Government.NL', publicatie, Government of the Netherlands (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 13 November 2020), <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2020/11/13/indo-pacific-guidelines>; 'Introducing the Indo-Pacific Strategy', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, December 2022, https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_26382/contents.do; 'Council Conclusions on the Revised EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and Its Action Plan' (Council of the European Union, 24 October 2023).

⁸⁹ Similar to efforts already undertaken by Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, and South Korea: 'Australia to Equip Philippine Coast Guard to Improve Maritime Security', *The Maritime Executive*, 18 May 2023, <https://maritime-executive.com/article/australia-to-equip-philippine-coast-guard-to-improve-maritime-security>; Frances Mangosing, 'PH Allowed to Use Canadian Satellites vs "Dark" Ships | Global News', *Inquirer*, 1 October 2023, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/220080/ph-allowed-to-use-canadian-satellites-vs-dark-ships>; 'Dutch Prime Minister Attends Roundtable on International Law, Order at Sea in Hanoi', *The Voice of Vietnam*, 4 November 2023, <https://vovworld.vn/en-US/vietnams-maritime-sovereignty/dutch-prime-minister-attends-roundtable-on-international-law-order-at-sea-in-hanoi-1245335.vov>; Samban Chandara, 'Maritime Workshop Aimed to Promote "Law of the Sea"', *The Phnom Penh Post*, 6 December 2024, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/maritime-workshop-aimed-to-promote-law-of-the-sea>; 'Japan to Assist 4 ASEAN Countries to Counter China: Report', *Radio Free Asia*, 15 February 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/southchinasea/japan-asean-02152024013442.html>; 'U.S., Japan, Korea Coast Guards Sign Trilateral Agreement to Increase Maritime Cooperation', *United States Coast Guard News*, accessed 6 December 2024, <https://www.news.uscg.mil/Press-Releases/Article/3771704/us-japan-korea-coast-guards-sign-trilateral-agreement-to-increase-maritime-coop>; <https://www.news.uscg.mil/Press-Releases/Article/3771704/us-japan-korea-coast-guards-sign-trilateral-agreement-to-increase-maritime-coop>.

⁹⁰ 'ASEAN Holds Law of the Sea Training for Officials', *ASEAN*, 10 November 2023, <https://asean.org/asean-holds-law-of-the-sea-training-for-officials/>.

established a high level of trust in Southeast Asia through soft diplomacy and can serve as a model.⁹¹

In conclusion, Southeast Asia's deliberate stance of neutrality amidst the US - China rivalry offers a strategic opening for South Korea and Europe to engage more actively with the region and with each other. It is crucial for South Korea and Europe to approach this engagement without framing it within the context of the US-China rivalry and to recognise the distinctiveness of each Southeast Asian country.⁹²

⁹¹ Sharon Seah, 'Can ASEAN and Japan Buttress the International Legal Order?', East Asia Forum, 19 October 2023, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/10/19/can-asean-and-japan-buttress-the-international-legal-order/>; Richard Javad Heydarian, 'Japan's New Golden Age in Southeast Asia | Lowy Institute', The Interpreter, 14 November 2023, <https://www.loyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/japan-s-new-golden-age-southeast-asia>; Emma Chanlett-Avery, 'Japan's Close Ties with Southeast Asia Hold Lessons for U.S.', Nikkei Asia, 8 December 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Japan-s-close-ties-with-Southeast-Asia-hold-lessons-for-U.S>; Siti Rahil, 'FOCUS: ASEAN Trusts Japan, Balances Ties amid China's Rise', Kyodo News+, 14 December 2023, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2023/12/c74112c81ed1-focus-asean-trusts-japan-balances-ties-amid-chinas-rise.html>; 'The State of Southeast Asia: 2024 Survey Report', ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, April 2024, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/asean-studies-centre/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/the-state-of-southeast-asia-2024-survey-report/>.

⁹² Aaron Favila, 'While the China Threat Grabs the Headlines, These Are the Maritime Issues Southeast Asians Want to Talk About', The Conversation, 7 March 2024, <http://theconversation.com/while-the-china-threat-grabs-the-headlines-these-are-the-maritime-issues-southeast-asians-want-to-talk-about-225076>; Lizza Bomassi, 'Reimagining EU-ASEAN Relations: Challenges and Opportunities', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 4 July 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/07/reimagining-eu-asean-relations-challenges-and-opportunities?lang=en>; Nhu Mai Le, 'Why ASEAN Is South Korea's Lifeline for Mediation with the North | East Asia Forum', East Asia Forum, 28 March 2024, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/03/28/why-asean-is-south-koreas-lifeline-for-mediation-with-the-north/>; Yerim Oh and Kayla Orta, 'The Road Ahead for South Korea-Southeast Asia Relations', Wilson Center, 27 March 2024, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/road-ahead-south-korea-southeast-asia-relations>.

The EU's Maritime Security signalling in the Indo-Pacific

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Introduction

Since the publication of its Global Strategy in 2016,⁹³ the European Union (EU) has gradually signaled that the Indo-Pacific region moved from being a peripheral interest to becoming a central focus of its broader foreign and security policy. In this context, the announcement of the EU's Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in (2021) was a clear instance of EU foreign policy signalling.⁹⁴ It signalled a geopolitical interest in a distant region.⁹⁵ Within the strategy, a free and open Indo-Pacific is explicitly presented as a necessary condition to achieve several European policy objectives and defend European interests, including trade, stability, and a rules-based international order. The strategy also argued that a free and open Indo-Pacific depends on a stable and predictable maritime security environment. Following the publication of the strategy, the EU has reiterated the region's strategic importance, especially in the fields of defence, technology and economic security. The EU has also become directly engaged through various security cooperation initiatives.

The EU has also increasingly been recognised as a one of the world's leading contributors to maritime security capacity building, conducting naval missions across key regions and investing an estimated €620 million in this domain.⁹⁶ This commitment to maritime security was highlighted in the 2016 Global Strategy, which envisioned the EU as a prominent "global maritime security provider."⁹⁷ The EU has also published in March 2023 a new maritime security strategy (EUMSS), notably to further highlight the need to secure the EU's 'access to an increasingly contested maritime domain'.⁹⁸ Within this strategy, it was also emphasised that

⁹³ *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe; A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (European Union, 2016). Available at: www.eeas.europa.eu/.

⁹⁴ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Joint communication to the European parliament and the council" The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, 2023. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021JC0024> (accessed 19 November 2024).

⁹⁵ Niels Van Willigen & Nicolas Blarel. "Why, how and to whom is the European Union signalling in the Indo-Pacific? Understanding the European Union's strategy in the Indo-Pacific in the epicentre of multipolar competition." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 0(0), 2024.

⁹⁶ Christian Bueger and Edmunds, Timothy (2023) "The European Union's Quest to Become a Global Maritime-Security Provider," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 76: No. 2, Article 6.

⁹⁷ *Shared Vision, Common Action*.

⁹⁸ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "JOIN/2023/8 Joint communication on the update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan: An enhanced EU Maritime Security Strategy for evolving maritime threats", 10 March 2023, Brussels. Available at: https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7274a9ab-ad29-4dae-83fb-c849d-1ca188b_en?filename=join-2023-8_en.pdf (Accessed 19 February 2024).

maintaining stability and security along the key shipping routes of the Malacca and Singapore Straits, the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean would entail that the EU and its Member States expand 'their presence and action in these regions, in line with the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific'.⁹⁹

Given the importance of maritime security for the EU and the ambitious policy objectives that the EU has set in its Indo-Pacific strategy and follow-up documents and statements, this policy brief aims to address a series of questions. What type of maritime signalling strategy has the EU adopted and implemented since it first presented its strategy in September 2021? Given its interests and capacities, what naval role can the EU play in the Indo-Pacific? How credible and committed has the EU been as a maritime actor in the Indo-Pacific? Under the renewed leadership of the European Commission by Ursula von der Leyen, and in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, can we expect the EU's maritime engagement to continue to grow? This policy brief starts with some reflections on maritime security as a key concept, after which we elaborate on the EU as a signalling actor in maritime security, and the potential and challenges for this role in the coming years.

Defining Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific

Maritime security is an umbrella concept which is often used to include a series of areas of the maritime domain which have gradually been securitized by varying state actors. The EU, for example, describes maritime security as covering different areas of the maritime domain, including: security and defence, critical infrastructure, environmental protection, fishing, trade and shipping, energy, transport and tourism.¹⁰⁰ Noting the lack of clear conceptual clarity, Bueger developed a maritime security matrix, in which these cited areas and other themes associated with maritime security are organised across four other key categories: marine environment, economic development, national security, and human security.¹⁰¹ In this paper we focus on the security and defence dimension of maritime security and therefore the concepts of maritime diplomacy and naval diplomacy are also relevant and need some further explanation.

Maritime diplomacy is 'the behaviour of a nation in pursuit of its maritime interests, usually by combining and/or applying the instruments of state power'.¹⁰² *Naval diplomacy* is 'a subset of general diplomacy' and 'a means of communication by maritime states in pursuit of their national interest'.¹⁰³ Being a subset of general diplomacy, we consider naval diplomacy as a subset of maritime diplomacy as well. Therefore, it follows that in this policy brief we consider maritime security to be the overarching concept, followed by maritime diplomacy, and by naval diplomacy. The EU's pursuit of maritime security can therefore include maritime and/or naval diplomacy (but also other activities and policies such those relate to addressing climate change, development issues, or crisis response). Building on these concepts, we map out the priorities and challenges to the EU's quest to become a maritime security actor in the Indo-Pacific.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Council of the European Union. (2024). Maritime Security. European Union. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/maritime-security/#what>

¹⁰¹ Christian Bueger. 'What is maritime security?' *Marine Policy*, 53, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mar-pol.2014.12.005>

¹⁰² Lisa Otto, 'Exploring maritime diplomacy of small island developing states in Africa: cases of Mauritius and Seychelles'. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 18(2), 2022, 133–148

¹⁰³ Kevin Rowlands, ed. *Naval Diplomacy for the 21st Century: A Model for the Post-Cold War Global Order* (Routledge, 2018) p.129.

The EU's maritime security interests in the Indo-Pacific

In terms of signalling, the then EU High Representative Josep Borrell clearly identified on the launch of the Indo-Pacific strategy the shared interests between the EU and Indo-Pacific partners on the day the Strategy was launched: *'The futures of the EU and the Indo-Pacific are interlinked. Our engagement aims at maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific for all, while building strong and lasting partnerships to cooperate on matters from the green transition, ocean governance or the digital agenda to security and defence.'*¹⁰⁴ Further, Borrell also compared the maritime routes in the Indo-Pacific as the *'arteries of the world as every day 2,000 ships transport goods across the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to Europe and back.'*¹⁰⁵ Moreover, and according to the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the region accounts for 60% of global GDP, comprises three-fifths of the world's population and contributed to two-thirds of pre-pandemic global economic growth.¹⁰⁶

The strategy therefore pointed out the need to step up the EU's strategic engagement in the region. Even more so, because the strategy also noted that the region was characterized by "intense [geopolitical] competition [and] military build-up including by China," and current regional dynamics had been leading to growing frictions in trade and supply chains, as well as in the technological, political, and security spheres.¹⁰⁷

The maritime security interests, as mentioned in the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy, echo the objectives of the EU's Maritime Strategy which was published in 2014 and updated in 2018 and 2023. For example, it mentions explicitly the need uphold international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.¹⁰⁸ Further, the 2022 EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, further highlighted the growing European security engagement in the region, particularly in the maritime domain. While the Indo-Pacific is not the primary focus of the Strategic Compass, it is identified as a critical region due to its growing geopolitical importance and the challenges it poses to global stability.¹⁰⁹ One of the Indo-Pacific's sub-regions, the Northwest Indian Ocean (NWIO), was also officially designated a European Maritime Area of Interest (MAI) in 2022.¹¹⁰ The EU clearly defined what it considers to be its interests in the MAI: "The North Western Indian Ocean is one of the most dynamic centres of economic growth in the world; 80% of the world's trade passes through the Indian Ocean; it is an area

¹⁰⁴ European Commission, "EU and Indo-Pacific: Natural partners", 16 June 2021. Available at: https://cyprus.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-and-indo-pacific-natural-partners-2021-09-16_en (Accessed 19 November 2024).

¹⁰⁵ European External Action Service. "Indo-Pacific: Opening speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the Brussels Indo-Pacific Forum", 29 November 2022. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/indo-pacific-opening-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-brussels-indo-pacific_en

¹⁰⁶ "The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific".

¹⁰⁷ "The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific".

¹⁰⁸ Council of the EU, "Council conclusions on the Revised EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and its Action Plan", 24 October, 2023 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/67499/st14280-en23.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ European External Action Service, "2024 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence", 18 March 2024. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2024-progress-report-implementation-strategic-compass-security-and-defence_en

¹¹⁰ Council of the European Union, "Coordinated maritime presences: Council extends implementation in the Gulf of Guinea for two years and establishes a new maritime area of interest in the North-Western Indian Ocean", 21 February 2022. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02/21/coordinated-maritime-presences-council-extends-implementation-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-for-2-years-and-establishes-a-new-concept-in-the-north-west-indian-ocean/> (Accessed 19 February 2024).

rich in natural resources (oil, gas, marine life); safe and secure sea lines in the region are key to link trade between the Middle East, Africa, East Asia, and Europe.”¹¹¹

These various documents have shown that the EU signalled its trade interests in the region, and thereby the support for a free, safe, open Indo-Pacific with freedom of navigation as one of its key priorities. The EU also expressed its intention of upholding and promoting normative and liberal principles, including respecting the rules-based international in order to facilitate a 'stable environment for economic interactions'.¹¹² Therefore, the EU clearly linked the region's stability and the access to key sea lanes essential for international trade to the EU's economic interests and prosperity. This is where maritime diplomacy, and in particular, naval diplomacy comes in; by ways of naval deployments, the EU and individual EU member states have attempted to promote a rules-based international order, and to safeguard economic interests in the region.

Maritime security through naval deployments in the Indo-Pacific

The EU's contribution to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific has been growing cautiously and gradually, as trade and investment remain at the heart of the EU's external policy. In fact, most EU or EU member states' maritime security initiatives have been driven by economic considerations, sometimes at the expense of a coordinated EU policy.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the EU was already active in the Indian Ocean, South Asian, and East African region(s) through a series of maritime security initiatives, including in the realm of non-traditional security: conflict prevention, anti-piracy, non-proliferation, anti-terrorism and anti-crime capacity building, as well as fighting transnational threats such as health crises and climate change. Rising concerns about maritime security in NWIO have encouraged European maritime missions such as the European-led Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH), and ATALANTA which was the first EU naval mission to fight and deter piracy. The EU also instituted the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) in 2021 to extend and maintain a long-term naval presence in the NWIO.¹¹⁴ The CMP was one of the most explicit indicators of the EU's objective to be a global maritime security provider in the Indo-Pacific.

By 2018, some EU member states, notably France, began to approach the “Indo-Pacific” with the goal of expanding and improving their relations with regional actors. France has historically been an unconventional European actor in the Indo-Pacific due to its overseas territories and citizens spread across the region and became therefore one of the first EU member states to embrace the term 'Indo-Pacific' and to follow up with clear maritime actions. Since the mid-2010s, France has actively engaged in regional security by participating in joint military signalling and strengthening coordination with local partners committed to maintaining the regional status quo and upholding international law. These like-minded nations typically advocate for freedom of navigation and overflight and strongly support the 'rules-based international order,' a core

¹¹¹ Council of the European Union, “Maritime Security: EU to become an observer of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment”, 22 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/22/maritime-security-eu-to-become-an-observer-of-the-djibouti-code-of-conductjeddah-amendment/> Accessed 9 December 2024).

¹¹² Council on Foreign Relations, “Navigating Europe's Challenges: A Conversation With Josep Borrell”, 27 September 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/event/navigating-europes-challenges-conversation-josep-borrell>

¹¹³ Giulio Pugliese, “The European Union's Security Intervention in the Indo-Pacific: Between Multilateralism and Mercantile Interests,” *Journal of Intervention and State-Building*. 17 (1), 2023: 76-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2022.2118425>.

¹¹⁴ “Coordinated Maritime Presences”

but often vaguely defined principle underlying the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) framework. By 2018, the French Ministry of Defence formally adopted the Indo-Pacific concept, followed by the French Foreign Ministry's announcement of its version in 2019.¹¹⁵

Likewise, Germany became more involved in the region when it sent a frigate in 2021 to the Indo-Pacific.¹¹⁶ Unlike France, Germany is not a resident power. Nonetheless, the German government saw the need to formulate a national Indo-Pacific strategy and to become involved in naval diplomacy by letting a warship cruise the region for the first time in 20 years.¹¹⁷ This was repeated in 2024 when two German ships (one frigate and one replenishment ship) were deployed and even sailed the politically sensitive Taiwan Strait. Both vessels participated in the US-led *Rim of the Pacific* (RIMPAC) multinational exercise for the first time.

A Dutch Frigate equally sailed in the Indo-Pacific and participated in RIMPAC in May 2024. The Netherlands, which like Germany and France also formulated a national Indo-Pacific strategy, had deployed one frigate both in 2022 and 2024, and plans to do so every two years.¹¹⁸ Finally, Italy has been an additional example of a member state strengthening its strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific, notably through the deployment of its flagship aircraft carrier *Cavour* to Japan in 2024 to conduct joint exercises with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force and participate in RIMPAC.¹¹⁹

The deployments by individual EU members states have been indicative of European concerns about the stability in the Indo-Pacific. They fit within the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy, but also show that the most tangible instances of maritime and naval diplomacy are made by individual member states rather than at an aggregated EU level. As mentioned, the EU has been active through a series of maritime security initiatives, but these were not systematically connected to the EU's signaled objective to uphold and promote the freedom of navigation. That objective, and accompanying naval deployments, can be considered as politically more contentious and is *de facto* left to discretion of the individual member states, as well as to the EU's security partners, including the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). That leads to the question how credible and committed the EU can be perceived as a maritime actor in the Indo-Pacific, especially given the rise in seaborne risks, and threats linked to the intensification of regional rivalries.

How credible is the EU as a maritime security actor in the Indo-Pacific?

As explained in the beginning of this policy brief, maritime security is a holistic concept that includes many activities, including ones that are not traditionally related to security. However, the ones we are focusing on in this policy brief, namely naval deployments to uphold and promote freedom of navigation, is clearly defined as a security issue. The European approach to this issue is characterised by intergovernmentalism (which is the dominant logic of the EU's

¹¹⁵ "France's Defence Strategy in the Indo-Pacific" (Paris: Ministère des Armées, 2019)

¹¹⁶ Blake Herzinger, "Germany Nervously Tests the Indo-Pacific Waters," *Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2022.

¹¹⁷ Christina Keller, "Germany's Defence Engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a Balancing Act". *The Diplomat*, 15 June 2024. <https://www.cer.eu/in-the-press/germany%E2%80%99s-defense-engagement-indo-pacific-balancing-act#:~:text=The%20frigate%20Bayern%20set%20sail,%2C%20Sri%20Lanka%2C%20and%20India.>

¹¹⁸ Nicolas Blarel and Niels van Willigen, "Strategic Communication in the Indo-Pacific: Signalling EU Naval Commitment to the Region" (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024). <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Strategic-Communication-in-the-Indo-Pacific-HCSS-2024.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Yoshihiro Inaba, "Italy's Aircraft Carrier *Cavour* Is In Japan To Conduct Joint Exercises With JMSDF", *Naval News*, 24 August 2024.

Common Foreign and Defence Policy) with the individual member states mentioned above that have taken the lead, notably France as currently the only EU Member State with a permanent naval presence in the region. That means that credibility depends fully on the quality and quantity of the contribution of individual member states' specific activities and not on a distinctive and coherent EU approach to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. Much of what is presently presented as enhanced EU presence and coordination is more of an official recognition of existing EU member states' maritime security footprint as part of the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy. The EU has been testing the grounds for the viability of a broader approach to the region and to slowly build a constituency of supporters at the EU level for extended involvement in the Indo-Pacific.

The same goes for the EU's policies on other security issues, like cyber security, counterterrorism, and foreign information manipulation and interference. In the light of this, there has been a shift from the EU as 'security provider' to the EU as 'smart security enabler'.¹²⁰ This entails an approach in which the capacities of the EU's partners in the Indo-Pacific are built and improved through the EU members' advanced capabilities. The EU has also identified and reached out to a specific grouping of states with which it has long-established economic and strategic relationships and which it has labelled as 'like-minded' partners (Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, ASEAN).¹²¹ This has been concretely translated in regular joint naval exercises performed by naval forces under EU command and the navies of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and since 2023 with the US. In another example of increasing naval coordination with like-minded regional actors, France has promoted a stronger coordination of EU-India naval operations in the NWIO, building on its own strong bilateral ties with New Delhi.

However, this is also an indicator of strong large reliance on the contribution of individual member states. Strengthening cooperation in maritime security with key Indo-Pacific partners has been announced as one of the EU's top priorities, but more coordination is necessary on situational awareness, intelligence sharing, and convergence on threat analyses to foster cooperation. The Red Sea crisis and the Houthi attacks were an opportunity for the EU to have a more substantial coordinating role in ensuring security and access to one crucial Indo-Pacific seaway. Initially, some EU member states individually deployed warships to protect international ships, and for the Netherlands, Denmark Greece even coordinated their operations with the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian. By February 2024 however, the EU foreign ministers launched the EUNAVFOR Aspides to help secure merchant shipping in a 'highly strategic maritime corridor' for the EU and the wider international community.¹²² The EUNAVFOR Aspides, which has included contributions from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Denmark and Greece has also been framed as an alternative deterrent and defensive operation, both distinct but also complementing the Prosperity Guardian operation.¹²³

¹²⁰ European External Action Service, "The EU and the Indo-Pacific: partners for a more stable and prosperous world", 31 January, 2024. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-indo-pacific-partners-more-stable-and-prosperous-world_en

¹²¹ Benedetta Girardi, Paul Van Hooft, and Alisa Hoenig, "Getting Them on Board: Partners and Avenues for European Engagement in Indo-Pacific Maritime Security" (The Hague, Netherlands: Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024).

¹²² Council of the EU, "Security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea: Council launches EUNAVFOR ASPIDES", Press Release, 19 February 2024. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/02/19/security-and-freedom-of-navigation-in-the-red-sea-council-launches-new-eu-defensive-operation/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Security+and+freedom+of+navigation+in+the+Red+Sea%3a+Council+launches+EUNAVFOR+ASPIDES

¹²³ Allard, Léonie, Cinzia Bianco, Mathieu Droin, "With Operation Aspides, Europe is charting its own course in and around the Red Sea", Atlantic Council, 7 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/with-operation-aspides-europe-is-charting-its-own-course/>

This has been the most visible sign of a gradual and credible EU naval contribution to ensuring maritime security in one specific sub-region of the Indo-Pacific.

However, naval diplomacy and deployment in distant theatres of operation is not cheap, especially in terms of financial costs and domestic politics. Furthermore, in practice, the EU and its member states' naval presence has also been mainly limited geographically to the North-West Indian part of Indian Ocean, Horn of Africa, and the Red Sea. The EU's security initiatives in the Indian Ocean are principally confined to its North-Western part, namely from the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to the Persian Gulf. Without enlarged naval capabilities, the EU risks becoming less credible in its signalling in the Indo-Pacific and in its potential for building naval partnerships. The capacity deployment issue has also been a concern for Indo-Pacific actors given the EU's support to Ukraine. At the same time, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine compounded the above geo-economic awakening of Europe and highlighted the ambiguous positioning of China on the Ukraine War to many EU actors. In addition, some Indo-Pacific actors like Japan or South Korea have for instance showed their solidarity with Europe amidst the Ukraine crisis, thereby enhancing defence collaboration in both the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions.¹²⁴

The EU is not a committed hard security provider, especially in Asia, despite its historical ambition of increasing military capabilities to promote itself as a global maritime security actor. Its reputation as a "normative power" gives it stronger strategic leverage to address non-traditional security challenges in the Indo-Pacific. Indeed, the EU has limited presence in the maritime region of the Indo-Pacific as only France has an established naval presence in the area. Nevertheless, by framing itself as a resident power and noting how the EU's 'Outermost Regions (Indian Ocean) and Overseas Countries and Territories (Pacific)' were also an important part of its approach to the Indo-Pacific, the EU has clearly signalled new stakes in the region: mainly the presence of territories, citizens, and resources which have be protected in a context of 'intense geopolitical competition'.¹²⁵

As a result, and at this stage, the EU can mainly contribute to maritime security and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific by coordinating already existing successful maritime capacity-building initiatives, such as the potential to leverage data and analysis aimed at maritime domain awareness through the EU's Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing (IORIS) platform, renamed as the Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing integrated in the EU Critical Maritime Routes in the Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO) I and II projects. The EU can also do more to concretely promote its image of a 'smart enabler' for security and defence in the region and expand other initiatives to enhance maritime domain awareness like the Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESIWA). This last initiative can expand the potential for collaboration (and, implicitly, exports of platforms, components and military technology) to like-minded Indo-Pacific counterparts. Finally, the EU has also been distinctive in its maritime security signalling towards the region and has expressed its concerns with the zero-sum logic embedded in Sino-American great power competition. As an alternative, the EU and its member states need to continue to provide security options for Indo-Pacific partners looking to maintain their strategic autonomy in an increasingly competitive and uncertain geopolitical environment.

¹²⁴ Giulio Pugliese. The European Union and an "Indo-Pacific" Alignment, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 3(1), 2024: 17-44.

¹²⁵ "JOIN/2023/8 Joint communication on the update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan".

Risk in Naval Diplomacy, a Small Power's Perspective

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Introduction

Economics and security at sea are closely related. Security alliances and trade agreements are often formed along the same lines but also more directly, attacks on shipping as currently made by the Houthis in the Red Sea or the threat of blockade in straits such as Malacca or Hormuz will damage the global economy. The Dutch integrated Security Strategy identifies the physical security of its citizens, economic security and the international rule of law and stability as three of its six security interests.¹²⁶ The strategy is based on a threat analysis that qualifies a crisis in the South China Sea as possible and severe and disruption of Dutch trade as very likely and severe. The Dutch small and open economy is vulnerable to declining world trade and a security threat can hit the Dutch economy 'midships'.¹²⁷

The current multipolar world, dominated by great power competition, has put the question of how to conduct naval operations under the level of war including handling international crises at sea, at the spot. In academic sea power literature, this is called Naval Diplomacy.¹²⁸ Naval Diplomacy is not about diplomatic activities by naval attaches but about the employment of warships as an instrument for foreign policy. An area that in the theory of international relations is described as coercive diplomacy.¹²⁹ This is not limited to the use of naval forces to express messages, but it also includes operations to protect sea lines of communications and limited interventions and influencing events ashore, a range of operations bounded by war at the upper and maintaining law and order in home waters at the lower end of the spectre.

At the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, June 2022, Dutch Defence Minister Kasja Ollongren announced that the Dutch government was aiming to send a warship to the Indo-Pacific region at a frequency of once every two years.¹³⁰ In 2021, the warship *Evertsen* made such a voyage as part of the British *Queen Elisabeth* Carrier Strike Group. In 2024, the air defence frigate *Tromp* operated in the Indo-Pacific, including a passage through the Taiwan Strait under national command. This focus on the Indo-Pacific marks a shift in Dutch naval policy as

¹²⁶ Veiligheidsstrategie voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, Minister of J&V and BZ, 2023, p12.

¹²⁷ Rijksbrede Risicoanalyse Nationale Veiligheid, Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid (ANV) in opdracht van de NCTV, 2022, p41,46.

¹²⁸ See Till, G., *Seapower: A guide for the twenty-first century* (Routledge, 2018), ch 13. Speller, I., *Understanding naval warfare*, 3rd edition ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), Ch 4.

¹²⁹ George, A.L. et al., *The limits of coercive diplomacy*, vol. 296 (Westview Press Boulder, CO, 1994); George, A.L., *Forceful persuasion: Coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war* (US Institute of Peace Press, 1991).

¹³⁰ <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/13/mogelijk-vaker-marineschip-naar-indo-pacific>.

such a journey had not been made since 2006 and these two deployments were part of a new Dutch Indo-Pacific Foreign policy.¹³¹ Even more, when taking into account that nearby crises such as those in the Black and Red Seas also require a large chunk of the limited Dutch naval capacity.

Critics such as Sweijjs, Van Hooft and Ellison argue that these Indo-Pacific deployments are risky. In their view, these operations draw away resources that are more urgently needed in Europe, they would be beyond our capabilities, create expectations to allies that cannot be met and involve escalation risks that could be difficult to manage and create the risk of sleep-walking into a third world war.¹³²

To the contrary, it could be argued that adaptability and mobility of warships can mitigate these risks.¹³³ Furthermore, others argue that we should avoid a neat European Union-United States division of labour in which the Europeans refrain from a military role in the Pacific.¹³⁴ The European Union (EU) has updated its Maritime Security Strategy in 2023 and intends to play an active role in the Indo-Pacific, so, participation of Dutch warships would make sense.¹³⁵ Germany, with its traditional post-1945 restraint in military expeditionary operations, may be expected to 'pass the buck' of containing China on to the United States and Indo-Pacific regional powers.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, two German warships followed the Dutch example and passed through the Taiwan strait in September 2024.¹³⁷ France is probably the European power with the largest naval footprint and presence in the Asia Pacific but is described as unable to apply a balancing strategy towards China due to its capability shortfalls and tyranny of distance. Instead, France is increasing bilateral security partnerships, naval presence and capacity building.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, French posture in the Far East is far from timid. In April 2023, France sent the frigate *Prairial* through the Taiwan Strait amidst the Chinese military exercises *Joint Sword*.¹³⁹ The previous British Conservative government had always pursued a frequent presence in the Far East. Although it's too early to predict what the current Labour government will do, they are encouraged to continue this policy.¹⁴⁰

This report will not discuss European strategy itself but instead focus on how the risks are or can be managed by a small country. The aforementioned critics point to important risks that are severely understudied. The risks described above will apply to France and particularly for small navies such as the German and Dutch. The Dutch only have six frigates, and the 2024 deployment of the air defence frigate *Tromp* made clear that the ship was required both in the Red Sea and the Far East. Dutch national command and control facilities are limited as can be concluded from the recent initiative to create an Operational Headquarters as part of the

¹³¹ Dutch Government (2020) 'Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia.+'

¹³² Ellison, D. and P.v. Hooft, "NATO should not go to the Indo-Pacific," *Atlantisch Perspectief* (2024). P. van Hooft, T.S.a.P.v., "Two theater tragedy: a reluctant Europe cannot easily escape a Sino-American war over Taiwan," *War on the Rocks*, no. 10 april (2024).

¹³³ Warnar, H., "The sea makes us one," *Atlantisch Perspectief*, no. May 2024 online (2024).

¹³⁴ Fiott, D., L. Simón, and O. Manea, "Two Fronts, One Goal: Euro-Atlantic Security in the Indo-Pacific Age," (2023).

¹³⁵ EEAS (2023). Revised EU Maritime Security Strategy and its action plan. Brussels.

¹³⁶ Ulatowski, R., "Germany and the Indo-Pacific in an age of superpower competition," *International Political Science Review* (2023), 5.

¹³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/german-navy-makes-rare-transit-sensitive-taiwan-strait-2024-09-13/>.

¹³⁸ Meijer, H., "Pulled East. The rise of China, Europe and French security policy in the Asia-Pacific," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 46, no. 6-7 (2023).

¹³⁹ <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/4862442>.

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/uk-and-indo-pacific-need-lean-tilt>.

Ministry of Defence. As a result, a risk of being overpowered or undesired escalation does exist but no academic research or publications on how small countries deal with such risks are known to the author. Naval war studies address Naval Diplomacy but from a large navy perspective with little notion of small navies. In recent years, a small body of literature on small navy issues has emerged but none of these publications address the specific risk identified in this report.¹⁴¹

The research question in this report therefore is: how have the Dutch government and its commanding institutions managed risks in Naval Diplomacy operations? What lessons can be derived and how do these reflect on the recent deployment of destroyer *Tromp*? To answer these questions, first, the characteristics of Naval Diplomacy and its risks will be explored through a study of existing literature, and based on this, the specific risks for small navies will be derived. Then, all cases of Dutch Naval Diplomacy from 1900 until today that could be identified, will be analysed and reviewed. Annex 1 depicts the database and Annex 2 is a list of naval terms.

Theoretical framework

In the development of sea power theory, two waves of thought on Naval Diplomacy, i.e., a Cold War and a post-Cold War, can be distinguished. Each wave had a different approach that can undoubtedly be explained by the difference in the strategic context in which these ideas were developed. Consequently, the question arises whether this double wave construct is suitable to understand Naval Diplomacy in its current Great Power Competition context, not even to mention the specific small navy characteristics. In this paragraph, the two waves of thought will first be described to analyse the questions raised above in order to construct an analysis framework for this research.

The Cold War wave of thought on Naval Diplomacy was initiated by James Cable's book *Gunboat Diplomacy* in 1971. It alluded to the easily recognisable concept of a 19th-century colonial regional dispute on trade arrangements with local authorities, usually in a port. The appearance of a gunboat and, if necessary, a short naval bombardment was often enough to settle the conflict. Unfortunately, as is often the case with sea power literature, the title of the book got better known and understood than its contents. Cable defined four types of limited naval force: definitive, purposeful, catalytic and expressive, described as follows:

Definitive Force: This is when force is used for a definite (limited) purpose that is apparent to both parties. Cable suggested that the force used should be sufficient to achieve a fait accompli where the opponent has the choice to either acquiesce or retaliate but is not able to actually stop the action from taking place. An example is the 1983 American regime-changing intervention in Grenada. Another example at a much smaller scale but equally direct and irreversible is evacuation operations.

¹⁴¹ McCabe, R.C., D. Sanders, and I. Speller, *Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security Balancing Traditional Roles and Emergent Threats in the 21st Century* (Milton: Routledge, 2019). Till, G., "Are Small Navies Different?," *Small Navies: Strategy and Policy for Small Navies in War and Peace* (2014). Nielsen, A.P., "Why Small Navies Prefer Warfighting over Counter-Piracy," in *Maritime Security: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from Maritime Piracy and Narcotics Interdiction* (IOS Press, 2020). Sanders, D., "Small Navies: Lessons for the Irish Naval Service," in *The EU, Irish Defence Forces and Contemporary Security*, ed. Jonathan Carroll, Matthew G. O'Neill, and Mark Williams (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023). Sweijs, T., "The Role of Small Powers in the Outbreak of Great Power War," *Centre for Small State Studies Publishing Series: University of Iceland* (2010). Sweijs, T., S.v. Genugten, and F.P.B. Osinga, *Defence planning for small and middle powers: rethinking force development in an age of disruption*, Routledge advances in defence studies, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2024).

Purposeful Force: This represents the employment of limited force to change the policy of a government. In this application, force does not do anything itself but it induces someone else to take a decision that would otherwise not have been taken. Cable also cited the reinforcement of the United States (US) and Soviet naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean in 1973, during the Arab-Israeli War, as an example, each seeking to influence the decisions of the other and the belligerents ashore.

Catalytic Force: Cable defined this as the use of naval forces to act as a deterrent and/or to influence events by their presence in a situation where something hostile or invidious to the state's interests could happen. These imply more vaguer or indirect purposes. AN example of this includes the deployment in 1919 of British warships in the Baltic to influence Bolshevik decisions during the Russian Civil War.

Expressive Force: This final category represents the use of warships to emphasise attitudes, support otherwise unconvincing statements or provide an outlet for emotion. As an example of this, Cable cited the use of the battleship USS *Missouri* in 1946 to send home to Istanbul the body of the deceased Turkish ambassador. This act sent a powerful and very visible message of support to Turkey and encouraged them to resist Soviet territorial demands.¹⁴²

This typology is used by other recent researchers,¹⁴³ so using it will allow to compare research findings. Cable's database holds 249 cases from the period 1919-1991.¹⁴⁴ Andrew Chubb used a slightly different but comparable typology (use of force, coercive, demonstrative and declarative).¹⁴⁵ Cable's typology is preferred because Chubb's declarative type is limited to verbal assertions and not well applicable to naval operations. Chubb's *demonstrative* type is comparable to Cable's *expressive* type so using Cable's typology provides a 4-tier rather than a 3-tier analysis.

A more difficult question is how the conduct of different types of operations can be compared. Rowland considers these types as a 'descending order of efficacy and displays the type in a graph along x-as variable power (soft to hard) and y-as variable effectiveness (low to high).¹⁴⁶ This view is based on quantitative research by Robert Mandel. Mandel tested hypotheses on success and effectiveness using independent variables such as the Cable types or other concepts used in Cable's study such as deterrent or compellent aims. For the purpose of this study that aims to understand risks rather than results, effectiveness is not used as a dependant variable for several reasons. First, effectiveness creates the wrong impression. Cable's typology presents different types of operations that are difficult to compare. Each operation has a specific aim that fits into and is designed for a specific context. The choice of applying type X rather than Y is usually not opportune. Mandel's conclusion that "Deterrent gunboat diplomacy is significantly more effective than compellent gunboat diplomacy" may be statically true but the meaning of such a conclusion is that deterrent operations usually have more success than compellent operations. Alexander George's qualitative approach concluding that compellence is more difficult than deterrence, is considered more appropriate.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Description of the four types from: Speller, I., *Understanding naval warfare*, 82-3.

¹⁴³ E.g. the database used in: Rowlands, K., *Naval Diplomacy for the 21st Century: a model for the post-cold war global order*, Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies series, (Routledge, 2018).

¹⁴⁴ Cable, J., *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force*, 3rd ed. (Springer, 1994), 158-213.

¹⁴⁵ Chubb, A., "PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970-2015," *International Security* 45, no. 3 (2021).

¹⁴⁶ Rowlands, K., *Naval Diplomacy for the 21st Century: a model for the post-cold war global order*, 24-5.

¹⁴⁷ George, A.L. et al., *The limits of coercive diplomacy*, 296, 83-5.

Nevertheless, Cable attempts to assess the effectiveness of each operation in his database but he is not using this for analysis or theory building. Instead, Cable focuses on how the operations were conducted. He does not explicitly describe what variable or scale defines the different types of limited naval force. Cable, a diplomat scholar who studied languages, not a political scientist, inductively defined the different types that can be distinguished when studying historical cases. Cable does not draw conclusions on what type of force is best to be used, only how the application of a specific type or limited naval force in general changes over time and how it can be used in the future. To understand risk possibly Cable's most relevant conclusion is that "limited naval force is a specialised tool, a spanner that will turn a nut it happens to fit, not a hammer that will bang home any old nail".¹⁴⁸ This implies that risk will depend on careful and well-balanced design of operations. Power is an important element in this but it needs to be analysed in more detail. For example, considering definitive operations, both evacuations and interventions to overthrow a government fall in this type, as they both create new very specific situations that are difficult to reverse. However, the scale, type of violence being used, risk of escalation and the political impact will be very different. Cable concludes that "in its definitive form [...] has lost none of its ancient effectiveness [...] as long as the assailant is able to support an informed resolution with appropriate naval force at the decisive point at the critical moment."¹⁴⁹ This means that in this case success is determined by the level of balance in informed resolution, force, time and place. It does not mean that for operations other than the definite, a lesser level of balance would be sufficient or that in these other types the same criteria need to be met. In every operation, all factors in its contextual meaning need to be in balance. Unfortunately, during the Cold War, a complete overview of all (contextual) factors could not yet be drafted.

A second reason why 'effectiveness' is of limited use for the study of risk to small nations is that these nations often only have limited influence on the design of the operations they participate in. Often, Dutch naval forces operate within a coalition in which organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or the European Union (EU) design operations. Also, in operations in which Dutch naval forces operate under national command, their room to manoeuvre will be limited by neutral or friendly but often more powerful states. Coercive Diplomacy factors, such as the risk of escalation or the need for compelling strategies to provide what Shelling and George described as brinkmanship, a 'last clear change' or the need to avoid 'deep seated hostility' as happened to Japan in 1941, are important in the grand design of strategy and the naval diplomacy operations, but it is less a point of concern for smaller nations. Dutch naval diplomacy operations are usually related to very specific interests concerning its population or possessions abroad (e.g., Shanghai 1927 or Libya 2011) or are a contribution to coalition operations (e.g., 1984 Mine search in Red Sea, 2001 Enduring Freedom). In these coalition operations, the Dutch Navy contributed to the collective coercive aims, often maintaining the international rule-based order. The potential failure of these coalition operations is more difficult to prevent by small nations but also creates lesser damage to Dutch prestige or interests. For small nations such contributions are often a matter of expressing commitment and displaying not being a free rider. This implies that participation in coalition operations might be politically less risky than national operations.

So far, it has been argued that the study on risks should be less concerned with meeting operational effectiveness and rather focus on what could go wrong. The theory that has been developed on this will also be applicable to small nations, particularly when national

¹⁴⁸ Cable, J., *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force*, 147.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 33.

operations are considered. Cold War scholars such as Edward Luttwak, Ken Booth and Dieter Mahncke & Hans-Peter Schwarz have much to offer on this matter.

Luttwak translated general theories on Coercive Diplomacy to the naval domain and introduced concepts such as naval suasion to make clear that influencing is not always clear but often involves subtle handling of operations.¹⁵⁰ Luttwak also distinguished between latent and active naval suasion to indicate that latent standard operating patterns could potentially cause diplomatic failure as for example happened to the young crew of British Warship Cornwall's boarding party that was detained by Iran's Revolutionary Guard while conducting routine ship-inspections under a UN-mandate.

Identifying and developing such theoretical concepts is one thing, educating naval personnel to recognise such dangers is another. Personnel at sea led by their Commanding Officer need to be able to understand competing navies' behaviour. They have to distinguish between harassing forces that conduct standard deterrent postures and circumstances in which these opponents signal that manoeuvres are perceived as problematic by the opponent, potentially crossing red lines. Possibly the best way to understand these matters is by studying case studies which for example has been done in a recent RAND study.¹⁵¹

Luttwak made clear that not only success but particularly failure is in the hands of the opponent. If the design of Naval Diplomacy is unbalanced, this can be exploited by the opponent. For example, when Nixon wanted to support his Pakistan ally during the rebellion in East Pakistan in 1971, he sent a carrier strike group threatening to intervene. However, due to a lack of international support, such an intervention did not occur and the task group withdrew. This withdrawal could be exploited by the Russians, claiming that this was the result of the presence of Russian naval forces at the scene.¹⁵² Contrary to overpowering, sending a task force that is too weak can also be dangerous as the Saudi and United Arab Emirates navy experienced when a sea landing near Hodeida was repelled by the Houthis in June 2018.

Booth has arguably written the most comprehensive Cold War publication on Naval Diplomacy in the English language.¹⁵³ His triangle describing the three peacetime roles of navies (policing, diplomatic and military role) is still a cornerstone in small navies doctrines such as implemented by the Dutch and Australian navies. Most of the book is written from an Anglo-Saxon large-navy perspective but its prestige is still useful for small navies. Chapter 3 of the book explains the functional meaning of prestige both to adversaries and allies.

Mahnke & Schwarz distinguish different forms of *Nichtkrieg*, not by their level or type of force or coercion but by the difference in power relation between the countries involved: industrial or Third World countries. So, types are: Industrial against a Third World country or vice versa, among Third World countries and industrial countries.¹⁵⁴ This asymmetry is underappreciated in Anglo-Saxon literature but potentially relevant for this small-nation study. Mahnke & Schwarz note that Western industrial countries endure a structural disadvantage facing Third World countries as they are more constrained by '*übergeordneten politischen Erwägungen*', whereas Third World countries often enjoy support from modern technology,

¹⁵⁰ Luttwak, E., "The political uses of seapower," (1974).

¹⁵¹ RAND. Coercive signalling, 2022

¹⁵² McConnell, J.M. and A.M. Kelly, *Superpower naval diplomacy in the Indo-Pakistani crisis* (Center for Naval Analyses, 1973).

¹⁵³ Booth, K., *Navies and foreign policy* (London. New York: Croom Helm, Crane, Russak, 1977).

¹⁵⁴ Mahncke, D. and H.-P. Schwarz, *Seemacht und Aussenpolitik, Rüstungsbeschränkung und Sicherheit*; Bd. 11, (Frankfurt am Main: Metzner, 1974), 48-52.

other sponsoring great powers or regional political organisations. These characteristics do not apply to Western small nations such as the Netherlands but it is nevertheless interesting that these German authors fully identify themselves as being part of the NATO military structure and do not see specific circumstances why *Nichtkrieg* by German warships, would be different than Naval Diplomacy by large NATO navies. Nevertheless, the 'Third World' encounters Mahnke & Schwarz describe, are very recognisable in today's Red Sea operations protecting shipping against Houthi attacks.

During the Cold War, Dutch Naval Diplomacy involved fewer operations than in the period before and after it. This could be for two reasons. First, it could be that a bipolar international setting dominated by two strong powers, constrained Dutch freedom to conduct such operations. The other reason could be that interaction between Dutch naval forces and other competitive navies did occur but remained outside the news and the scope of academic research. A recent publication on Dutch submarine operations in the Cold War revealed that many interactions between Dutch submarines and Russian forces occurred but it is excluded from Naval Diplomacy research.¹⁵⁵ Second, most efforts of the Dutch Navy in the Cold War were shaped by numerous exercises and deployments of NATO Standing Forces which all supported and provided a strong deterrent message to the Soviet Union but these activities are often not included in Naval Diplomacy databases. Prestige was the indicator of the strength of deterrence, and this was largely determined by technological military innovation and the professional behaviour of naval personnel. This implies that operational failure was often only known within military circles, including those of the adversary, but not to the general or academic public. Nevertheless, such failures could backlash on prestige and downgrade contributions to collective security. Possibly, studying older historical case studies will help to reveal insight into this.

To summarise, Cold War theory implications for the risks to small navies involve the failure to achieve objectives or undesired escalation. It consists of failure to protect direct interests such as the protection of Dutch citizens and properties and failure to contribute to more ulterior objectives such as deterrence and maintaining the international rule of law. These objectives are difficult to measure but prestige is an important indicator. These risks and preventing failure are determined by carefully balancing all (contextual) factors in the design of Naval Diplomacy and by having it executed by professional officers who understand the context in which they operate, know how to interpret manoeuvres of competing navies and understand that any routine operation needs careful handling to avoid exploitation by the adversary. Although Cold War scholars provided an impressive theoretical foundation of Naval Diplomacy, it can also be criticised for taking mostly a policy approach in theoretical abstract terms. To a certain extent, this is a reflection of its time. Dutch Naval history of the Cold War is also breathing an atmosphere of policy making.¹⁵⁶ This is in contrast to the naval history of Dutch out of area operations, covering a period until 2001 in which operations in the Middle East and the Adriatic play a large role.¹⁵⁷

Post-Cold War scholars on Naval Diplomacy such as Christian LeMierre and Kevin Rowlands wrote studies after 2010 that provided an overview of all studies that had been written before

¹⁵⁵ Karremann, J., *In het diepste geheim : spionage-operaties van Nederlandse onderzeeboten van 1968 tot 1991* (Marinescheper.nl, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ Schoonoord, D.C.L., *Pugno pro patria : de Koninklijke Marine tijdens de Koude Oorlog*, Werken uitgegeven door de Commissie voor Zeegegeschiedenis, 1387-1242 ; 21, (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2012).

¹⁵⁷ Peet, A.J.v.d., *Out-of-area : de Koninklijke Marine en multinationale vlootoperaties 1945-2001*, De Koninklijke Marine na de Tweede Wereldoorlog ; 3e deel, (Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, 2017).

and during the Cold War.¹⁵⁸ Their studies delivered models that, compared to the Cold War models, provided better overviews of all factors at work. During the period between the end of the Cold War and 2010, it was not about Naval Diplomacy but Good Order at Sea and security operations. This period was characterised by cooperation between NATO members and countries like Ukraine, India and China to combat piracy in the Horn of Africa, which was the dominant mission of Naval Thought. The observation that naval operations could not only be used to signal competition or *enmity* but also *amity* to stimulate cooperation and new alliances, in combination with the return of great power rivalry with India and China, reinvigorated thoughts on Naval Diplomacy. Accordingly, these analyses emphasised messaging and signalling. However, the instruments to be used were not limited to the use of naval forces as described by Cold War scholars but also included activities such as military assistance, humanitarian aid and capacity building. Also, while Cable defined gunboat diplomacy as the use or threat of limited naval force towards other states in situations other than war, Rowlands included non-state actors and defined Naval Diplomacy as a “subset of general diplomacy [...] used as a means of communication by maritime powers in pursuit of their national interest. More specifically, it can be defined as the use of naval assets as communicative instruments in international power relationships to further the interests of the actors involved”.¹⁵⁹

Rowlands distinguished different audiences, such as direct participants, domestic populace and regional neighbours and made the point that a message can have a different meaning for different audiences. If these potential effects are not well thought through in advance, a counterproductive result can be achieved. For example, in 2006 the US Navy made a visit to a port in Crimea after the annual Sea Breeze exercise but did not take into account that the largest portion of the city’s population supported Putin. The effect was that Russia could exploit the visit by media coverage of anti-US demonstrations along the jetty.¹⁶⁰ Rowlands included the messages (e.g., cooperation, reassurance, deterrence) that were signalled in his database (cases from 1991) and observed trends over time congruent with changing patterns of international relations. Also, researchers in the Netherlands studied diplomatic signalling and messaging, focusing on naval operations and concluded that European messages are different and more ambiguous than American diplomacy.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the adaptiveness and versatility of navies can enable Europe to display its global interests and commitments in a European way.

Although this focus on signalling provides valuable new insights, according to the logic of this report, it is also assessed that the risk of compiling the wrong message for a Naval Diplomacy mission by small navies is not the greatest concern. Dutch messages in use often follow ideological lines along the rule of law, liberal values and freedom of navigation. The risks identified by Cold War scholars may appear as more pressing for small navies. The current multipolar world is also different than the bipolar Cold War and the decreasing dominance of one or two great powers and a more anarchistic world could fuel new limited wars, crises and the need for Naval Diplomacy. Also, the growing awareness that a future US-China war cannot be won by any of the two parties further underlines this point. Although the latter point may allude to the mechanism of Mutual Assured Destruction, the current multipolar nature and competition will require a theory for Naval Diplomacy that could have much in common with Cold War theory but it will not be similar.

¹⁵⁸ Le Mière, C., *Maritime diplomacy in the 21st century: Drivers and challenges* (Routledge, 2014).

¹⁵⁹ Rowlands, K., *Naval Diplomacy for the 21st Century: a model for the post-cold war global order*, 129.

¹⁶⁰ Sanders, D., “US naval diplomacy in the Black Sea: Sending mixed messages,” *Naval war college review* 60, no. 3 (2007).

¹⁶¹ van Willigen, N. and N. Blarel, “Why, how and to whom is the European Union signalling in the Indo-Pacific? Understanding the European Union’s strategy in the Indo-Pacific in the epicentre of multipolar competition,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (2024).

Alessio Patalano recently made an appeal that Naval Diplomacy needs rethinking and a paradigm shift.¹⁶² Patalano makes the case for Naval Statecraft moving beyond both the previously described Cold War statecraft and post-Cold War cooperation ideas towards a cognitive grand strategic approach to shaping international affairs, emphasising the non-war-fighting effects of naval platforms, employing a strategy ‘in which the sea is a significant factor’. Possibly a bridge can be created between Patalano’s thoughts and European desires for a more autonomous strategy as described by van Willigen & Blarel. It would combine Dutch and British ideals on global trade and wealth with maritime views on world affairs. It is difficult to assess what risks will be introduced embarking on such a strategy. Some may argue that it will create new vulnerabilities, sleepwalking into Chinese ideas of being a global responsible power. Others may argue that it could be a method to mitigate the risks of great power competitions. Finally, more pragmatic Dutchmen may consider this grand strategic conceptual approach too abstract. Within the context of this study, the relevance of these ideas can be that it raises the need to study naval diplomacy of statecraft in periods different from Cold War and post-Cold War periods. This study is too short to really fill in Patalano’s appeal to design a new framework but it could help in developing a small navy building block.

The conclusion of this paragraph on theory is that in the study of Naval Diplomacy cases, focus on balanced design and professional execution, as previously summarised in the Cold War section, will provide the best insights into how successful risks have been managed. Nevertheless, post-Cold War models will provide a wider view of Naval Diplomacy that will address all relevant factors, and this will help to describe and explain operations. Additionally, to avoid bias for Cold War mechanisms, sufficient cases before 1940 should be included. In this study, the following indicator model is used.

Table 1. Indicators for case study analysis



Performance Indicators		Cable indicator	Type of cooperation	Interest at stake
Design	Balance in:	– Definitive	– National	– Citizen (C) protection
	– Objectives	– Purposeful	– Coalition	– Specific Messaging (M)
	– Force	– Catalytic		– Projecting (P) stability ashore
	– Support, sustainment	– Expressive		– Sovereignty (S), territorial
	– Capabilities			– Trade (T)
	– Information			
Execution		Effectiveness of:		
		– Qualified personnel		
		– Decision making and information sharing processes		

The column on the far right depicts the different interests that are served by Naval Diplomacy. Citizen protection deals with the protection of Dutch Citizens that work abroad, and their properties, including diplomatic and consular buildings, commercial infrastructure and buildings. Specific messaging is a naval operation that expresses a specific message such as Dutch commitment to the Freedom of Navigation by passing through the Taiwan Strait. Projecting stability ashore means naval operations that aim to achieve an effect ashore such as an embargo to prevent the spread of weapons.

¹⁶² Patalano, A., “Rethinking Naval Diplomacy in a contested global order at sea: a framework for naval statecraft” (Australian Navy Indo-Pacific Seapower conference 2023, King’s College London, 8 November 2023).

1. Methodology

In this paragraph, case selection, sources, method and quality issues will be discussed.

Case selection

56 cases of Dutch Naval Diplomacy or the use of limited naval force have been identified and studied. So far, an overview of this subject, covering such a long period has not yet been compiled. Undoubtedly some lesser known, cases have been overlooked but the number should be enough to provide a representative picture. These cases are comparable, as they all consist of Dutch operations under the level of war, executed by a small navy country, in cooperation or competition with stronger powers. The following types of operations have been excluded:

- Warfighting operations such as participation in the Korean War (1950-1954) and the 1991 Gulf War.
- Secret covert patrols and operations conducted by Dutch submarines and other entities.
- Colonial warfighting. This includes the War of Independence in Indonesia in the period 1945-1949 and in the Netherlands (West) New Guinea in the period 1945-1962. In the context of the latter, as exception the 1960 deployment to the Netherlands New Guinea and the climax in August 1962 have been included as the audience of these operations was wider than only Indonesia and the Netherlands New Guinea.
- Operations to maintain or establish order within a colony or domestic regional waters. This means that combatting crime within domestic waters is out of scope. However, piracy around the Horn of Africa is included as the latter deals with several international state actors that defend their own, often shared interests. These first two exclusions can be challenged because they particularly fitted the 19th-century stereotype image of Gunboat diplomacy. Additionally, in the 20th century such operations still put a heavy burden on Dutch capacity. The reason for exclusion is that these operations are less relevant to draw lessons from for current or future Dutch operations. Another argument is that it has been sufficiently addressed by other studies such as the NIOD, KITLV and NIMH project *Independence, decolonisation, violence, and war in Indonesia in 2022*.¹⁶³ Finally, routine or latent monitoring of territorial waters is out of scope because analysing such routine operations requires another approach.
- Related to the previous bullet but different in nature are operations in the North Sea to preserve Dutch sovereignty. These expressive operations, usually to escort Russian warships through the Dutch Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), are numerous and therefore not included in the database. To a certain extent, symmetry exists between these Near operations in the North Sea and Dutch Far operations in the Black Sea or Far East. For adversaries, Near/Far is the opposite.¹⁶⁴
- Exercises and presence operations with coalition partners without notifying potential adversaries. This includes a large number of NATO exercises, bilateral journeys in the Indo-Pacific conducted together with the Royal Navy in 1952 and 1973 and National Dutch Navy deployments to the Far East in 1970, 1986, 1988, 2000 and 2006. The Fairwind deployment in 1995 has been included as this involved a passage through the Taiwan Strait a year before the Taiwan crisis in 1996. The Taiwan crisis involved a US carrier which passed through the strait in reaction to Chinese coercion towards Japan. In 2000, the strait was avoided. The East deployments in 2021 and 2024 have been included as these involved

¹⁶³ <https://www.niod.nl/en/projects/independence-decolonization-violence-and-war-indonesia-1945-1950>

¹⁶⁴ See also: Flint, C., *Near and Far Waters: The Geopolitics of Seapower* (Stanford University Press, 2024).

interaction with the Russian and Chinese navies. Also, the continuous Dutch participation in NATO's Standing Naval Forces has not been included. These operations, although usually regarded as exercises to improve readiness also have a deterrent effect and could be used for specific messaging controlled by NATO.

- Port visits to friendly states, this and the previous bullet are operations that Luttwak described as supportive suasion and therefore less risky.

Sources

The cases have been analysed by a literature study on history publications, governmental publications such as letters to Parliament, newspapers, and journal articles such as the *Marineblad* and the *Jaarboeken Koninklijke Marine*.¹⁶⁵ In this report only publicly available documents have been used. A limitation is that the Dutch naval historical bibliography is weak for the period from 1913 until 1940. Research on this period is mostly covered by the *Jaarboeken* and the *Marineblad*. Each of the cases deserves more in-depth archival research but unfortunately such capacity was not available for this research. For the analysis of the 2024 *Tromp* deployment, letters to Parliament and press statements have been used. Additionally, interviews with staff of the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office have been made to verify the analysis and findings in this report.

Method

Annex 1 describes the cases that have been studied. For each case, the indicators depicted in Table 1 have been classified. Admittedly, Performance is difficult to assess. The classification 'Unbalanced design or ineffective execution' has been marked if clear and significant proof of unbalance or ineffectiveness could be found. In the results paragraphs, the marked cases will be explained and discussed while comparing these with other more positive cases in roughly the same time period. The results of this method will not have statistical meaning but will allow trend analysis to support conclusions on the research question as defined in the introduction.

Combined Cable classifications such as E(xpressive)/P(urposeful) are avoided. Any P, D(efinitive) or C(athartic)-type of operation is also a form of expression of attitude and policy. However, in some cases when the difference applies to different audience's combinational classifications have been used.

Quality issues

The foundation of the theoretically derived indicators is believed to sufficiently ensure the validity and representativeness of the findings. As discussed, the list of cases will be incomplete. Two types of missing operations can be distinguished. The first type is operations that were intended to have signalling or coercive meaning but have been missed in the historiography. This will have a limited impact on the findings due to its insignificance. A second type is military interaction which all actors have deliberately chosen not to release to public media. This could involve serious and risky interactions. In the Dutch political system, governmental

¹⁶⁵ Peet, A.J.v.d., Out-of-area : de Koninklijke Marine en multinationale vlootoperaties 1945-2001; Peet, A.J.v.d., Belangen en prestige : Nederlandse gunboat diplomacy omstreeks 1900, Bijdragen tot de Nederlandse marinegeschiedenis, (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1999). Schoonoord, D.C.L., Pugno pro patria : de Koninklijke Marine tijdens de Koude Oorlog. Raven, G.J.A.e., De Kroon op het anker (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988). Groen, P.M.H., Dissel, A.M.C., Loderichs, M., Limpach, R. en Brocades Zaalberg, T., Krijgsgeweld en kolonie: opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid: 1816-2010, Militaire geschiedenis van Nederland; deel 6, (Amsterdam: Boom, 2021).

accountability for secret operations is regulated by specific procedures.¹⁶⁶ Such operations are outside the scope of this research but it is also believed that due to the small number of such operations, the impact on the findings in the research is limited. Additionally, of all Cable-types the number of Expressive operations is probably the least accurate. These are done at such large numbers that chances are higher that some are missed. This should be taken into account when the numbers of the different Cable-type operations are compared.

In general, more data about national operations is available than about coalition operations. In-depth analysis of military coalition operations is done by international organisations such as NATO but these data are not always publicly available. This causes limitations. For example, the 2024 case of the Red Sea countering or protecting shipping against Houthi attacks consists of two types of coalition operations: EU-operation *Aspides* and Operation *Prosperity Guardian* by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) led by the United States. Picture compilation and information exchange in the CMF-structure are probably more effective than in the EU command structures. Such differences in risk do not appear in this study. The analysis of risks in coalition operations is therefore limited in depth. This will however not cause large errors in the findings. As will appear in these findings, coalition operations tend to be less risky than national operations. It should also be noted that this study will result in identified risks but this is not yet a guarantee that other risks could also exist but stay hidden by the lack of available data.

On recent national operations such as the deployments to the Far East in 2022 and the Red Sea in 2024 the constraint that only publicly available information could be used in this report has limitations because the government has not yet published much on these operations and archives have not yet been released. Older operations have the advantage that higher-quality data is available. However, the background of the author, combined with the verification interviews that have been made, mitigate the impact of this limitation, as it will ensure a good appraisal of how insights into historical operations resemble these recent operations.

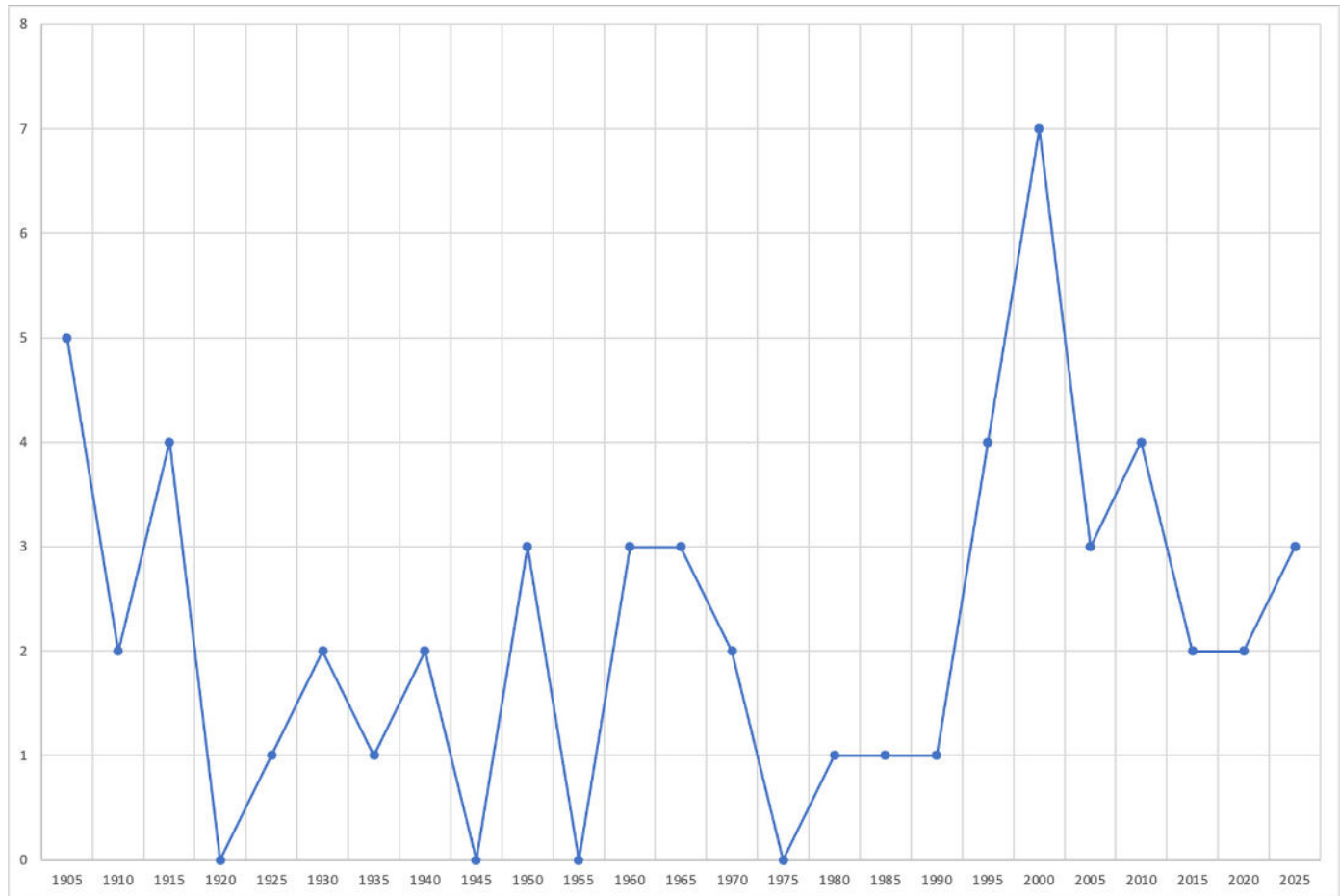
2. Results

The cases that have been reviewed are described in Annex 1 and can be displayed in an overview as charted below. In this graph and text, the year of the operation is the year of its start. The table in the annex depicts the whole period but this is usually not more than one year.

Figure 1 illustrates that Naval Diplomacy operations have been used throughout the century, an observation that was already made by James Cable. They peaked around 1900 and the two decades after 1989 as described by Van der Peet and a low period during the Cold War. It also indicates that the number of operations during the current multipolar period after 2005 displays the same level of intensity as the average before 1920. Intuitively, this pattern could possibly be explained by how international relations determine the behaviour of small powers, but this has not been the primary focus of this research. Similar to observations of Cable and Rowlands, it is more important to observe what type of ND operations have been conducted and how this was done. This analysis will be made along the three indicators (Cable-type, performance and cooperation) in Table 1.

¹⁶⁶ Ministeriële Kerngroep Speciale Operaties (MKSO), MOD letter to Parliament, 23 augustus 2000 Kst 26 800 X, nr. 46.

Figure 1. Number of Naval Diplomacy cases initiated by 5-year blocks in which these were initiated

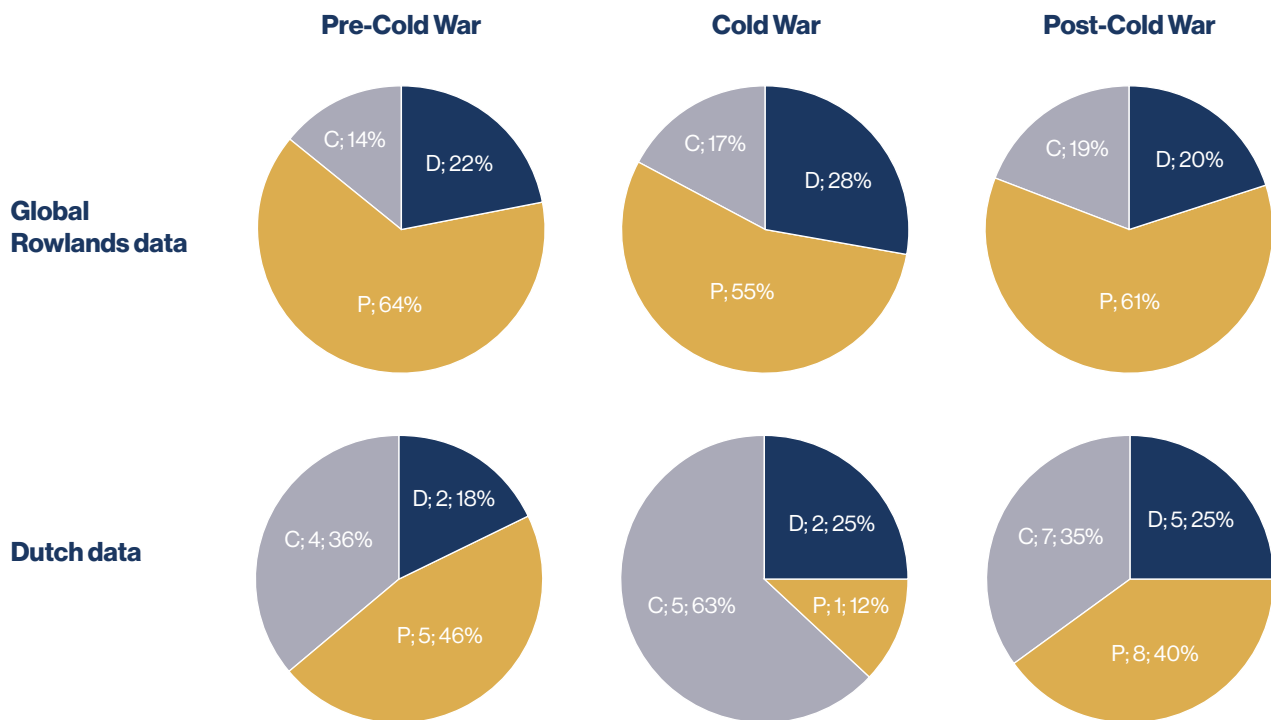


Cable indicators

First, the pattern of Cable-type operations conducted by the Dutch Navy will be compared with the global pattern. Figure 2 below compares the Dutch data from this research in the lower bar with global data in the upper bar about all, mostly large, navies as compiled by Rolands.¹⁶⁷ To compensate for potential errors caused by the inaccuracy of the number of expressive operations, these have been eliminated from the data. As this is only one of the four categories, it is assumed that despite this deletion, the comparison will still illuminate the difference in the patterns of Dutch and global operations.

¹⁶⁷ Rowlands, K., *Naval Diplomacy for the 21st Century: a model for the post-cold war global order*, 55.

Figure 2. Comparison Dutch (below) and global data (above) by Cable classification (C: Catalytic, P: Purposeful and D: Definitive Force) in three different periods



The comparison in Figure 2 indicates the following:

- There is no significant difference in the percentage of Definitive operations. This does not mean that small powers are equally bold in their behaviour compared to larger powers. The Dutch Definitive-Force operations are usually small-scale evacuations, not regime-changing interventions.
- The group of Definitive and Purposeful operations together is smaller for the Dutch data, in any of the three periods. This indicates that the Dutch, as a small power compared to larger powers, tend to operate more carefully and less aiming for big changes in the targeted countries.
- The pattern of global navies during the Cold War having a smaller percentage of Purposeful operations than before and after the Cold War, is clearer in the Dutch case. This indicates that the Cold War was more of a constraint for small powers than for larger powers.

Performance indicators

The observations above colour the setting and context in which small powers conduct Naval Diplomacy but not yet the risks. These will be understood from studying the cases focused on the performance indicators in Table 1. The following cases have more unbalance or ineffectiveness than other cases in the list: Shanghai (1900), Balkan (1912), Smyrna (1922), Shanghai (1937), the Netherlands New Guinea (1960,1962) and Libya (2011).

Shanghai (1900)¹⁶⁸

The Boxer Rebellion was an uprising in the summer of 1900 by secret factions against the ruling Qing dynasty and privileged foreigners who enjoyed favourable trade arrangements. Christians were particularly targeted. As a reaction, Western powers, Japan and Russia formed an army of eventually 160.000 troops that recaptured Beijing to protect their foreign citizens. The German and Dutch governments exchanged their intentions and both were keen to deploy military force. Dutch Foreign Secretary W.H. de Beaufort assumed that Dutch military participation would provide leverage to improve trade arrangements, it would raise prestige and domestic pressure criticised the government for its cautious attitude towards the Boers in South Africa.

In mid-July 1900, three Dutch warships arrived in Shanghai with unclear instructions. Policy instructions seemed to cover a wide spectrum from the protection of Dutch citizens and property to restoring order in China. Captain S.K. Sybrandi assumed his task was to protect Dutch citizens. After arrival, Sybrandi and the Dutch consul Van Walree started investigating talks with other Western officials, particularly the French. French consular staff requested the Dutch to assist in defending the French concession comprising 75.000 inhabitants. During further political navy and army consultations, plans started to emerge for a landed deployment of two battalions (2000 soldiers) of the Dutch Colonial Army (KNIL) launched by the navy. Further planning soon learned that the scope of such an undertaking, a punitive expedition, including a long logistically complex movement, in winter through the north of China, would be well beyond Dutch capabilities. Plans were abandoned and the German government was informed. Nevertheless, the ships continued their mission and in October two ships left China to be followed by the last in December 1900. The following year, in September 1901, the Chinese capitulated and during the negotiations, thanks to the American delegation, favourable trade arrangements were established, i.e., China would not be split up into foreign spheres of influence. This allowed an economic open-door policy, favourable for the Dutch.

This case illustrates how unclear political or policy guidance creates the danger of plans to grow beyond Dutch capabilities and endangers the Dutch policy of neutrality, beyond what was required. To meet the security objective of the Dutch community, which represented only 40 citizens, a ship evacuation was enough. The deployed naval squadron was enough to achieve prestige and leverage for diplomacy to influence and obtain favourable trade arrangements. Deploying Dutch battalions for complex land deployments overseas was not required for the objectives of the governments. However, aborting such plans and thus deceiving German expectations was potentially harmful to Dutch prestige. In later Shanghai deployments, the government and military commanders better succeeded in balancing force and other factors. This will be discussed in the Shanghai 1927 and 1937 paragraphs.

Constantinople, Sea of Marmara (1912)¹⁶⁹

Dutch foreign policy could be characterised as neutrality with a pro-British character. Under the Abraham Kuyper confessional government in 1901-1905, this fine balance had slightly moved towards Germany, a rising economy, and tilted back towards Britain when in 1911 Hendrik Colijn became Minister of War and then on the Navy in 14 May 1912 as well.¹⁷⁰ Implementation of this policy was challenging for the governmental apparatus as appeared

¹⁶⁸ Peet, A.J.v.d., *Belangen en prestige : Nederlandse gunboat diplomacy omstreeks 1900*. Jaarboek Koninklijke Nederlandsche Zeemacht 1900-1901.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Hellema, D., *Nederland in de wereld: buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Spectrum, 2016), 68-72.

during the deployment of two Dutch warships from 12 November 1912 until 31 May 1913 in the Sea of Marmara during the first Balkan War. In this war, Balkan states attacked the Ottoman Empire and threatened Constantinople. Western powers and Russia intervened and the Dutch had to find a way in between while protecting their citizens in Constantinople.

Opposing views existed within the Foreign Office. The diplomatic envoy in Constantinople Van der Does de Willebois advised and pursued a cautious policy, friendly to the Ottoman Empire. Foreign Office leadership however had different views and wished to send a warship to 'independently guard Dutch interests' because "our dignity demands independent action" and so they did while surprising an unprepared Ministry of the Navy.¹⁷¹ The protected cruiser *Gelderland* proceeded into the sea of Marmara and the small battleship *Kortenaer* to Smyrna. Dutch information position was weak. The warship *Kortenaer* accidentally found out that Smyrna had been mined and the warship *Gelderland* passed close to the land frontline line near Büyükçekmece without being aware of it. The warship *Gelderland* had to pass through the Dardanelles which were guarded by Greek warships, using an Ottoman pilot as a safeguard for a potential mine threat. However, the warship *Gelderland* was unnecessarily harassed by Ottoman warships.

Ottoman authorities objected to allied intentions to land troops in Constantinople and defend the private and diplomatic premises of their citizens or evacuate them but the allies pressed on. Guépin, Commanding Officer of the warship *Gelderland* coordinated the Dutch participation in the landing with the French leading admiral but got entrapped in disagreement with Van der Does. The latter considered one officer and 2 sailors enough to defend the Dutch diplomatic premises. Guépin considered a much larger detachment was required to participate in a cordon around the quarters that were inhabited by Western diplomats and traders. Eventually, on the morning of 18 November, when Balkan troops approached close to the city, a Dutch detachment of around 100 men as part of an international division of 2600 men, was landed. Van der Does continued to mitigate the role of the Dutch detachment to prevent offending the Ottoman or making it too much appear as an intervention and arranged that the Dutch force would not participate in the cordon but operate inside the quarters so "their presence would not be noted".¹⁷²

Ottomans managed to hold Constantinople and from 28 November half of the *Gelderland's* detachment could return aboard. But hostilities were far from over and continued Dutch naval presence in the sea of Marmara was required. This caused a problem of sustainability. The *Gelderland* needed to be relieved as it had many junior officers under training on board who were required for duties elsewhere. Meanwhile, Bulgaria had landed a large force in Gallipoli and the Greeks had intensified their patrol south near the Dardanelles entrance. Under these circumstances, Ottoman authorities refused to allow the battleship *Kortenaer* to enter the strait denying *Gelderland's* relief, so the ship was trapped.

After the truce of 15 April, the warship *Kortenaer* could relieve *Gelderland* on 30 May. The warship *Kortenaer's* presence however was still required as the general situation was deteriorating. On 23 April, Montenegro, supported by Russia, attacked and took the Adriatic port of Scutari. The ulterior objective of Russia was the fall of Constantinople into Russian hands, not Balkan. Despite the end of the First Balkan War in June 1913, the Second Balkan War erupted on 30 June with Ottoman and Romanian forces pushing back the Bulgarians. Pressured by Russia, this war ended on 16 August 1913 and the warship *Kortenaer* could return home.

¹⁷¹ Peet, A.J.v.d., *Belangen en prestige: Nederlandse gunboat diplomacy omstreeks 1900*, 153-4.

¹⁷² Ibid. 158.

Evaluating this case is not easy. Van der Peet concludes that the Dutch government had almost overstretched its capabilities, creating unnecessary dangers.¹⁷³ Indeed, guidance from the government in the beginning was vague, the information position was weak and preparations poor, but to what extent can a small nation avoid such limitations? The Dutch needed to protect its citizens and economic interests. The elements of 'dignity' or prestige and 'independency' are related, the first supporting the latter. The geographic and geopolitical circumstances created a trap from which escape was difficult. The government may have underestimated the dangers of such a trap but not entering the Sea of Marmara would have created damage of prestige and would have left Dutch interests undefended. Despite all the difficulties and dilemmas, they managed to finish the operation without being involved in direct escalation or lethal casualties. Obviously, neutrality is at risk in such scenarios, but staying away may also damage independency.

The Constantinople 1912 case could be considered as an audacious action in a theatre in which the Netherlands independently operated among stronger powers to secure its interests. As the previous case illustrates, neutrality is never absolute and opportunistic cooperation is always part of steering a middle course. Possibly Dutch confidence in this had grown during two previous operations that could be reasonably considered a success, i.e., 1900 South Africa and 1908 Venezuela. Success that was achieved by balancing force taking the balance of power well into account and combine this with careful diplomacy.

In 1900, Britain was fighting an unpopular war against the Boers in South Africa. Historically and culturally strong sympathy within Dutch society for the Boer cause existed. The government therefore felt obliged to do something in support of the Boers. However, simultaneously, it was not in the interest of Dutch policy to antagonise powerful Britain. The solution the Netherlands found was to send just one warship, the protected cruiser *Gelderland*, to South Africa to evacuate Paul Kruger, former president of the South African Transvaal Republic and known in the Netherlands as Uncle Paul. A force of just one small warship was big enough to be of symbolic value but small enough not to offend the British.

On 15 May 1908, Venezuela forbade small Dutch merchant vessels entry into Venezuelan ports to destroy colonial transit trade. As a response, the Dutch wanted to enforce a blockade on Venezuelan ports. Germany was sympathetic to this initiative but after a strong denouncement by the United States (US) of a bombardment conducted by the German warship *Panther* on a Venezuelan fort, Berlin decided to stay aloof. The US fiercely enforced its Monroe Doctrine not allowing European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Also, the First Bosnian crisis made most European powers focus on their own continent. After close diplomatic consultation with the US, they approved of a Dutch blockade. Probably the Dutch were considered to be too small to be a real threat to the US and possibly they remembered that the Dutch by its *St Eustacia's* salute to *Andrew Dora*, a brig upgraded to a man of war of the young US Navy in 1776, was one of the first countries to officially recognise the US as a state. The Dutch implemented the blockade on 1 December 1908 deploying three warships. The blockade created unrest in Venezuela and its government fell. None of the other European powers however dared to join in participating and this made the blockade unsustainable for a longer period. Fortunately, the US intervened to stabilise the region and sent three US cruisers to Venezuelan waters. Soon after that, in February 1909, the new Venezuelan president withdrew the decret and favourable trade arrangements to both the US and the Netherlands were made possible.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 166.

Smyrna (1922)¹⁷⁴

During the Greek-Turkish War or Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923), the Dutch small battleship *Tromp* was deployed to Smyrna (now Izmir) in the period 13 November 1922 – 13 March 1923. In this war, Kemalist forces were fighting the Greek and violently regained control over Smyrna on 9 September 1922. A fire had destroyed much of the city. A Dutch church in the centre was damaged and although not yet destroyed, further plundering was feared. A Dutch community of 150 people feared its security. The background of this attack was a power struggle between the old Ottoman regime in Istanbul and the new Kemalist regime seated in Ankara.

To save the 150-person Dutch community located there, the warship *Tromp* received the orders for this operation during its journey and these orders and Dutch policy were far from clear and preparations were poor. It was not until arrival in Smyrna Bay that the Commanding Officer (CO) Rendorp was informed by the consul that the Ottoman regime had fallen but the new regime had not yet been recognised by the Dutch government. This raised the question of whether or not to salute the Turkish flag and pay respect to the new authorities. The consul advised not to do this but Rendorp perceived this as counterproductive to his mission so he saluted and during his visit, he invested heavily in good relations with local Kemalist authorities. The situation however was complex. Different from most other foreign warships in Smyrna, the Netherlands was neutral so the warship *Tromp* could not claim rights based on the Mudros Armistice arrangements of 1918 that allowed other ships to enter the port. Rendorp asked the American CO, also neutral, for advice. The Americans had arranged a specific diplomatic agreement that allowed entrance but such an arrangement had not been made by the Dutch. As a result, the warship *Tromp* could not get alongside in port, a desirable position to support the local population. After the arrival of the warship *Tromp*, the general situation started to escalate. Kemalist authorities ordered all foreign ships to leave Smyrna and artillery on the local fortress formed a clear threat to all ships. Rendorp's instructions from The Hague were to follow the actions of the other ships among whom the British had the lead. The British reacted boldly and proceeded with two dreadnoughts and two cruisers towards the bay of dispute. Rendorp however did not have comparable power nor a legal ground for such a stance. Rendorp considered leaving Smyrna but the consul and Dutch Foreign Office disagreed and ordered the warship *Tromp* to stay. Rendorp made his ship ready for war action but also continued to maintain open and close liaison with the Kemalist and this paid off. It became clear that the warship *Tromp*'s position was safe. Eventually, The Hague allowed Rendorp to leave if hostilities broke out, but fortunately, no further escalation occurred.

This case illustrates the difficulties local military and consular officials have in cooperation with their directing ministries in the home country. They all seemed to have a broad understanding of policy and all understood the need to balance all factors. However, they failed to create a common agreed understanding of a chaotic situation in time of crisis. Difficulties were caused by: 1) poor communication capabilities, as it sometimes took a week to get a cable message to The Hague, 2) lacking tactical information and intelligence and 3) complex legal constraints. This resulted in crossing unclear or contradicting assessments and orders at the risk of getting involved in a firing exchange that would harm Dutch neutrality and create unnecessary danger. These dangers were averted by improvisation and skilful statecraft by in-theatre officials, including the warships' CO.

¹⁷⁴ Based on following sources: *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine 1922-1923*, Rendorp, H., "Een Nederlandsch oorlogschip in moeilijke omstandigheden," *Marineblad* (1930). Peet, A., "Snakepit Smyrna 1922-1923, A strange case of Dutch gunboat diplomacy in Turkish waters," *ibid.*129, no. december (2019).

Shanghai (1937)

The destroyer *Van Galen* was deployed in Shanghai on 23 August - 17 November 1937 at the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Its mission was similar to previous Shanghai missions, to protect Dutch citizens and interests. It witnessed the battle of Shanghai and returned home after the armistice on 11 November 1937.

The start of this mission was rather similar to those in 1911 and 1927. The most important difference is that its arrival was sooner. The destroyer *Van Galen* arrived on the same day as the Japanese that started their landing and attack on the Chinese in reaction to the Chinese National Revolutionary Army (NRA) attacking Japanese soldiers in downtown Shanghai. This indicates that the Dutch intelligence position was well established. The Dutch naval staff, and Lt Cdr Wim Nuboer in the lead, had established a radio interception and decipher capability that from the mid-1930s was able to follow Japanese fleet movements.¹⁷⁵

The arrival of a neutral warship in the middle of a battle provided an almost surreal image as described by one of the officers onboard.¹⁷⁶ The Dutch passed Japanese warships engaged in delivering artillery fire combatting the Chinese. During this passage, Japanese gunners interrupted their shooting, saluted the Dutch and carried on. From its berthing position, moored in the 'Bund' overlooking Shanghai Boulevard, distant fighting could be observed but normal life also went on. Chinese antiquaries sold their art to crewmembers as visits ashore were allowed carrying curfew passes. The crew could attend concerts, cinema and theatre performances in town. The task of the destroyer *Van Galen* was to protect Dutch citizens but their danger was limited. Fighting occurred away from their quarters. Members of the Dutch community and their ladies were frequently invited on board for lunch. This does not mean that the crew looked away from the tragedy ashore. The Chinese lost the battle and left the city but not before setting the complete Chapei quarter on fire. The crew was invited by their beer supplier to watch the scene, like Nero in Rome, from his rooftop. Soon after the armistice, the destroyer *Van Galen* returned home, while displayed in a newspaper picture as dressed up with flags to celebrate the truce with the smoke of a burning city in the back.¹⁷⁷

In official reporting, the events of the war were only briefly mentioned. Arguably, the risk of spreading undesirable messaging was mitigated by censoring. As the captain told a journalist, the ship had provided security to the Dutch citizens, and the crew had behaved well and now deserved its leave.¹⁷⁸ It was the ship colliding with a tug on arrival and a typhoon encounter on the return journey that coloured the newspapers. In the *Jaarboek Koninklijke Marine* de trip report of destroyer *Van Galen*, clearly in deviation from the normal pattern, is not included. This does mean that the tragedy was ignored in the press. *De Indische Courant*, that had printed the captain's well-done story also printed criticism. J. Fabius reported the opinion that the posture of allied warships in Shanghai was undignified and that evacuating women and children in the face of hundreds of Japanese war and transport ships unloading troops, ammunition and stores, was wrong.¹⁷⁹ The observation could well have been penned down in an interview by one of the destroyer *Van Galen*'s crewmembers as Simons described the

¹⁷⁵ Van Waning, C.J.W., "In Memoriam J.F.W. Nuboer," *Zeewezen* 73, no. April (1984). Note that the NIMH collection 070 J.F.W. Nuboer (W 1811), numbers 90-98, 103-4 and 105-119 include comprehensive data on how the intelligence and communication organisation in the East Indies developed.

¹⁷⁶ Simons, C.H.F., "Met Hr.Ms. torpedoboot "Van Galen" van Soerabaja naar Shanghai (augustus - december 1937)," *Marineblad* 103 (1993).

¹⁷⁷ "Wapenstilstandsdag met den oorlog op den achtergrond.," *Soerabaijasch handelsblad*, 11 December 1937.

¹⁷⁸ "De Commandant vertelt," *De Indische Courant*, 1 December 1937.

¹⁷⁹ Fabius, J., "Onwaardige houding der westerse mogendheden in Shanghai," *ibid*.

same scene. A scene of ship movements in port. However different from 1927, this move was offensively west rather than returning East.

These events create the uncomfortable feeling of being unable to intervene in a tragedy in progress similar to the appeasing events in Europe happening in the same period. The relevant question here is whether these actions were appropriately balancing all factors. Decisions to deploy warships follow patterns of policy, created in previous years and people on the ground and in government execute it to how it best serves existing policy. From that perspective, this event is not different from the previous one. They protected national interests while maintaining a policy of neutrality.

The case of 1937 may create the idea that Naval Diplomacy, apart from the described dilemmas, is a matter of hosting lunches for business relations, an image that may reappear in today's cocktail parties during port visits of modern warships. However, this image is as misleading today as it was in the past. By the flow of events, security of the Dutch local community in 1937 was easy to manage but this was different in previous Shanghai missions in 1911, 1927, and 1932. Each mission, aiming to protect Dutch citizens and interests threatened by civil war, was challenged by the complexity of understanding the local political and/or military situation, managing sustainability in several theatres far away from each other and balancing forces. These aspects, their risks and how they were mitigated in execution will be described along the three missions.

Complexity

In 1911-13, the scenes of civil war were set by the defending ruling dynasty, rebelling Kuomintang (KMT) forces and a variety of warlords. Despite this complexity, the situation was sufficiently clear to the Dutch Commander to conduct his mission.

In 1927, the KMT position became stronger and occupied Shanghai. The situation was also more complex as the Soviet Union started to support the KMT and social uprisings. Additionally, strikes and cooperation opportunity between the KMT and the labour movement became a power factor in Shanghai. Cooperation that was ended on 12 April 1927 during the Canton Coup by the KMT, followed by the Shanghai massacre in which many communists were killed. Despite all complexity, Capt. Jhr. G.L. Schorer, Commanding Officer of the cruiser *Sumatra*, deployed in Shanghai from 19 February to 12 May 1927, described a reasonably clear picture of the political and military situation in the region he operates in. A picture based on frequent staff talks with other forces and an organised intelligence briefing structure on board. This also had its limitations. During his stay in Shanghai on 23 March, 200 km upriver in Nanking, the British and allies conducted a violent bombardment in which 2,000 Chinese were killed. An incident that could have escalated into a British-Chinese war.¹⁸⁰ Schorer did not mention anything on this as it most likely occurred outside his scope of awareness.

In 1932, the situation was less complex. It was not a civil war but a Japanese intervention in reaction to the Chinese boycott of Japanese trade. The Japanese occupied Shanghai and when the Chinese agreed to trade regulations that were favourable to Japan, they returned home. For the Dutch, the task requested by Dutch financial institutions and staff of the Java-China-Japan shipping line was to protect Dutch citizens and property.

¹⁸⁰ Discussion by author and Dr Matthew Heaslip.

Sustainability

In 1911-1913, both the British and the Dutch had to divide their naval forces over both the European and Asian theatres. The British feared a German threat. The Dutch also needed ships in the Balkan theatre. Shortage in ship numbers put European solidarity under pressure. Solidarity was distorted by German fake news as would the British consider intervening in Sabang in the north of the Dutch East Indies.¹⁸¹ The Dutch solved the sustainability issue by changing the crew and keeping the protected cruiser *Holland* in the theatre.

In 1927, sustainment was not an issue because the situation stabilised as the KMT had managed to restore order by violent suppression (*'drastische maatregelen'*) by April. Additionally, in 1932, the Japanese action conquered quickly and two months after the arrival on 1 March of the destroyer *Van Galen*, when an agreement had been reached, economic life was reinvigorating and the destroyer *Van Galen* returned home on 27 April.

Balancing force

In 1911-1913, the small battleship *Holland* landed 50 men to protect Dutch premises. In addition to this task, it also helped defend Swedish consular building, guarded a segment of rail and assisted in the sealing of a Chinese quarter. This was a larger force and a wider task than that executed in 1900 but still less than the planned and subsequently aborted 2-battalion army landing.

In 1927, the cruiser *Sumatra* got involved in a chaotic and violent situation which Schorer was very keen to manage and limit impacts as much as possible. He limited his support to protecting the Dutch premises only, particularly to the *Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank* and the *Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij*. When the American senior Admiral Williams on 25 February discussed whether or not the Western forces should accept the Cantonese commercial blockade of the Whang Poo River, Shorer clearly argued that the blockade should be considered as established by legitimate authorities having the right to do so. Therefore, Western forces should not intervene and this course of action was followed. Schorer was also not immediately launching his landing division when the *Municipale Raad*, an institution representing Western residents of the city, on 28 February was requesting so. His argument is that the presence of all foreign warships is deterrent enough to provide the residents security. Also, he analysed the threat as organised forces that will not attack the Dutch areas but fleeing defeated refugees that seek protection against the KMT. On 21 March, when a State of Emergency was established, Shorer finally deployed his landing detachment ashore. A force that eventually grew to 140 men. Schorer was able to launch such a large force because he had requested it as soon as he arrived in Shanghai, and later received reinforcements (*'euro-peanen'*) from the military base in the East Indies. Throughout the operation, Shorer considered instructions and policy intentions from his superiors as sufficiently clear. Although not all this guidance was precisely written down, Schorer claimed to understand the intentions of his government when on 25 February he wrote: *'Ik meen het standpunt van de Nederlandsche regeering voldoende goed te kennen om te weten dat ze aan een dergelijke actie niet wenst mee te doen'*.¹⁸² Probably of great help is that Headquarter-Ship communication lines benefitted from a good working short-wave radio connection.

¹⁸¹ Peet, A.J.v.d., *Belangen en prestige : Nederlandse gunboat diplomacy omstreeks 1900*, 134.

¹⁸² In English: 'I believe I know the position of the Dutch government well enough to know that it does not wish to participate in such an action.' *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine 1926-1927*, p102.

Also, in 1932, the task was limited to the security of the Dutch residents only. Two contingency plans were made by the ship. Plan 1 would have been applicable when defeated Chinese forces would force entry to the Dutch areas and in this scenario, the 200-250 Dutch citizens and 30-40 Hungarians would be evacuated. Considering the size of the destroyer, this would be a challenging scenario that fortunately did not materialise because the Chinese were soon driven out of the city. Plan 2 and scenario 2 were a reaction to chaos in the city and consisted of defending Dutch Quarters against have-nots ('*bezitlozen*') that were assessed to be under communist influence and could attempt to penetrate Dutch quarters. In this case, scenario 2 would occur, a limited force, consisting of a maximum of two patrols each consisting of 20 men would be deployed but this would not happen.¹⁸³

The Netherlands New Guinea (1960 and 1962)¹⁸⁴

After the independence of Indonesia, the Netherlands New Guinea was still a Dutch colony in the East. Within the Netherlands, strong support existed to keep it that way. In 1960, the colony had become the focus of an intensifying Dutch-Indonesian political confrontation. Soekarno, first Indonesian president, wanted to draw away attention from internal Indonesian troubles and an annexation of the Netherlands New Guinea, out of the hands of the imperialistic Netherlands, would achieve this aim and strengthened his position. The Dutch used the right of (future) independence for the indigenous Papua population as their main argument. In 1960, the Dutch government used a visit of the carrier *Doorman*, escorted by two destroyers and a tanker, to display legitimate Dutch rule and to influence international relations, but it backfired with counterproductive effects.

The carrier task group sailed around Africa, as it was assumed that passing Suez could be denied by Egypt. Then, after a port visit to Fremantle around Australia, it sailed to Hollandia in the Netherlands New Guinea. The Dutch government assumed in advance that sufficient international support for Dutch policy had been obtained, but during the journey this assessment was challenged. In Australia, unexpectedly, harbour personnel went on strike and the carrier *Doorman* had to use the running motors of its lashed aircraft to bring the ship alongside the jetty. Soekarno could exploit the carrier *Doorman*'s following visit to the Netherlands New Guinea as an act of imperialism and broke diplomatic relations with the Netherlands. The next planned port visit to Yokohama in Japan by the carrier *Doorman* was cancelled by Japan at the last moment and although the tanker *Moordrecht* was still welcome, the carrier had to reverse its course. This diplomatically blunt cancellation was a clear signal of decreasing support in the region for Dutch policy. The Navy then changed the narrative of the journey into a global circumventing voyage around the world and visited Brazil, a break much appreciated by the crew. After this longest Dutch naval voyage ever, the task group was warmly welcomed back home in Den Helder.

The diplomatic effect however was different. Instead of raising international support, the Dutch helped Soekarno win the information and media campaign. The United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan and smaller regional countries such as the Philippines openly turned away from the Dutch. Soekarno gained leverage and interpreted this as tacit support to start infiltration operations in the Netherlands New Guinea aiming to annex it. In the period 1960-1962, several military Dutch-Indonesian confrontations occurred such as the 1962 battle near Vlakke Hoek in which three infiltrating Indonesian motor torpedo boats were

¹⁸³ Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine 1931-1932 p63-6.

¹⁸⁴ Hellema, D., *De Karel Doorman naar Nieuw-Guinea* (Boom Koninklijke Uitgevers, 2005). A good summary video: <https://anderetijden.nl/aflevering/413/Karel-Doorman->

destroyed. Although Vlakke Hoek may have created the impression that the Dutch naval force had the military upper hand, this was far from the truth.

Indonesia was supported by Russia and their combined action reached its climax in August 1962. Indonesian and Russian naval and air forces planned for an attack and landing on the north coast of the Netherlands New Guinea near Biak. Russian submarines were ordered to sink Dutch warships on 15 August. Dutch intelligence services were aware of the presence of the Russian forces, but the *Kabinet* (meeting of all ministers) was not informed.¹⁸⁵ The Dutch Navy could not have resisted nor prevented such an attack by combined Indonesian-Russian forces. The exact flow of information related to diplomacy processes has not been mapped but on the same day an agreement transferring sovereignty over the Netherlands New Guinea to Indonesia was reached and Moscow cancelled the order to attack. Interestingly, in 1963 diplomatic relations between the Dutch and Indonesian governments were restored.

The objectives of this deployment had not been met and, in fact, its result was counterproductive. Naval Diplomacy can have a catalytic effect on international relations but if the narrative game is taken over by the opponent, success will reverse. A weak military hand in combination with decreasing international support forced the Dutch to agree to the transfer of authority. Duco Hellema is attributing this failure to an erroneous interpretation of the international situation, poor cooperation between the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Office and disagreement on policy among the ruling political parties.

In 1960, the Navy was used in an attempt to maintain the status quo in the Netherlands New Guinea. It failed but it is doubtful whether any other instrument could have achieved that effect. In the West Indies, the naval deployments of 1929, 1948, 1950, 1962, 1969 and continuous presence after that in the Dutch Antilles, and the operation in 1964 in Suriname did succeed in maintaining the status quo while simultaneously the Navy was used to maintain rule and order, e.g., by combatting crime such as drug smuggling, and fulfil the duties of the Netherlands as a responsible state. Naval Diplomacy and maintaining Good Order at sea by Maritime Security Operations are different roles and types of operations but what these cases illustrate is that both roles are complementary to each other and should be part of integrated policy in which the effectiveness of one role depends on the other.¹⁸⁶ In the East, the Dutch focused on Naval Diplomacy but their commitment to the development and support of the Papuans was much less. In the West, success was determined by doing both.

Libya (2011)¹⁸⁷

At the start of the civil war in Libya, Dutch citizens needed to be evacuated. Air defence frigate *Tromp*, which was on its way to combat piracy around the Horn of Africa, reversed course in the Red Sea and was tasked to participate in these evacuation operations. It was ordered to covertly pick up a Dutch national by Lynx helicopter but it was ambushed. The crew was taken hostage for two weeks, the helicopter was lost and Libyans could exploit Dutch failure on public media.

¹⁸⁵ Ooms, M., "Het Nieuw-Guinea-conflict in nieuw perspectief. Hoe in 1962 actieve militaire Sovjetsteun aan Indonesië leidde tot het verlies van onze laatste kolonie in de Oost" (Master thesis UvA, 2012). "Onderzeebootpatrouilles bij Nieuw Guinea," updated 1 december 2019, 2019, <https://javapost.nl/2019/12/01/onderzeebootpatrouilles-bij-nieuw-guinea/>.

¹⁸⁶ Warnar, H., "International Engagement, een actuele marinerol die meer aandacht verdient," *Marineblad*, no. nr. 4, juli (2021).

¹⁸⁷ MOD and Foreign Affairs letter to Parliament, Kst 32709 nr. 1 Evacuatie Nederlandse staatsburger uit Libië.

On 15 February 2011, as part of the Arab Spring movement rebellion in Libya started. On 20 February, Benghazi fell and the Ghadaffy government was in defence. On 26 February, the first UN Resolution 1970 on a weapon embargo was established and also structured military operations such as Odyssey Dawn and later the NATO Unified Protector operation, which would start on 19 March. Most Dutch evacuations were conducted by aircraft in bilateral coordination with other countries. For instance, on 22 February, 42 Dutch and 83 foreign nations citizens were evacuated by Dutch KDC-10. The warship *Tromp* arrived in the area at 24 February. The next day an attempt was made to pick up six Dutch nationals near Misrata by helicopter, but the operation failed as the evacuees did not manage to pass all roadblocks and reach the pick-up point. At the scene, *Tromp* managed to liaise with an Italian frigate and arranged evacuations of Dutch nationals via that ship. On 27 February, *Tromp* was ordered by the Dutch Ministry of Defence (MoD) in The Hague to pick up a Dutch National in Sirte, 200 kilometres further to the East. The concept of operations was a quick covert pick-up by helicopter but the operation had obviously been compromised, as upon arrival the helicopter was surrounded by a large number of Libyan fighters in a position from which defence and escape was impossible. After negotiations on 2 March, the civilians, and on 11 March the military crew were released without harm.

This scenario has many similarities with the previously discussed Shanghai cases. Staff and commanders faced complexities. Governments and diplomatic channels could not function routinely, and judicial rules and applications were unclear. Thus, decisions needed to be made in uncertainty. The information position was weak and the tactical situation changed every day or hour. This created time pressure. In the Shanghai case but also other ones, this was usually driven by sustainability challenges, e.g. ships needed to be relieved or were required elsewhere. In the case of Libya, time pressure was much more short-term. It was caused by limited opportunities to communicate with evacuees in the theatre, leading to a quick escalation of the security situation and procedural decision-making battle rhythms and constraints. These quick short-term decision cycles were demanding for the link between governmental actors in the capital and military commanders and consular staff in the theatre. The question could be raised whether modern communication equipment better connects these actors than the short-wave equipment in the 1930s in the East Indies. A bigger difference was the duration between decision-making cycles. Rendorp and Schorer had more time to make up their mind, assess the situation and consider alternatives. As a result, the split of responsibility to make policy in the capital and to make tactical decisions in theatre functioned better in Shanghai than in Libya. However, time pressure can also be self-constructed or self-perceived without adequately making sense of reality as shown by Simons.¹⁸⁸ Had *Tromp* been allowed more time to assess the situation the ship could have observed that also in Sirte, as in Misrata, many other ships were conducting evacuations, and a better plan could have been made.¹⁸⁹

Analyses as made above could suffer from hindsight bias. Despite all executive issues as discussed, there is no indication that unbalanced design considerations such as risk versus gains were made. Anyone's decision was understandable in the context it was made. It could also be argued that Libya was bad luck. A year before, in 2010, the same ship and helicopter crew, in the same national command structure, liberated the German merchant vessel *Taipan*; an event that was applauded by many. Indeed, many differences between these cases exist. The piracy case occurred in a maritime single domain vs a complex joint land-sea scenario in Libya. In the piracy case, the commanding officer in theatre had a much better overview and

¹⁸⁸ Simons, J., "Operation Rapid Return: a casestudy on if- and how the ministry of Defence applied sensemaking during an evacuation operation in Libya" (Master Leiden University, 2016).

¹⁸⁹ Assessment by the author based on interviews.

grip on the situation than Libya allowed but the timeline in 2010 was shorter than that in 2011. Possibly *Tromp* had more luck in 2010 than in 2011. Instead of evaluating success, it is better to evaluate the execution. From that perspective, the comparison does demonstrate that time and complexity need to be seen in conjunction and that the link between capital and local commanders is vital for success. A link that is determined by division in responsibilities and the ability to share information, not necessarily complexity. Libya (2011) was more complex than Libya (2010) but not less complex than Shanghai (1911 and 1932), Constantinople (1912) or Smyrna (1922) and half of the latter four operations were better controlled than Libya (2011).

Interests at stake-indicator

Table 2 below arranges the cases grouped by the interest at stake.

Table 2. Cases by indicator of the interest at stake



Interest	Cases
Citizen (C) protection	Shanghai 1900, 1911, 1912, 1927, 1932 and 1937 Mexico 1914 Smyrna 1922 Libya 2011
Specific Messaging (M)	South Africa 1900 Warchau Pact 1956, 1967 and 1977 Far East 2021 and 2024
Projecting (P) stability ashore	Venezuela 1929 Caribbean 1969 and 1993 Adriatic 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998 and 1999 (2x) Arabian Gulf 1996, 2001 and 2006 Africa 1998, 2000 and 2003 Mediterranean 2001 and 2016
Sovereignty (S), territorial	East Indies 1905 (2x), 1906, 1914, 1950, 1957, 1960 and 1962 West Indies 1948, 1962 and 1960 Suriname 1964 Caribbean 2006
Trade (T)	Venezuela 1902 and 1908 Gibraltar 1937 East Indies 1950 Red Sea and Arab Gulf 1984, 1987, 2020 and 2024 Far East 1995 Africa 2008, 2010 and 2011

From this overview, it is concluded that:

1. All types of interest at stake, seem to occur in all periods with the possible exception of territorial disputes. The latter may not have occurred much from 1964, which correlates with the end of the decolonisation period. However, territorial defence is still an issue in the Caribbean and the North Sea. However, execution of the first is still a relevant task for the guardship stationed in the Antilles and in the North Sea. For instance, escorting and monitoring Russian ships that pass through the North Sea is as important as the regular security monitoring of seabed critical infrastructure. Luttwak would have labelled this task as 'latent' naval diplomacy that by the regular way of conduct via standard procedures remains outside the scope of this research.

- 2. All cases that are marked to indicate unbalance or ineffectiveness or part of the group of cases deal with the protection of citizens and their properties. The cause is probably that these occur in scenarios of (civil) wars. These scenarios are inherently riskier.

Cooperation indicator

Table 3 below arranges the cases grouped by their type: national or coalition operations

Table 3. Overview of cases by indicator: national or coalition indicator



	Total cases	Coalition operation	National operation
Indication of unbalance or ineffectiveness (including the unclear Shanghai 1937-case)	6	1	5
No deviating performance indication	50	26	24
Total	56	27	29

Before WWII, organisations such as NATO or EU did not yet exist but this does not mean that cooperation among navies having the same objective, did not exist. Therefore, a coalition is defined as including ad-hoc structures in which regular coordination meetings among commanders of different navies exist and a common goal determines their actions.

A quick look at Table 3 could lead to the conclusion that national operations are riskier than coalition operations. However, this is misleading. Table 2 makes clear that all risky cases occur in (civil) wars, which are inherently riskier. Also, it often involves evacuations that occur in the early phase of conflicts when a coalition structure has not yet been formed. Another point, as discussed in the methodology and quality issues paragraph, is that this research has limitations for coalition operations. However, it could be argued that coalition operations are less risky. Not in absolute terms because, as the current operations in the Red Sea show, these operations involve significant risks but these are the inherent risks related to the general nature of war and not the specific Naval Diplomacy risks that specifically apply to small navies, as studied in this report. Coalition operations have the diplomatic advantage that risks are shared. The coalition structure could also mitigate risks or shortcomings in national command structures but it could also be argued that cooperation with other nations creates other new risks. This difference in risk has not been the primary focus of this study.

It thus follows that balancing force and a good link between governmental policy, guidance and leadership in theatre is particularly determining success in minimising risk in Naval Diplomacy. This raises the question of how this was done during the recent deployment of the air defence frigate *Tromp*.

Reflection on the 2024 deployment of air defence frigate *Tromp*

Air defence frigate *Tromp* made a journey eastbound around the globe from March until September 2024. By this deployment, the Dutch government wanted to support maritime security and the international rule of law in a region where it has large economic interests. The region is also considered to be the most important for economic growth and an increasing geopolitical point of gravity.¹⁹⁰

In April, the warship *Tromp* participated in Operation Prosperity Guardian (OPG), an operation under American leadership to protect merchant shipping in the Red Sea against attacks by Houthis in Yemen. The duration of OPG participation had to be balanced against other objectives for the warship *Tromp*'s deployment. To achieve continuity in Dutch contribution to merchant ship protection operations in the period from April to August, the Joint Support Ship *Karel Doorman* participated in EU Operation Aspides. After visits to India, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam, en route conducting exercises with these navies, the warship *Tromp* passed through the Taiwan Strait. This was a change of policy as in 2022 the Strait was avoided by sistership *Evertsen*. By this passage, the Dutch government expressed the importance of the freedom of navigation in sea routes important for trade. Also, as Minister of Defence Kasja Ollongren stated in the company of the Chief of the Dutch Armed Forces, General Eichelsheim, during their visit to the warship in Korea on 3 June 2024: it is critical to "strengthen and expand new partnerships as security in the Indo-Pacific and Europe are closely connected".¹⁹¹

After the Strait passage and visit to Korea in June, the warship *Tromp* supported the Pacific Security Maritime Exchange/Enforcement Coordination Cell by monitoring UN sanctions against North Korea. During the conduct of this mission, the warship *Tromp* and its helicopter were approached by two Chinese fighter aircraft and a helicopter in international airspace.¹⁹² The Chinese manoeuvre was classified by the warship *Tromp* as "potentially dangerous", but no accident occurred, and the ship could continue its mission. The Chinese deployment was meant as a signal that the warship *Tromp*'s operations were disapproved by the Chinese government. In general, approaches by military forces can be used for such signals. They could choose to shadow or approach another ship at a particular distance, pass warnings or apply various sorts of harassment.¹⁹³ Such signalling methods form a scale of increasing level of assertiveness. The classification 'dangerous' can be interpreted to indicate a low-level assertive incident.¹⁹⁴

From the end of June and in July, the warship *Tromp* participated in the large American exercise *Rim of the Pacific* (RIMPAC) in the vicinity of Hawaii an exercise valuable to improve readiness and interoperability with 29 other participating navies and an opportunity to test its weapons systems by launching a Harpoon missile against a realistic surface target.

¹⁹⁰ Ministers of Defence and Foreign Office, letter to Parliament, 30 January 2024, Kst 29521, nr. 468.

¹⁹¹ Press release, <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/06/03/minister-en-commandant-der-strijd-krachten-bij-tromp-bemanning-in-korea>.

¹⁹² Minister of Defence, letter to Parliament, 7 June 2024, Kst. 29521, nr. 488.

¹⁹³ Stockton Centre for International Law, Newport ROE Handbook, vol 78, 2022.

¹⁹⁴ ea., S.C., *Understanding Russian Coercive Signaling*, (RAND, 2022), p50, table 4.3. Dangerous is a relatively low level of assertiveness in a spectrum from deterrent to compellent signals. Deterrent signals indicate predictable patterns that do not entail brinkmanship. Compellent signals indicate that behaviour is considered problematic.

Considering the requirement for a balanced design and effective execution of this deployment in 2024, it is argued that it was sufficiently balanced and that the execution had improved compared to the previous deployment in 2021. Balance existed in the design of the journey in which the choice of the route merged into a sound narrative that supported the freedom of navigation message. After a port visit in Vietnam, the shortest route to Korea is via the Strait of Taiwan. Another element of balancing was that before the passage of the strait only exercises with small regional countries and no large exercises with the US Navy were conducted. A conduct that was well woven into a narrative of seeking and strengthening local partnerships and a European navy vessel operating independently from the US, a message that well serves the European policy of Open Strategic Autonomy. Consequently, the passage of the Taiwan Strait did not raise incidents.

Design choices also come at a price. Operations in the South China Sea occurred at the time the US Navy was working closely together with the Philippines and other countries. This would have been an opportunity to exercise test interoperability, improve experience and readiness with the US Navy, another important objective of the deployment. Although the warship *Tromp* participated in the large RIMPAC exercise with the US Navy after the Korea visit, during the journey and before the strait passage more exercises with the US could have been done and would have served readiness. From the other diplomatic perspective, the message to operate independently from the US was also diluted as cooperation with the US Navy also turned out to be unavoidable. For logistical reasons, a replenishment at sea with a US tanker was executed before passing through the strait of Taiwan. An event the US Navy was keen to publicise as a “bilateral operation [...] to improve allied interoperability and conduct complex scenarios to improve combined readiness”.¹⁹⁵ The design of the journey can therefore be seen as balancing diplomacy versus readiness objectives.

In terms of execution, linking the ship's tactical leadership with the MoD and Foreign Office guidance, the approaches by Chinese forces near Korea, will have created opportunities to learn conducting such operations and to learn about China's attitude and behaviour. Compared to a previous comparable experience of this kind, the harassment of the sister warship *Evertsen* by Russian aircraft in 2022 in the Black Sea near Crimea, in 2024 a better MoD-ship link could be observed. After the *Evertsen* incident, the Dutch MoD was silent for five days while the UK government was running the Info War. Then the MoD deliberately chose to remain silent as the better strategy if you are not yet ready for the game.¹⁹⁶ In 2024, the warship *Tromp* could not rely on British support, but it did not need to. The fact that the Dutch MoD could confidently react on the same day as the incident occurred indicates that the MoD-ship link functioned better than in 2022. The Chinese assertive reaction may have occurred unexpectedly, which can also be seen as part of the game. The ship was operating under a UN mandate to monitor movements in which the Chinese had a direct interest in their relation with North Korea. Displaying determination by ECC participation and before that, the passage through the Taiwan Strait did not mean that the Dutch had an escalating intent. To the contrary, by adding the word ‘potentially’ before the qualification of the dangerous Chinese behaviour, the Dutch government signalled a de-escalating intent which was appropriate in the desired China-Dutch relation. In 2021, the Dutch qualification of ‘comparable’, although probably more assertive Russian behaviour was ‘dangerous’ and ‘irresponsible’.¹⁹⁷ The differ-

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3785044/netherlands-us-naval-forces-conduct-south-china-sea-operations/>

¹⁹⁶ Warnar, H., “Warships as tools for international diplomacy, HNLMS *Evertsen* as part of the British Carrier Strike Group,” *Atlantisch Perspectief* 2022, no. 2 (2022).

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2021/06/29/russische-gevechtsschepen-veroorzaken-onveilige-situaties-bij-zr.ms.-evertsen>.

ence might be subtle; in diplomatic language the meaning is significant. Although the actions of the Dutch MoD in 2021 during the *Evertsen* operations were relatively silent, they did not prevent it from exploiting the operation during a later visit by the deputy Commander of the Netherlands to Moscow to discuss the events and negotiate a new INCSEA agreement to prevent Incidents at Sea in the future.¹⁹⁸

Conclusion

From this research, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. *The Netherlands as a small power has been more careful than larger powers.*

From the comparison depicted in Figure 2, it is concluded that in choosing and designing objectives for Naval Diplomacy, the Dutch were more careful than larger powers. The percentage of Definitive and Purposeful operations was smaller, particularly during the Cold War. The Netherlands had to take into account that its naval force often operated in competition with stronger navies. Nevertheless, after 1945, it could participate in a large number of coalitions through Purposeful operations, usually in order to project stability ashore. Also, throughout the same period, it conducted Definitive operations under national command but these were usually operations of limited scale to protect or evacuate Dutch nationals.

2. *The Netherlands has been able to control Naval Diplomacy.*

Although, in some of the cases the danger of unbalance existed. This could be limited in such a way that the operation did not draw the country into a conflict or war into which it did not want to and lethal casualties could be avoided.

None of the Naval Diplomacy cases listed in Annex 1 included lethal casualties. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in East Indies colonial warfighting significant numbers of lethal casualties were recorded.¹⁹⁹ Obviously, relations exist between warfighting, Dutch policy, and how this was implemented by Naval Diplomacy, but lethal casualties in the Netherlands New Guinea occurred during fighting in defence to Indonesian infiltrations in the territory. The unbalanced and ineffective *Doorman* deployment in 1960 played into the hands of Soekarno, and expressed Dutch policy, but did not directly cause the 1962 planned attack.

In all cases, naval commanders put much effort into preventing escalation and limiting the operation as much as possible. In some cases, the setting of the international crisis (Smyrna and Shanghai) or challenging policy (the Netherlands New Guinea) brought about unbalance in the design of Naval Diplomacy operations but the flexibility

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2021/11/12/defensiedelegatie-bepreekt-veiligheids-issues-met-russische-collegas>.

¹⁹⁹ Note that during the New Guinea operation in August 1962, two lethal casualties among the Dutch Armed forces and an unknown number of Indonesian forces were recorded. For the whole duration of period 1960-1962 this number is eight. Pellekaan, H., "RE van, Regt, IC de, and Bastiaans, JF (1990) Patrouilleren voor de Papoea's—de Koninklijke Marine in Nederlands Nieuw Guinea," (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw (2 vols.)).[in Dutch].

and adaptability of warships enabled to mitigate and manage these risks.²⁰⁰ In 1900 (Shanghai), political dynamics initiated planning of courses of action that turned out to be unachievable but enough checks and balances existed to alter these plans into plans that were realistic. In 1912 (Constantinople) and 1922 (Smyrna), the cooperative negotiations and diplomacy in theatre, by consular staff and military commanders, made it possible to prevent escalation. In 1937, the departure of the destroyer *Van Galen* may have been dishonourable but did not escalate, and it is doubtful whether more could have been achieved. Naval Diplomacy is by definition limited in what it can achieve. It can be an option and instrument for a government to prevent larger evil but it is not a silver bullet. Unified Protector (2011) could not end the civil war in Libya but this naval and air operation did allow to withdraw when nothing more could be achieved. In 1960 and 1962, a mismatch existed between the diplomatic arc of the possible and how naval operations could support this. The events in August 1962 were risky but the question of “what could have happened if...” is speculative.

3. *Deploying just one ship limits options but does not deny effective Naval Diplomacy.*

Surrounded by more powerful ships, a single ship as the protected cruiser *Gelderland* in 1900 when evacuating Paul Kruger from South Africa, in a competitive and underdog position, could send an important message. The air defence frigate *Tromp* was limited in its ability to escalate in scenarios of Chinese confrontation. But, it should also be noticed that power balance in peacetime has a different meaning than in times of war. In times of war, sea control is directly related to combat power. For presence operations, which is the peacetime equivalent for sea control, dynamics are different.²⁰¹ The ship has a deterrent symbolic value as it represents the power of the country and the alliance it is part of.²⁰² A warship such as *Tromp* can defend itself and its mandate of operations in support of UN sanctions against North Korea, strengthening its position. If China chose to escalate via a real attack, this aggression would put large political costs on China.²⁰³

4. *The link between the MoD and the ship determines the ability to manage risk.*

In any design of military operations risk remains and this is applicable to Naval Diplomacy as well. However, as demonstrated earlier in the second point of this conclusion, risk can be mitigated and managed by sound execution. Having well-educated commanders and consular staff who understand the intentions of their government and who are able to interpret events in their theatre, is a requirement for such effective execution as illustrated by the Shanghai and Smyrna cases. However, in all the cases used, failure cannot be attributed to lacking quality of this personnel. The air defence frigate *Tromp* executed two operations within a year, one was a success but the other was not. Much of the crew and staff were similar in both operations.

More important for good execution is the quality of the link between the governmental ministries (MoD and Foreign Office) and commanders in theatre. As seen by comparing the Shanghai, Smyrna and Libya cases, the effectiveness of decision-making and

²⁰⁰ See also: Till, G., *Seapower: A guide for the twenty-first century*, 370.

²⁰¹ Wegener, E., “Theory of Naval Strategy in the Nuclear Age,” *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, no. May (1972). In war and real fire exchange the balance of power will determine outcome. In peacetime, a single warship is representing the power of state and its allies and proceedings are determined by how escalation is managed by both sides.

²⁰² Luttwak, E., “The political uses of seapower,” 33.

²⁰³ Speller, I., *Understanding naval warfare*, 91.

information-sharing processes, are determined by both the duration of these cycles and the complexity of the environment and setting. Interestingly, the challenges in this aspect occur in every period of history. Even if the quality of communication systems is important and the nature of the challenge has changed, the introduction of modern systems has not solved the issue. The speed and volume of information have increased but the duration of decision cycles is shorter. Patterns that are determined by information warfare. All agree that good command and control will benefit commanders in theatre by helping them build up situational awareness and make all tactical decisions. The current reality however is that a short-duration cycle in complex scenarios can push the decision to the upper level, the MoD-level, for decisions that should be made at the tactical level, as occurred in the Libya 2011 case. The 2021 *Evertsen* and 2024 Far East cases also demonstrate that information warfare is the domain where the effects of Naval Diplomacy become manifest and effective and this will make the MoD-in theatre link even more important. Although the link is challenging, improvements are made as the performance of the link was better in 2024 than in 2021.

5. *Naval Diplomacy needs to be balanced against other naval tasks.*

Naval diplomacy is just one of the multiple tasks of a navy. Other tasks are to prepare and conduct warfighting and to maintain Good Order or the rule of law in waters of domestic responsibility. As seen in the East and West Indies cases, the conduct and effectiveness of strategy is determined by how Naval Diplomacy and maintaining Good Order relate to each other and all this needs to be regarded in the full maritime context. This supports Patalano's appeal to Naval Statecraft. Also, warfighting and Naval Diplomacy relate to each other as Naval Diplomacy, including deterrence, will be more effective when the readiness for warfighting and operational prestige are higher. In execution, however, priorities need to be set. During the Far East deployments, training and diplomacy objectives could be in contradiction. For *Tromp's* deployment Diplomacy in the Far East was at the expense of operations in the Red Sea. The benefit of the Red Sea air defence operations was not only to support the protection of merchant shipping but also to gain experience and test new systems in Air Defence in drone fighting scenarios.

Such dilemmas are not new. In 1905, neutrality had to be maintained in the face of the Russo-Japanese war but in naval records such as the *Jaarboeken*, only little attention was given to this task. In 1905, colonial warfighting demanded all resources and attention. Van der Peet already noticed that in the early 20th century, the Navy was not happy with Naval Diplomacy tasks that had to be done for the Foreign Office, as it took away scarce resources that were required in other regions and also to sustain readiness.²⁰⁴ The port visit to the Netherlands New Guinea for the carrier *Doorman* and its escort was not very popular for the crew as the island had little entertainment to offer.

6. *National operations could be riskier but they are also unavoidable.*

Most operations that displayed risks were national operations. Most of these operations are evacuations during the early phase of (civil) war in which coalition structures often do not (yet) exist.

²⁰⁴ Peet, A.J.v.d., *Belangen en prestige : Nederlandse gunboat diplomacy omstreeks 1900*, 174.

7. *Naval Diplomacy serves a variety of interests of which most appear in all periods.*

Naval Diplomacy serves the following interests: citizen protection, specific messaging, projecting stability ashore, territorial sovereignty and trade. Each of these is applicable in every period. This echoes James Cable's observation of continuity.²⁰⁵

To conclude, Naval Diplomacy operations are no guarantee for success. However, the risks involved are manageable and the impact of failure is relatively mild and short-term. Also, as James Cable observed in his first version of Naval Diplomacy, it is "not a hammer or an all-purpose tool but a screwdriver" that needs top-down guidance and local leadership. In linking these, time and timing are crucial to benefit from the mobility and flexibility of warships.

²⁰⁵ Cable, J., *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force*, 98.

PART 2

Maritime Supply Chain in the Wider Indo-Pacific

Port Countermeasures to Stabilise Supply Chain

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Overview

In recent years, a series of risks have emerged, threatening the global supply chain, making the establishment and management of a stable supply chain a key policy objective for many countries. In particular, ports play a crucial role within the supply chain as essential infrastructure for national logistics and as nodes for international multimodal transportation. However, the current systems in place for ports to manage and respond to supply chain risks are insufficient. Therefore, this study aims to examine the importance of ports within the supply chain, identify the factors of supply chain risks that affect ports, and quantitatively assess the impact of these risks on port operations. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to propose response strategies for ports to mitigate the effects of these supply chain risks.

To achieve this, the study utilised a comprehensive approach including a review of domestic and international literature, expert consultations, surveys, and empirical analysis. The key findings are as follows: First, Chapter 1 explores the role and importance of ports within the supply chain. Second, Chapter 2 identifies the key factors of supply chain risks that affect ports. Third, Chapter 3 analyses the impact of the identified factors. Finally, Chapter 4 presents strategies for ports to mitigate the effects of supply chain risks.

1. The Role and Impact of Ports in the Supply Chain

1.1 The Role of Ports in the Supply Chain

While definitions of the supply chain may vary slightly depending on the researcher, it can broadly be defined as the flow of logistics from suppliers providing products and services to the final customer. In the pre-industrial era, early supply chains were restrained locally due to the high cost of raw material procurement and the difficulties of transportation, with production occurring near the sources of raw materials. After the Industrial Revolution, the development of steam engines and internal combustion engines facilitated the growth of inland supply chains through rail and truck transport. However, the development of intercontinental supply chains through maritime trade was hampered by the challenges of shipping and cargo handling.

²⁰⁶ The manuscript is an updated version of the 2023 KMI report titled “A Study on the Port Countermeasure to Stabilize Supply Chain.”

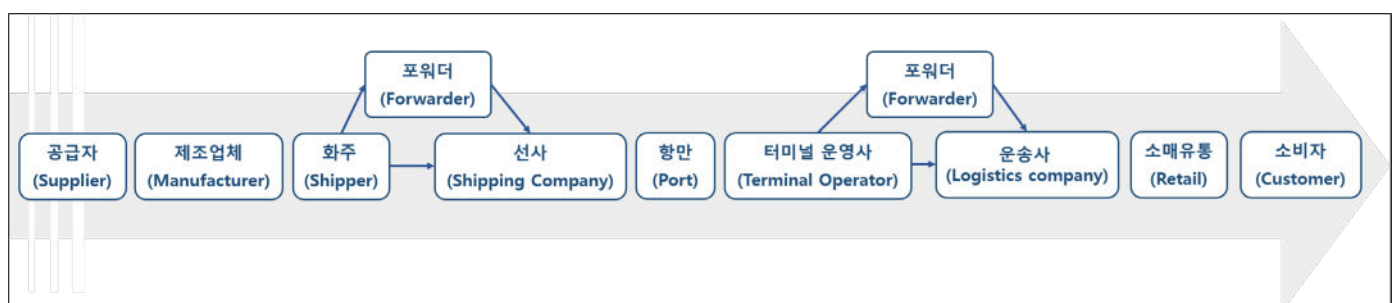
This changed with the opening of the Suez and Panama Canals, and the adoption of standardised containers such as pallets and shipping containers, which improved the efficiency of storage, loading, and unloading. Consequently, maritime transport developed, and intercontinental supply chains expanded. At the endpoints of these maritime transport networks lie ports, which have evolved rapidly over the generations and continue to grow in importance.

Historically, ports within supply chains mainly served as hubs for transportation, storage, and cargo handling. However, as industries have become more sophisticated and international trade has grown, ports have transformed into central links within the global supply chain. They now serve as comprehensive logistics hubs that integrate industrial, logistics, and business functions while creating additional value within the logistics process. Notably, third-generation ports (1980s–1990s) began to function as nodes for production and logistics, driven by the expansion of global trade, containerisation, and the advancement of multimodal transport. Since the 2000s, ports have evolved beyond their traditional role as nodes for physical goods, providing logistics services by linking a wide range of related information. As supply chains expand across continents and ports take on more active roles, their significance within the global supply chain continues to increase.

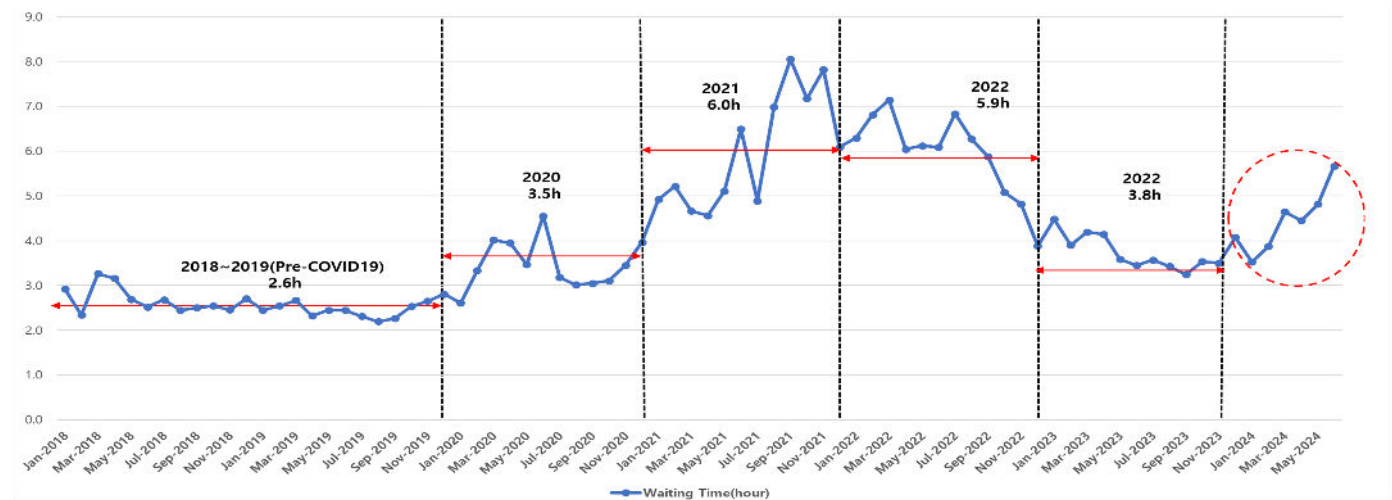
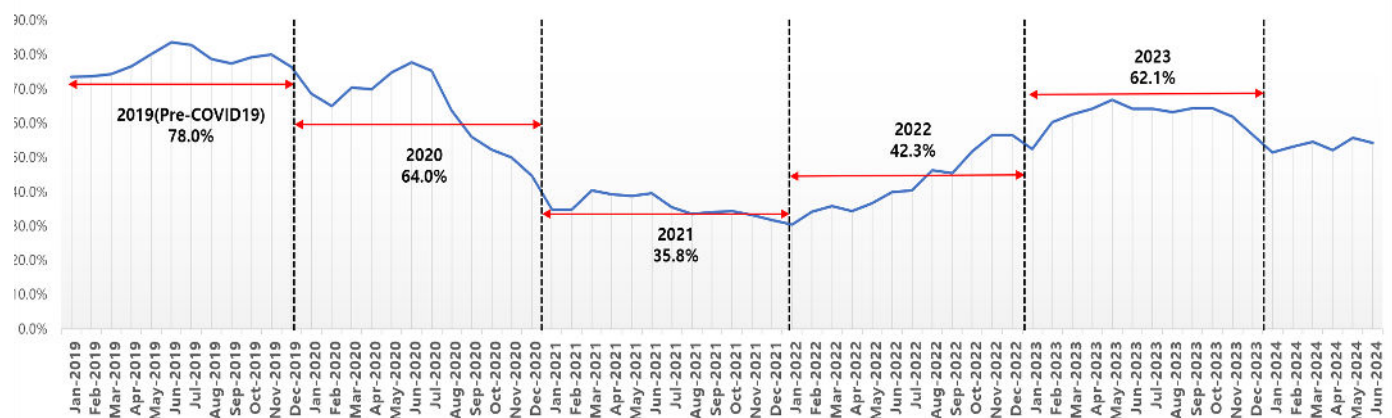
1.2 Analysis of Supply Chain Risk Cases

Recently, a series of risks threatening the global supply chain has underscored the increasing importance of establishing and managing stable supply chains. With approximately 74% of international trade (based on 2023 weight data) being transported via maritime routes, ports play a crucial role as nodes in international multimodal logistics. As such, any disruption at ports can cause significant upheaval throughout the global supply chain. In fact, supply chain risks have led to a substantial increase in the average waiting time for container ships globally and a notable decline in schedule reliability. Before the COVID-19 pandemic (2018–2019), the average waiting time for container ships was 2.6 hours. However, during the peak of the pandemic and the associated logistics crisis in 2021, this figure surged to 6 hours, nearly tripling. Although the logistics crisis has somewhat eased since then, leading to a reduction in waiting times, new challenges have emerged. By the end of 2023, the intensification of the crisis in the Red Sea region has once again increased waiting times due to longer sailing routes around the Cape of Good Hope and a shortage of container ships. In addition, container schedule reliability experienced a sharp decline during the period of heightened supply chain risks. Compared to 2019, the on-time performance of container ships dropped by approximately 40 percentage points in 2021. During these periods of supply chain disruption, ports faced severe congestion, further exacerbating global logistics challenges.

Figure 1. Supply Chain Diagram



Source: Lee et al. (2023), *A Study on the Port Countermeasures to Stabilize Supply Chain*.

Figure 2. Average Port Waiting Time (Containerships 8,000+ TEU, 7dma)²⁰⁷**Figure 3. Global Schedule Reliability²⁰⁸**

This port congestion has led to increased logistics costs, including port waiting fees, trucking costs, warehouse fees, and container freight rates. When a port becomes congested, the loading and unloading of cargo are delayed, increasing waiting times. As the time a ship spends in the port grows, port waiting costs (demurrage and detention charges) are incurred. These costs are then reflected in the final transportation fees, leading to an increase in container freight rates. Demurrage refers to the costs incurred when a container is not moved out of the terminal within the allowed free time, while detention refers to the fees charged when a container is returned late to the terminal. Before the onset of significant port congestion in 2020, the average demurrage and detention (D&D) costs at the world's 60 major ports were \$586. However, as congestion worsened in 2021, these costs rose by approximately 48% to \$868. While these costs have somewhat eased since 2022, they still remain 12% higher than in 2020, averaging \$664.

²⁰⁷ 'Shipping Intelligence Network', Clarksons Research, accessed 30 August 2024, [https://www.clarksons.net/n/#/sin/timeseries/advanced/50/1;searchTerm=containership%20port%20congestion%20index\(-modal:sin/timeseries/data/100/latest;t=%5B546909%5D;l=%5B546912%5D;listMode=false\)](https://www.clarksons.net/n/#/sin/timeseries/advanced/50/1;searchTerm=containership%20port%20congestion%20index(-modal:sin/timeseries/data/100/latest;t=%5B546909%5D;l=%5B546912%5D;listMode=false)).

²⁰⁸ 'Global Schedule Reliability Remains Stable at 50%-55% in 2024', Sea Intelligence, 30 September 2024, <https://www.sea-intelligence.com/press-room/288-global-schedule-reliability-remains-stable-at-50-55-in-2024>.

Table 1. Average Costs of D&D at Major Container Ports²⁰⁹

Port	2020(\$)	2021(\$)	2022(\$)	% Change 2021 vs 2020	% Change 2022 vs 2020
LA	1,826	2,594	2,673	42.1	46.4
LB	1,736	2,638	2,730	52.0	57.3
Rotterdam	539	756	617	40.3	14.5
Antwerp	494	709	546	43.6	10.5
Singapore	122	615	619	402.5	405.7
Qingdao	62	183	202	195.2	225.8
Busan	90	133	114	47.8	26.7
Average (Total of 60 ports)	586	868	664	48.1	13.3

Note : Average cost after 14 days based on standard containers.

Additionally, the costs for warehouse storage of congested cargo and trucking fees for transporting goods inland have also risen. In the United States (US), the Producer Price Index (PPI) for trucking costs increased by more than 18%, from 151.8 in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, to 174.8 in 2022. Likewise, the index for warehouse fees increased by over 21% during the same period, exceeding the average inflation rate of previous years. Although the trucking cost index decreased by 7% year-on-year in 2023, warehouse fees continued to rise, with the index increasing by 9.8% compared to the previous year, reflecting a persistent upward trend in costs.

Table 2. Trucking and Warehouse Fees in the US²¹⁰

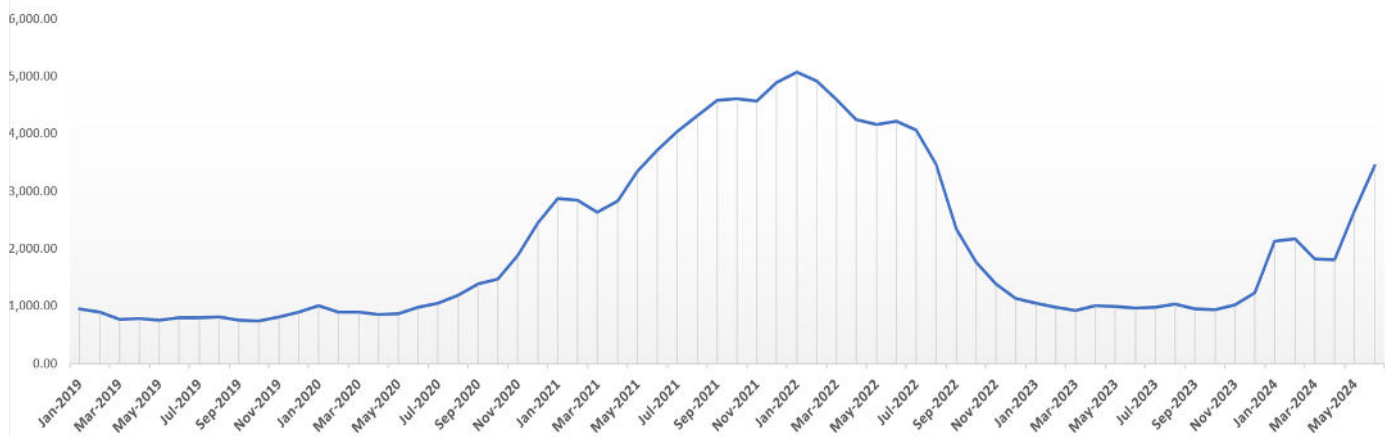
Index		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
General Freight Trucking	Index	152	151	175	211	196
	% change on previous year	2.6	-0.2	15.4	20.6	-7.0
Warehouse and Storage	Index	109	109	115	132	145
	% change on previous year	3.8	-0.1	6.3	14.1	9.8

Note : General Freight Trucking (2003=100), Warehouse and Storage (2006=100)

These various costs are ultimately reflected in transportation fees, with the Shanghai Containerised Freight Index (SCFI) rising from 812.1 in 2019 to 1,242.7 in 2020, an increase of over 50%. In 2021, the SCFI surged by more than 200% year-on-year, reaching 3,767. Although the elevated freight index stabilised slightly in 2023 to around 1,000, recent the crisis in the Red Sea have caused disruptions in the supply chain due to rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope, resulting in the SCFI rising again to 2,333.4 in the first half of 2024.

²⁰⁹ 'Annual Demurrage & Detention Benchmark 2021 Report', Container xChange, 2021; 'Annual Demurrage & Detention Benchmark 2022 Report', Container xChange, 5 July 2022, <https://www.container-xchange.com/press-center/annual-demurrage-detention-benchmark-2022-report-top-5-most-expensive-ports-in-the-world-all-located-in-the-u-s/>.

²¹⁰ 'Transportation and Warehousing Indexes', U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Federal Reserve Economic Data, 30 October 2024, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/TSIFRGHT>.

Figure 4. SCFI Container Freight Rate Index²¹¹

In summary, port congestion caused by supply chain risks has driven up various logistics costs, which in turn accelerated inflation and had a significant impact on the overall economy. These series of cases highlight the critical role ports play within the supply chain, underscoring the importance of evaluating the impact of supply chain risks on ports and developing mitigation strategies to address these challenges.

2. Identification of Supply Chain Risks

2.1 Selection of Port-related Supply Chain Risk Factors

Supply chain risks are categorised and selected differently by researchers based on supply chain components, sources of risk, and other factors. To identify the supply chain risks that affect ports, we utilised the findings from Lee et al (2023), which identified key risk factors impacting ports. This study derived supply chain risks through a two-stage process.²¹²

In the first stage, a review of prior studies on supply chain risks was conducted to identify the most frequently mentioned risk factors. In the second stage, among the risk factors identified in the first stage, those that significantly impact ports were selected through a survey of port stakeholders.

As a result of this study, five key risk factors that affect ports were identified: "Transportation Network Congestion and Disruption", "Natural Disasters and Epidemics", "Social and Political Instability", "Cyber Attacks", and "Labour Strikes and Disruptions".²¹³

2.2 Selection of Variables for Measuring Port-related Supply Chain Risks

To identify the variables that can measure the five supply chain risk factors affecting ports, Lee et al. (2023) conducted a Delphi survey targeting economic and trade experts as well as professionals from the port industry. Based on the Delphi survey results, the 'Port Congestion

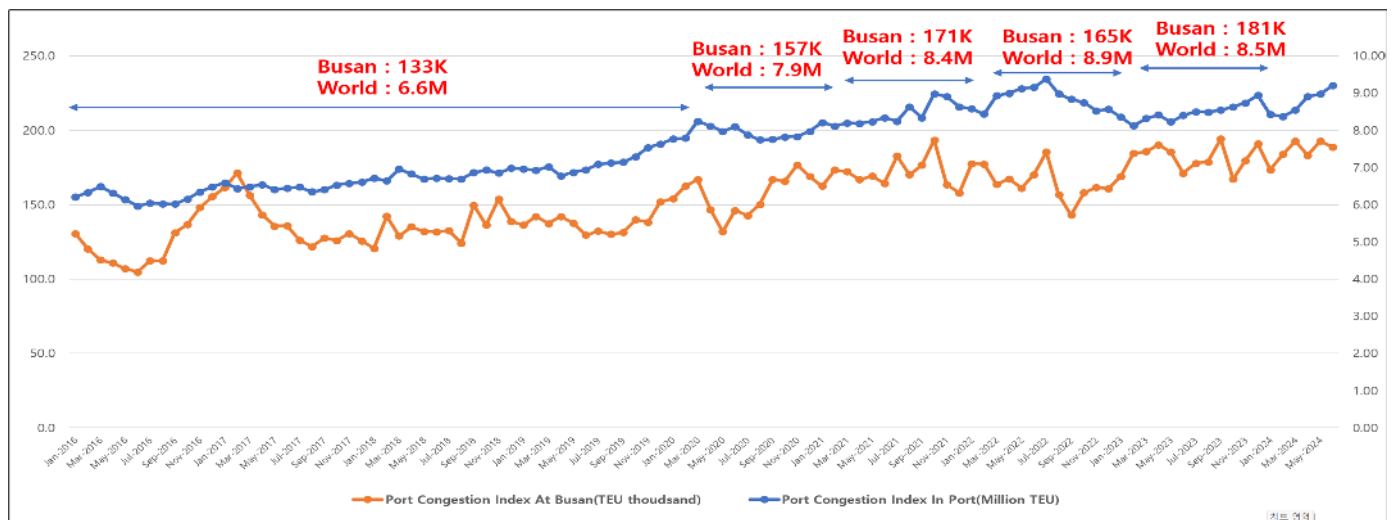
²¹¹ 'Shipping Intelligence Network'.

²¹² Lee et al., 'Study on the Port Countermeasures to Stabilize Supply Chain' (Korea Maritime Institute, 2023).

²¹³ Lee et al.

Index', provided by the British shipping analysis firm Clarkson Research, was selected as the indicator to measure "Transportation Network Congestion and Disruption". The Port Congestion Index represents the amount of container ship capacity waiting at ports due to congestion. For example, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2016–2019), Busan Port's average congestion index was 133,000 TEU. In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, the index increased by 17.8% compared to the pre-pandemic period, and by 24.3% in 2022, indicating a clear pattern of increased congestion when transportation networks become congested. This makes it a suitable measurement variable for assessing this risk.

Figure 5. Port Congestion Index²¹⁴

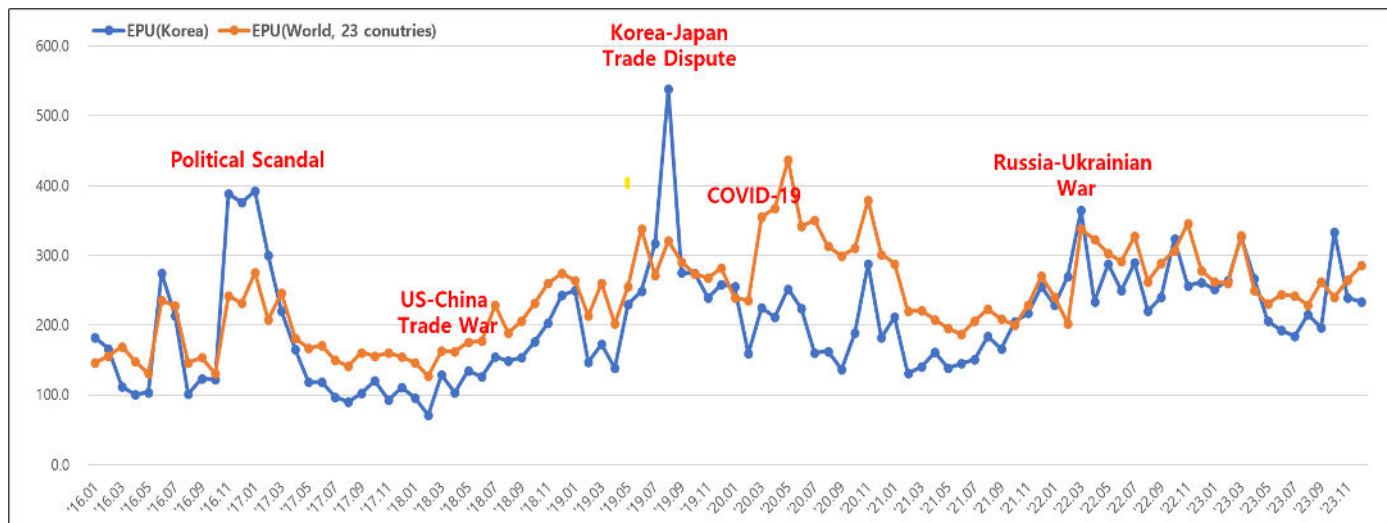


As a measurement variable for "Natural Disasters and Epidemic", the 'Number of occurrences of natural disasters and epidemics' was selected, utilising the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), a database that records disaster-related data at the national level. The EM-DAT is a joint initiative of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the University of Louvain in Brussels, Belgium, and the World Health Organisation (WHO). It collects data from a variety of sources, including the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, insurance companies, research institutions, and media outlets. A disaster is recorded if it meets at least one of four criteria: more than 10 deaths, more than 100 people affected, a state of emergency declared, or an international request for assistance. However, since the number of epidemics and natural disasters in South Korea is relatively low, instead of using the numerical variable 'number of occurrences of natural disasters and epidemics,' this variable will be converted into a categorical variable indicating the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of such events and used for impact analysis.

For "Social and Political Instability", the 'Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU) Index', developed by Baker et al. (2016), was identified as a suitable measurement variable. This index is calculated based on the frequency of keywords related to "Economics," "Policy," and "Uncertainty" in news articles from major media outlets. A review of South Korea's EPU trends shows a significant increase in the index around periods of social and political unrest, such as the impeachment scandal (November 2016), the US-China trade war (March 2018), Japan's export restrictions (August 2019), and the Russia-Ukraine war (February 2022).²¹⁵

²¹⁴ 'Shipping Intelligence Network'.

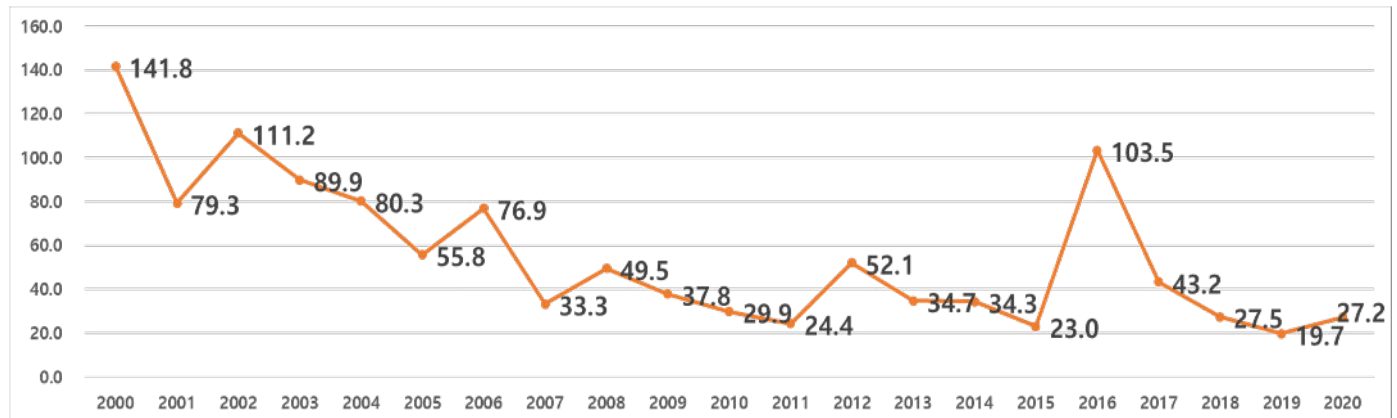
²¹⁵ Scott R. Baker, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 'Measuring Economic Policy Uncertainty', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 4 (7 November 2016): 1593–1636.

Figure 6. Economic Policy Uncertainty²¹⁶

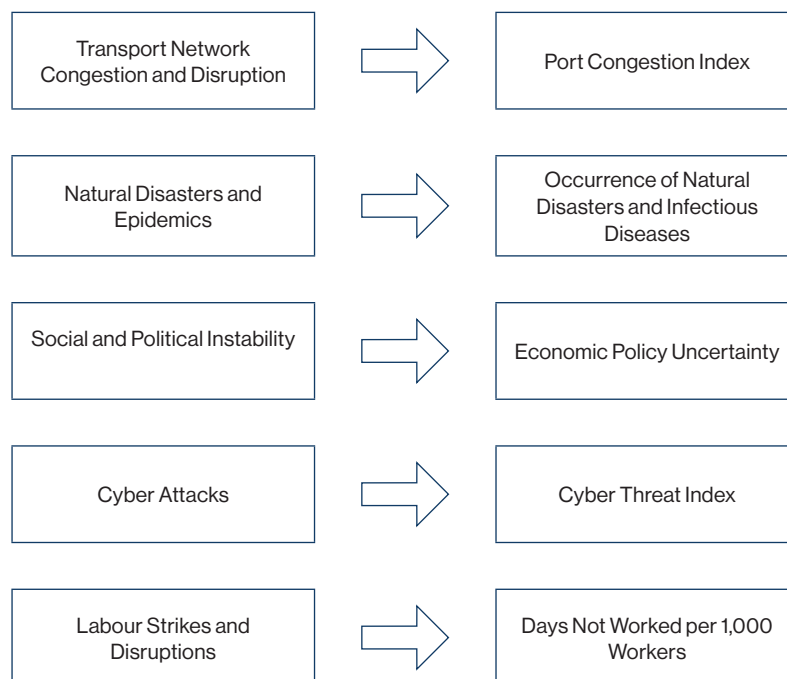
The “Cyber Attacks” measurement variable selected is Imperva’s ‘Cyber Threat Index.’ Imperva is a US-based multinational company that protects its clients’ key business data and applications from cyberattacks. The index provides daily data on the global cyber threat landscape across data and applications. The index categorises threat levels as follows: a value between 0 and 400 indicates a “very low” threat level, 400 to 550 is “low,” 550 to 700 is “moderate,” 700 to 850 is “high,” and 850 to 1,000 is considered “severe.” However, since this index has been tracked and published only since August 2019, it was excluded from the final impact analysis due to discrepancies in the data collection periods compared to other independent variables.

The measurement variable for “Labour Strikes and Disruptions” selected is the ‘Days Not Worked per 1,000 workers,’ published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In South Korea, the number of days lost peaked at 103.5 in 2016 due to strikes by the railway union and the Hyundai and Kia Motors unions, although there has been a downward trend in lost workdays over the past 20 years. However, since this data is published annually, the impact analysis will prioritise the use of annual data for review, unlike other measurement variables.

²¹⁶ Author’s rewrite based on Baker, Bloom, and Davis.

Figure 7. Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers in Korea²¹⁷

In conclusion, the five port-related supply chain risks and their corresponding measurement variables have been selected, as shown in the figure below. These selected measurement variables will be used as independent variables to analyse the impact of supply chain risks on ports.

Figure 8. Port Supply Chain Risk Measurement Variable²¹⁸

Note: Cyber Threat Index is excluded from the final impact analysis.

²¹⁷ 'Statistics on Working Time', International Labour Organisation, n.d., accessed 10 December 2024.

²¹⁸ Lee et al., 'Study on the Port Countermeasures to Stabilize Supply Chain'.

2.3 Selection of Variables for Assessing Port-related Supply Chain Risks

The variables used to measure port-related supply chain risks correspond to independent variables, while assessment variables are dependent variables, indicating the impact of supply chain risks on ports. These assessment variables were selected through consultations with experts involved in port operations and utilisation. However, most data that can assess port operations are derived from terminal operators, and much of this information is proprietary, making data collection challenging. Therefore, in this study, the final assessment variables were selected by considering the availability of data among the candidate variables proposed by experts. As a result, three key variables were selected to assess port operations: yard occupancy ratio, berth productivity and container throughput.

The Yard occupancy ratio refers to the ratio of containers stored in the port yard relative to its total container storage capacity. Data from the internal resources of the Busan Port Authority were used for this measure. Berth productivity indicates the number of containers handled while a container ship is berthed. It is one of the primary factors in evaluating port operations. Some of the container ship arrival and departure data for major ports are provided for a fee by S&P Global Market, and the Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) currently uses this data to publish berth productivity indicators. This study also plans to utilise these data. The third assessment variable, container throughput, will be analysed using PORT-MIS data, which provides container throughput statistics for Korean ports.

3. Analysis of the Impact of Supply Chain Risks

3.1 Stress Test

Stress testing is a risk management technique used to assess the vulnerability of a system and analyse the impact of shocks or extreme, yet plausible, events.²¹⁹ Originally developed for risk management of individual financial institutions, stress testing is primarily used as a method to measure the stability of financial systems. However, in recent years, this technique has been applied across various industries, such as real estate and the shipping and shipbuilding industries, as a tool for risk management.²²⁰

Various methodologies are used in stress testing, with many models being constructed based on macroeconomic theories.²²¹ However, when a specific theory is not well-established, making theory-based model construction difficult, regression analysis is most frequently

²¹⁹ Joon-sung Choi and Seung-han Ro, 'Financial Soundness Model Estimation and Stress Test in Terms of Size and Industry of Specialty Contractors', *Journal of the Korea Real Estate Analysts Association* 29, no. 1 (2023): 91–105; Park et al., 'A Study on the Financial Stability of Korea Shipping and Shipbuilding Companies Based on Stress Testing' (Korea Maritime Institute, 2020).

²²⁰ Man Cho, 'Testing Effects of Housing-Driven Stress Scenarios in Korea: Focusing on Sectoral Consequences' (Korea Development Institute, 2013); Annel van Smirnov, 'How Supply Chain Stress Testing Helps Mitigate Disruptions', EyeOn, 14 March 2024, <https://eyeonplanning.com/blog/supply-chain-stress-test/>.

²²¹ Cho; Choi and Ro, 'Financial Soundness Model Estimation and Stress Test in Terms of Size and Industry of Specialty Contractors'; Ki-seok Hong and Ji-won Choi, 'Stress-Testing Korea's Household Debt', *The Korea International Economic Association* 24, no. 1 (2018): 1–24.

employed.²²² In this study, since no concrete theory has been established regarding the relationship between supply chain risks and port operations, stress testing was conducted using regression analysis, logistic regression models, and other similar methods.

3.2 Impact Analysis Results

3.2.1 Variables Information

The information regarding the supply chain risk measurement variables and port operation assessment variables selected in Chapter 2 is as follows. The stress test was conducted on a monthly basis, which is the standard time series collection period for the data. However, since the ILO's 'Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers' is an annually aggregated and published dataset, an additional analysis was conducted with annual data for container throughput, as it provides sufficient data on a yearly basis.

When evaluating the impact of supply chain risks, the risk impact varies depending on the geographical characteristics of the port and the type of cargo being handled. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the risk impact for each port individually. However, due to the temporal and physical limitations of this study, it was not possible to conduct an impact analysis considering the individual characteristics of all ports. Therefore, the analysis focuses on container cargos at Busan Port.

Table 3. Measurement Variables (X)²²³



Category	Congestion Index at Busan Port (0,000TEU)	Occurrence of Natural Disasters and Infectious Diseases (Korea)	EPU (Korea)	Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers (Korea)
Time series	2016.1~2023.12	2016.1~2023.12	2016.1~2023.12	1993~2020
Type	Numerical	Categorical	Numerical	Numerical
Mean	151.1	0.5	205.4	62.90
Sd	22.2	0.5	80.9	6.94
Median	151.1	0.0	204.3	50.76
Min	104.7	0.0	71.2	19.70
Max	194.1	1.0	538.2	141.81

Note: "Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers" is annual data, a separate impact analysis is scheduled to be conducted.

²²² Hee-jae Kim and Dong-chul Kwak, 'Analysis of Business Performance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) before and after COVID-19 Examined through Stress Test', *The Korean Society of Management Consulting* 22, no. 2 (2022): 277–89; Myung-Joong Kim and Beum-jo Park, 'Quantile Regression Approach Using R Statistical Software: Analyzing the Effect of Non-Economic Factors on Life Expectancy at Birth', *Journal of Industrial Economics and Trade* 37, no. 2 (2013): 33–58; Pil-sun Choi and In-sik Min, 'Distressed Real Estate Market and Stress Tests on Banking and Construction Industries', *Journal of Social Science* 40, no. 1 (2014): 65–84; Park et al., 'A Study on the Financial Stability of Korea Shipping and Shipbuilding Companies Based on Stress Testing'.

²²³ Prepared by the Authors.

Table 4. Assessment Variables (Y)²²⁴

Category	Container Throughput at Busan Port (0,000TEU)	Berth Productivity at Busan Port (move/hour)	Yard Occupancy Ratio at Busan Port (%)
Time series	2016.1-2023.12	2016.1-2023.12	2017.1-2023.12
Type	Numerical	Numerical	Numerical
Mean	1,805.8	83.2	72.6
Sd	124.0	8.9	5.3
Median	1,811.2	84.7	71.7
Min	1,505.1	68.6	61.7
Max	2,077.5	104.5	83.8

3.2.2 Analysis Results

Container Throughput

To examine the impact of supply chain risks on container throughput at Busan Port, the independent variables considered include the Port Congestion Index (PCI), the occurrence of natural disasters and epidemics (DIS_EPI), and the Economic Policy Uncertainty Index (EPU). The final regression model estimation is represented by Equation (Eq.3-1).

$$\text{Throughput}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \times \text{PCI}_t + \beta_3 \times \text{DIS_EPI}_t + \beta_4 \times \text{EPU}_t + \epsilon_t \quad (\text{Eq.3-1})$$

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis and Sensitivity Analysis (Container Throughput)²²⁵

OLS Regression Analysis				
Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Prob.
C	1275.727234***	76.4027515	16.6974	0.00
PCI	3.561017733***	0.561230253	6.345021	0.00
DIS_EPI	-18.38206614	29.60138265	-0.62099	0.54
EPU	-0.019545167	0.133932676	-0.14593	0.88
Sensitivity Analysis				
PCI	Historical Scenario (20.6% ↑)		6.1% ↑	
	Severe Scenario (30.0% ↑)		8.9% ↑	

Note: ***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.1$

The results of the regression analysis show that, at a 99% confidence level, the PCI (Port Congestion Index) was significant, and the impact was positive (+). This can be interpreted as an increase in PCI leading to a rise in container throughput at Busan Port. In other words, as port congestion worsens, the container throughput increases, which aligns with the phenomenon of port overcapacity to some extent. However, while DIS_EPI (natural disasters and

²²⁴ Prepared by the Authors.

²²⁵ Prepared by the Authors.

epidemics) and EPU (Economic Policy Uncertainty) had a negative (–) impact on throughput as expected, the results were not statistically significant.

Next, a stress test was conducted on the significant PCI (Port Congestion Index) variable by developing different scenarios. The scenarios were based on a baseline scenario, a historical scenario, and an extreme exception scenario. The baseline scenario utilised the average value of PCI, while the historical scenario considered the largest fluctuation during the analysis period, which was a 20.6% increase in PCI from August to September 2018 (124.1–149.7). The extreme scenario assumed an unprecedented shock, with a PCI increase higher than 20.7%, set at 30%.

The results of the sensitivity analysis under these scenarios showed that a 20.7% increase in PCI would result in a 6.1% increase in container throughput, while the extreme scenario of a 30% increase in PCI would lead to an 8.9% rise in throughput compared to the previous period. However, even if the monthly throughput increases by more than 9% compared to the previous period, the impact on port operations would not be significant enough to cause major disruptions. Thus, the overall impact of PCI on port throughput can be considered minimal.

Additionally, since sufficient yearly data is available for the container throughput variable, a model was set up to examine the impact of the 'Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers' which is only provided in annual statistics, on container throughput. The model excluded the PCI index, which has only been collected since 2016. The equation is represented by (Eq.3-2).

$$\text{Throughput}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \times \text{ILO}_t + \beta_3 \times \text{DIS_EPI}_t + \beta_4 \times \text{EPU}_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (\text{Eq.3-2})$$

Table 6. Results of Regression Analysis of Container Throughput (Year Data)²²⁶



OLS Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Prob.
C	12905.67***	3146.597	4.101469	0.00
ILO	-87.4605***	22.11472	-3.95486	0.00
DIS_EPI	842.9623	1572.591	0.536034	0.60
EPU	45.72547**	16.68691	2.740199	0.01

Note: ***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.1$

The results of the OLS regression analysis show that, at a 99% confidence level, the number of days lost per 1,000 workers has a statistically significant impact, with the effect being negative (–). This indicates that as the number of days lost due to strikes or other labour disruptions increases, container throughput decreases, which is an expected outcome to some extent.

²²⁶ Prepared by the Authors.

Berth Productivity

To examine the impact of supply chain risks on berth productivity, a model similar to that used for container throughput was set up, and the equation is represented by (Eq.3-3).

$$\text{BMPH}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \times \text{PCI}_t + \beta_3 \times \text{DIS_EPI}_t + \beta_4 \times \text{EPU}_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (\text{Eq.3-3})$$

Table 7. Results of Regression Analysis and Sensitivity Analysis (Berth Productivity)²²⁷



OLS Regression Analysis				
Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Prob.
C	120.6111***	4.40249	27.39611	0.00
PCI	-0.22228***	0.032339	-6.87324	0.00
DIS_EPI	-4.61098***	1.705695	-2.70329	0.01
EPU	-0.00671	0.007717	-0.86925	0.39
Sensitivity Analysis				
PCI	Historical Scenario (20.6% ↑)		7.9% ↑	
	Severe Scenario (30.0% ↑)		11.6% ↑	

Note: ***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.1$

The results of the OLS regression analysis show that, at a 99% confidence level, both the PCI (Port Congestion Index) and DIS_EPI (Natural Disasters and Epidemics) have statistically significant negative (–) effects. In other words, an increase in the Port Congestion Index and the occurrence of natural disasters or epidemics are factors that lead to a decline in berth productivity.

A sensitivity analysis was conducted on the significant continuous variable PCI. The results suggest that, under the historical scenario where the PCI increases by 20.6%, berth productivity is expected to decrease by 7.9% compared to the previous period. In an extreme scenario, berth productivity is projected to decrease by 11.6% over the same period. Considering that the largest historical decrease compared to the previous period was 10.4%, these declines are substantial, indicating that the PCI has a significant impact on berth productivity, which is a key performance indicator for port services.

Yard Occupancy Ratio

For the yard occupancy ratio, a logistic regression analysis was conducted to derive insights on saturation levels. Generally, when the occupancy ratio exceeds 80%, it is considered a state of saturation. In this analysis, instances where the yard occupancy ratio was below 80% were categorised as a normal state and assigned a value of 0, while instances where the occupancy ratio was 80% or higher were categorised as a saturated state and assigned a value of 1.

$$\text{Occupancy}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \times \text{PCI}_t + \beta_3 \times \text{DIS_EPI}_t + \beta_4 \times \text{EPU}_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (\text{Eq.3-4})$$

Table 8. Results of Logistic Regression Analysis (Yard Occupancy Ratio)²²⁸**Logistic Regression Analysis**

Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Prob.
C	-0.74818***	0.226437	-3.30413	0.00
PCI	0.005786***	0.001567	3.691529	0.00
DIS_EPI	-0.1638**	0.078929	-2.07532	0.04
EPU	-0.00051	0.000362	-1.4099	0.16

Note: ***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.1$

The results show that, at a 99% confidence level, PCI (Port Congestion Index) was statistically significant, and at a 95% confidence level, DIS_EPI (Natural Disasters and Epidemics) was also statistically significant. The PCI had a positive effect, indicating that when port congestion occurs, there is a higher likelihood of the container yard reaching saturation levels, which is an expected result. However, the coefficient value is small, suggesting that the overall impact is minimal. In contrast, natural disasters and epidemics had a negative effect, implying that when such events occur, port operations are likely to be suspended, which increases the likelihood that the yard occupancy ratio will remain at a normal or lower level.

In conclusion, container throughput at the port is influenced by the Port Congestion Index (PCI), which measures "Transportation Network Congestion and Disruption," and by the 'Days Not Worked per 1,000 Workers' (ILO), which measures "Labour Strikes and Disruption." For berth productivity, it was found that both PCI and the occurrence of natural disasters and epidemics (DIS_EPI), which is the variable for "Natural Disasters and Epidemics," have significant effects. As for the yard occupancy ratio, an increase in PCI raises the likelihood of the yard reaching saturation levels. In summary, the supply chain risk factor related to "Transportation Network Congestion and Disruption" has the greatest impact on port operations.

The risks used in the impact assessment can arise from various factors, and no one can predict which risks will occur in the future. In particular, ports have no control over these risks. Therefore, it is important to find ways to mitigate their impact when they do arise. Ports that establish such response systems will play a crucial role in protecting global trade. In the next chapter, we will propose strategies for ports to mitigate supply chain risks.

4. Countermeasure

We propose four key strategies for mitigating the impact of supply chain risks on ports.

First, investments in the development of terminals and logistics warehouses at strategically important overseas ports should be expanded. North America and Europe are major global consumption regions, while China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region are key production areas, making it essential to invest in ports within these regions. Particularly in light of the recent intensification of US-China trade tensions, which is prompting a shift in supply chains toward India and ASEAN, investing in port terminals and logistics warehouses in these regions becomes a vital strategy for diversifying supply chains and spreading

²²⁸ Prepared by the Authors.

risk. A notable example is Apple, which previously relied on Foxconn's factory in Zhengzhou, China, for 70% of iPhone production. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, Apple is increasing its investment in Indian factories to raise production capacity. By 2025, Apple aims to increase production in India from just 1% in 2021 to 25%. Such investments can diversify supply chain routes, reducing dependence on specific regions and enabling the rapid establishment of alternative routes in the event of supply chain disruptions. Securing logistics warehouses in hinterland zones will also be effective in supporting the swift handling of logistics and inventory management. In particular, the expansion of logistics networks in India and the ASEAN region will help facilitate trade shifts resulting from US-China tensions and significantly contribute to maintaining stable global logistics flows. To achieve this, participation in or increased equity stakes in port terminal and logistics warehouse development projects in North America, Europe, India, and ASEAN regions should be considered. Additionally, strengthening cooperation with India and ASEAN countries to establish strategic logistics hubs, and exploring various forms of investment, such as acquisitions or joint ventures in existing port terminals as well as new ones, will be essential for securing a stable supply chain.

Second, expanding the connections between ports and inland transportation networks, such as railways, roads, and waterways, is essential. Even if logistics are processed efficiently at the port, bottlenecks can occur if the connectivity of the inland transportation network is poor, resulting in delays. Therefore, the expansion of inland transportation networks is a key factor in ensuring the efficiency of ports and the stability of supply chains. Additionally, strengthening interconnectivity among various modes of transportation can reduce logistics costs and waiting times, offering further benefits. To achieve this, increased investment in development plans related to the expansion of railway, road, and waterway networks connected to ports, either through government or private sector cooperation, is necessary. Along with this, it is important to introduce digital tracking and management systems to ensure smooth coordination between ports and inland transportation systems.

Third, the digitalisation of port operations and the enhancement of cybersecurity systems are essential. Digitalisation will improve logistics processing speed and enhance the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to supply chain risks through information exchange, automation, and real-time monitoring. To achieve this, it is necessary to introduce cutting-edge technologies such as digital twins, Artificial Intelligence, and big data analysis across all aspects of port operations. Many major container ports are already expanding the implementation of terminal operating systems (TOS) based on digital twin technology, including smart technologies. However, as ports become more digitalised, their reliance on connected systems increases, making them more vulnerable to cyberattacks, which could result in large-scale and severe damages. Therefore, the digitalisation of port operations must be accompanied by the strengthening of cybersecurity systems. Potential measures include establishing a cyber resilience centre to monitor and block cyberattacks in real time, and fostering collaboration between public and private institutions to share threat information and develop integrated response strategies.

Fourth, it is essential to expand research collaboration between countries where major ports are located. Since global supply chain issues are not confined to individual ports, sharing port operation know-how and technical capabilities across nations has become increasingly important for effectively addressing risks. Research collaboration can contribute to technological innovation and the search for optimal operational strategies, thereby strengthening the resilience of the global supply chain. Moreover, such collaboration fosters the development of joint response strategies to risks, based on shared experiences and data, which helps build a robust network. To advance this, establishing international port research centres or

creating cooperative frameworks between existing research institutions could be considered. Through the sharing of port operation data and the promotion of joint research projects, new technologies and operational models can be developed. Furthermore, by working with international organisations and associations, solutions for port risk management and resilience enhancement can be devised. In particular, enhancing port resilience requires objective and consistent performance indicators. The development of such indicators will allow for the quantitative assessment of port resilience during risk events, enabling the swift formulation of response measures. In the long term, this will improve port competitiveness and help secure an advantage in the global logistics market.

In conclusion, this study has proposed response measures at a broad level. However, to implement them effectively, more specific and systematic action plans are needed. In particular, cooperation between government entities, port authorities, terminal operators, and private companies such as shipping lines is of utmost importance. Therefore, it is essential to establish collaborative bodies to ensure that practical and effective response strategies to supply chain risks can be developed.

Potential for India-Netherlands-Korea Industrial Cooperation in Strengthening Maritime and Semiconductor Value Chains

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Introduction

Korea and the Netherlands may seem worlds apart, but they share more similarities than meet the eye. Both countries are renowned for their pivotal roles in the semiconductor industry: Korea excels in advanced node fabrication, while the Netherlands leads in equipment manufacturing.²²⁹ Additionally, both nations boast competitive maritime industries.²³⁰ The development of world-class shipbuilding technologies, shipping capacities, and port infrastructures has fostered thriving maritime ecosystems in both countries. Furthermore, due to their tight integration with the global economy, the stability of sea lanes is crucial for Korea and the Netherlands, making maritime security a significant concern for both.

In recent years, geopolitical events have disrupted global value chains, placing the semiconductor and maritime industries at the forefront of strategies aimed at de-risking supply chains. As a result, Korea and the Netherlands have garnered increased attention from countries seeking stability in their supply chains. It is only natural for these two nations to explore opportunities to enhance their partnership. Accordingly, in November 2022, Korea and the Netherlands signed the Joint Statement on the Strategic Partnership Agreement, with terms like “economic security” and “resilient supply chains” prominently featured. This statement

²²⁹ Varas, Antonio, Raj Varadarajan, Jimmy Goodrich, & Falan Yinug. 2021. Strengthening the Global Semiconductor Supply Chain in an Uncertain Era. Boston Consulting Group & Semiconductor Industry Association. https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BCG-x-SIA-Strengthening-the-Global-Semiconductor-Value-Chain-April-2021_1.pdf

²³⁰ Menon Economics & DNV. 2024. The Leading Maritime Cities of the World 2024. Menon Economics & DNV. <https://www.ssa.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Leading-Maritime-Cities-of-the-World-2024.pdf>

highlighted various areas for cooperation, including “semiconductors” as well as “logistics, smart port, and transportation”.²³¹ In December 2023, the leaders of both countries reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing economic partnerships.²³²

One country that could significantly benefit from cooperation with Korea and the Netherlands is India. Simultaneously, the potential advantages for Korea and the Netherlands in collaborating with India are substantial in terms of economic security. Both nations are individually seeking prominent partners in the Indo-Pacific, as outlined in Korea’s “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region” and the Netherlands’ “Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia.”²³³ Both documents highlight India as a vital partner in the Indo-Pacific, and trilateral cooperation among India, the Netherlands, and Korea (INK) could create synergies and economies of scale that bilateral cooperation cannot achieve alone. To identify potential pathways for triangular cooperation among India, the Netherlands, and Korea, this paper will analyse India’s strategic and economic importance in the Indo-Pacific, followed by two promising areas for cooperation: the maritime and semiconductor industries.

Strategic importance of India in the Indo-Pacific

In an era marked by value chain instability and fragmentation, Korea and the Netherlands require reliable partners for cooperation. India stands out as a prime candidate. Positioned as a responsible and influential country in the Indo-Pacific, India strives for prosperity within the region and actively collaborates with like-minded nations through participation in multilateral and minilateral arrangements. While India’s plurilateral diplomacy has historically focused on regional partnerships such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), and the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative, India is now expanding its reach.²³⁴

India’s involvement in various multilateral and minilateral mechanisms aimed at ensuring a “free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific” is strengthening. Under the conceptual framework of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), India envisions stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean.²³⁵ To achieve this goal, India not only participates actively but also takes on leadership roles in various plurilateral architectures.

²³¹ Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. 2022. Joint Statement on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. <https://www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2022/11/17/joint-statement-on-the-establishment-of-a-strategic-partnership-between-the-government-of-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-government-of-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands>

²³² Government of the Republic of Korea. 2023. Joint Statement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=320931

²³³ Government of Republic of Korea. 2022. Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region. <https://www.mofa.go.kr/viewer/skin/doc.html?fn=20230106093833927.pdf&rs=viewer/result/202412>; Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. 2020. Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2020/11/13/indo-pacific-guidelines>

²³⁴ Government of India. 2024. Ministry of External Affairs Annual Report 2023. Ministry of External Affairs. https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/38005_Final-MEA-AR-2023-English.pdf

²³⁵ Government of India. 2015. Prime Minister’s Remarks at the Commissioning of Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Barracuda in Mauritius. Ministry of External Affairs Media Center. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-State-ments.htm?dtl/24912/prime+ministers+remarks+at+the+commissioning+of+offshore+patrol+vessel+opv+barracuda+in+mauritius+march+12+2015>

India is a member of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which serves as a platform for discussing partnerships in (i) trade; (ii) supply chains; (iii) clean energy, decarbonisation, and infrastructure; and (iv) tax and anti-corruption.²³⁶ Although India does not participate in the trade pillar, it remains an active member nonetheless. Another key grouping in which India plays a significant role is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a strategic alliance comprising the United States, Australia, Japan, and India.²³⁷ The Quad increasingly serves as a platform for initiating joint projects aimed at ensuring peace and economic stability in the region. Discussions have expanded beyond security-related areas, with members agreeing to cooperate on infrastructure, technology, space, energy, climate change, and health. In 2023, India joined the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) as its 14th member, aiming to contribute to establishing sustainable critical mineral supply chains.²³⁸ Like in the Quad, India stands out as the only developing country in this initiative. Additionally, India aspires to become a leader of the Global South, which has led to the establishment of development-focused multilateral bodies such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA).²³⁹

India's zealous approach to partnering with like-minded countries presents an opportunity for Korea and the Netherlands. Korea views India as a "leading regional partner with shared values," while the Netherlands considers India one of its "democratic, like-minded partners in Asia" with whom it seeks to deepen its partnership.²⁴⁰ Despite the geographical distance between them, both countries are already India's key trade partners. To advance security in the Indo-Pacific, these three nations need to take a more active role in strengthening value chains in critical areas. This essay highlights the maritime and semiconductor industries as promising areas for trilateral cooperation, considering India's developmental needs and the competitiveness of Korea and the Netherlands. Next, we will examine the reasons why India has become a key country for major nations seeking to enhance relations aimed at safeguarding resilience in the global value chain.

India as a destination for supply chain diversification

For many Korean and Dutch companies that rely heavily on the export market and global value chains, there is a current search for ways to diversify their supply chains. India is emerging as a pivotal player in facilitating this diversification for various reasons. Domestically, one of India's major goals is to foster the manufacturing sector as a driver of economic structural

²³⁶ Government of India. 2024. India Signs First-of-its-kind Agreements Focused on Clean Economy, Fair Economy, and the IPEF Overarching Arrangement under Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. Ministry of Commerce & Industry. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057489>

²³⁷ Malhotra, Aditi. 2023. Engagement, not Entanglement: India's Relationship with the Quad. Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. <https://gja.georgetown.edu/2023/05/01/engagement-not-entanglement-india-as-relationship-with-the-quad/>

²³⁸ Government of India. 2024. Strengthening of Mineral Supply Chains. Ministry of Mines. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1946416>

²³⁹ Government of India. 2023. India is Part of the Solution and Is Doing More Than Its Fair Share to Address Climate Change. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1895857>

²⁴⁰ Government of Republic of Korea. 2022. Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region. <https://www.mofa.go.kr/viewer/skin/doc.html?fn=20230106093833927.pdf&rs=/viewer/result/202412>; Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. 2020. Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2020/11/13/indo-pacific-guidelines>

transformation.²⁴¹ While there is still room for improvement, India's business environment is strengthening in terms of physical infrastructure, financial stability, and regulatory certainty, attracting investors eager to diversify their value chains. Moreover, India's vibrant consumer market and talent pool present opportunities that global companies find hard to resist.

Let's take a brief look at the factors attracting global companies, including those from Korea and the Netherlands, to India. Since 2020, the Indian government has implemented a package of manufacturing subsidies known as the Production-Linked Incentives (PLI), amounting to \$25 billion.²⁴² These subsidies are available to both foreign and domestic companies across 14 different manufacturing sectors, provided they meet specific conditions related to domestic value addition or employment. This budget is allocated over a period of five years on average, offering subsidies worth 5% of additional production in general. The actual disbursement has varied, with the mobile phone, medicine, food, and automobile industries leading the way. As will be discussed below, the Indian government has also adopted a separate subsidy system for semiconductors. These packages exhibit characteristics of successful industrial policies from East Asian countries, including reciprocal control mechanisms and sunset clauses implemented by policymakers with a degree of embedded autonomy.

Manufacturing subsidies are only part of the story. International companies have expressed concerns about India's business environment for some time. The current Indian government has taken these worries seriously and begun implementing measures to provide stability. In terms of macroeconomics, the government has achieved fiscal and price stability over the past decade.²⁴³ While the government debt-to-GDP ratio surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has stabilised with rapid nominal GDP growth and gradual fiscal normalisation. Thanks to responsive policy measures regarding interest rates, credit, and food provision, annual inflation has ranged between 2.5% and 6.7% over the past decade—a remarkable feat given the high inflationary pressures in the global economy during the early 2020s.

Improvements in the regulatory framework have also been observed in India. The focus on enhancing the business regulatory environment in the latter half of the 2010s helped elevate India's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Index from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2020.²⁴⁴ Significant strides have been made in government regulatory procedures, both in materials and processes. Tax codes have been simplified, and licensing procedures have become more transparent. Bureaucratic streamlining, combined with digitalisation, has notably reduced the cost of obtaining government permissions.

Another area of significant progress is physical infrastructure.²⁴⁵ India has accelerated infrastructure development to such an extent that The Economist described it as “on a scale unprecedented outside China.”²⁴⁶ The length of national highways increased from 91,300 km in 2014 to 141,300 km in 2022. The length of electrified railways rose from 34,300 km in 2019 to 58,070 km in 2023. These figures translate to an increase of approximately 6,250 km of national highways and 5,943 km of electrified railways per annum. Installed electricity

²⁴¹ Make in India website. <https://www.makeinindia.com/>

²⁴² Government of India. 2024. PLI Schemes: Shaping India's Industrial Growth. Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NotelId=153454&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>

²⁴³ Reserve Bank of India. 2024. Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy, 2023-24. <https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/Publications/PDFs/HSBS24F13092024DB1A116321A644358B5F399BAD39FE7C.PDF>

²⁴⁴ Government of India. 2021. Ease of Doing Business. Ministry of Commerce & Industry. <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2021/oct/doc202110451.pdf>

²⁴⁵ CMIE Economic Outlook. <https://economicoutlook.cmie.com/>

²⁴⁶ The Economist. 2023. India is Getting an Eye-Wateringly Big Transport Upgrade. <https://www.economist.com/asia/2023/03/13/india-is-getting-an-eye-wateringly-big-transport-upgrade>

generation capacity has grown from 275.0 GW in 2014 to 416.1 GW in 2023. An impressive improvement in port infrastructure will be discussed in the next section. This infrastructure development has been enabled by a substantial increase in the government's capital expenditure, as well as regulatory and bureaucratic reforms aimed at enhancing logistics effectiveness under the 'Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multimodal Connectivity' and the 'National Logistics Policy'.²⁴⁷ India's global standing is also improving, with its rank in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index rising from 54th in 2014 to 44th in 2018 and 38th in 2023.²⁴⁸

While there is still room for improvement, these recent changes in India are already attracting global companies seeking alternative destinations for supply chain diversification, particularly in the semiconductor sector, where Dutch and Korean companies play significant roles in the value chains. This essay will discuss potential areas for cooperation in the semiconductor industry following the next section on the maritime industry.

Potential areas for cooperation

1. Maritime industry

India is gearing up to develop its maritime industry, a key sector that is crucial both in itself and for other sectors highly dependent on trade. An efficient shipping industry and robust port infrastructure are vital for the export competitiveness of manufacturing companies. The government has been working to enhance the hard and soft infrastructure of the country's 12 major ports and over 200 minor and intermediate ports along its coastline of more than 7,500 km. Considering that 95% of India's trade by volume and 68% by value occurs through maritime transport, improving maritime competitiveness is essential for accelerating the country's industrialisation.²⁴⁹

Recognising this, the Indian government adopted the Sagarmala Programme in 2015.²⁵⁰ This initiative aims to transform India's water-linked transport system to reduce logistics costs, thereby contributing to the country's structural transformation. The programme encompasses various projects organised under five pillars: 'port modernisation,' 'port connectivity,' 'port-led industrialisation,' 'coastal community development,' and 'coastal shipping and inland water transportation.' Under the 'port modernisation' pillar, measures such as automation, digitisation, and streamlining are being implemented. The 'port connectivity' projects aim to link ports with consumption and production hubs via road, rail, and pipelines. The 'port-led industrialisation' pillar focuses on establishing or expanding manufacturing bases at or near ports to reduce logistics costs, taking the form of 'industrial clusters,' 'smart industrial port cities,' and 'special economic zones.' Projects under the 'coastal community development' pillar focus on safeguarding the livelihoods of various stakeholders by providing skills training,

²⁴⁷ Government of India. 2024. PM Gati Shakti: Transforming India's Infrastructure and Connectivity. Ministry of Commerce & Industry. <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?Noteld=153274&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>

²⁴⁸ Government of India. 2024. India Ranks 38 out of 139 Countries on World Bank's Logistics Performance Index Report 2023; India's Rank Has Improved by Sixteen Places from 54 in 2014. Ministry of Commerce & Industry. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2003541#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20World%20Bank's,from%2044%20in%202018%20and%20sixteen%20places%20from%2054%20in%202014.>

²⁴⁹ Government of India. 2021. Maritime India Vision 2030. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. <https://sagarmala.gov.in/sites/default/files/MIV%202030%20Report.pdf>

²⁵⁰ Government of India. n.d. Sagarmala: New Dimensions in Coastal Economy. <https://shipmin.gov.in/sites/default/files/sagarmala-eng.pdf>

fishing infrastructure, and cultural venues. Finally, the 'coastal shipping and inland water transportation' pillar includes projects aimed at improving the capacity and efficiency of roll-on/roll-off passenger ferry services. As of 2023, 802 projects have been identified under Sagarmala, of which 220 have been completed and 231 are under implementation.²⁵¹

These projects have been supported by various legislations aimed at improving the business environment, such as the 'Enactment of the National Waterways Act, 2016,' the 'Major Port Authorities Act, 2021,' and the 'Inland Vessels Act, 2021,' along with policy measures designed to invigorate private investment, including the 'Policy for Award of Waterfront and Associated Land to Port-Dependent Industries in Major Ports, 2016,' and the 'Guidelines for Dealing with Stressed Public-Private Partnership Projects at Major Ports, 2022.'²⁵²

The achievements during the nine years of Sagarmala have been remarkable.²⁵³ Between 2014 and 2023, the capacity at major ports has doubled, and the weight of cargo handled there has increased by 43%. The overall turnaround time has declined significantly from 93.6 hours to 52.4 hours. Performance in the area of inland water transportation has been especially notable, with the weight of cargo handled on national waterways increasing more than 16 times, partly due to an increase in the number of operational national waterways from 3 to 24.

Despite this impressive performance, India's port competitiveness remains weak on a global scale. In the list of container ports by volume, India's ports were ranked 35th and 39th as of 2021, lagging behind those of nearby countries such as Singapore (2nd), Malaysia (12th), Indonesia (23rd), and Sri Lanka (25th).²⁵⁴ As container traffic volume is expected to expand rapidly with economic growth, the Indian government faces the challenge of enhancing port capacity. Therefore, it envisions increasing port capacity from around 2,600 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to over 3,000 MTPA by 2030, and to 10,000 MTPA by 2047.²⁵⁵ The application of automation and digital technologies will be accelerated to improve port efficiency, and the government aims to increase the share of public-private partnerships in cargo handling from 56% in 2023 to 85% by 2030.

Additionally, the government is preparing a long-term strategy to foster a globally competitive shipping industry. Recent reports suggest plans to establish a new government company tasked with increasing the country's fleet by at least 1,000 ships over the next decade, representing a significant expansion from India's current fleet of around 1,500 ships.²⁵⁶ The government also sees this fleet expansion as an opportunity to strengthen domestic shipbuilding capacity. Discussions are underway to create four mega shipbuilding parks—two on the west coast and two on the east.²⁵⁷ These parks will feature the infrastructure and equipment

²⁵¹ Government of India. 2023. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Annual Report 2022-23. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. <https://shipmin.gov.in/sites/default/files/Annual%20Report%202022-23%20English.pdf>

²⁵² Government of India. 2024. 9 Years of Maritime-Led Prosperity. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. https://sagarmala.gov.in/sites/default/files/9%20Years%20of%20Sagarmala%20Achievements_1.pdf

²⁵³ Government of India. 2024. 9 Years of Maritime-Led Prosperity. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. https://sagarmala.gov.in/sites/default/files/9%20Years%20of%20Sagarmala%20Achievements_1.pdf

²⁵⁴ World Shipping Council Top 50 Ports. <https://www.worldshipping.org/top-50-ports>

²⁵⁵ Government of India. 2023. Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. <https://shipmin.gov.in/content/amrit-kaal-2047>

²⁵⁶ Verma, Nidhi. 2024. India Plans New Shipping Firm to Capture Revenue from Growing Trade. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-plans-new-shipping-firm-capture-revenue-growing-trade-2024-06-05/>

²⁵⁷ Mishra, Twesh. 2024. India to Set Up Two Mega Shipbuilding Parks by 2030. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-/transport/india-to-set-up-two-mega-shipbuilding-parks-by-2030/articleshow/113333783.cms?from=mdr>

necessary for constructing large vessels, with the aim of having two such parks operational by 2030. The detailed plan for this initiative is yet to be published.

However, the Indian government faces significant challenges. Current international comparisons indicate that India's presence in shipping and shipbuilding is minimal.²⁵⁸ China, Korea, and Japan dominate the world's shipbuilding industry. Greece, China, and Japan lead in ship ownership, while most ships are registered in Liberia, Panama, and the Marshall Islands. In 2022, India's shares in shipbuilding, ship ownership, and ship registration were a mere 0.072%, 1.2%, and 0.768%, respectively.

Figure 1. Building, ownership and registration of ships, 2022.²⁵⁹



Korea and the Netherlands possess a wealth of complementary knowledge and technologies that could support India's maritime industries. As of 2022, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, had the 10th busiest port in the world, while Busan, Korea, ranked 7th.²⁶⁰ Both countries excel in port operations and management, drawing on their extensive experience and state-of-the-art digital technologies. Additionally, Korea is a major shipbuilding nation, with Korean shipbuilders seeking to diversify their supply chains.²⁶¹ India has a strong interest in attracting investment from Korea in this sector. Although the Netherlands is no longer a major shipbuilder by volume, it possesses technologies for building sustainable ships, and the Dutch government is now taking a more active role in strengthening its shipbuilding industry.²⁶²

2. Semiconductor industry

Another area of focus for the Indian government is the semiconductor industry, where demand is rapidly rising alongside the growth of the electronics sector. The electronics industry has been expanding quickly since the government began providing financial incentives under the Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) program in 2020. As previously mentioned, the PLI offers subsidies to companies across 14 manufacturing sectors that meet

²⁵⁸ UNCTAD Maritime Transport Merchant Fleet. <https://hbs.unctad.org/merchant-fleet/>

²⁵⁹ UNCTAD.

²⁶⁰ World Shipping Council Top 50 Ports. <https://www.worldshipping.org/top-50-ports>

²⁶¹ Martin, Timothy. 2024. At the World's Largest Shipyard, U.S. Courts an Ally to Face Up to China. *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/world/asia/us-south-korea-shipyard-china-30aa2b11>

²⁶² Buitendijk, Mariska. 2023. Dutch Govt and Sector Put EUR 60 Million in Innovative Shipbuilding. *SWZ Maritime*. <https://swzmaritime.nl/news/2023/10/27/eur-60-million-for-innovative-dutch-shipbuilding/>; OECD. 2020. Peer Review of the Dutch Shipbuilding Industry. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2020/03/peer-review-of-the-dutch-shipbuilding-industry_2912dc82/a8605749-en.pdf

predefined performance goals. One major sector is 'large-scale electronics manufacturing,' which includes the production of mobile phones and electronic components.²⁶³ This sector has secured one-fifth of the PLI's multi-year budget and has received the largest disbursement of funds as of 2024. As a result of these efforts, India has become the second-largest mobile phone producer and a net exporter of mobile phones by the early 2020s.²⁶⁴ Samsung Electronics has led the smartphone manufacturing boom, while Apple has increasingly participated through its contractors—Foxconn, Pegatron, and Wistron—all of which have established factories in India.²⁶⁵ The next step for India is to deepen its participation in the mobile phone value chain by attracting more producers of parts and components.²⁶⁶ The PLI also covers sectors such as automobiles, information technology, white goods, and telecom, although disbursements in these areas have yet to take off. In summary, sectors that are large consumers of semiconductors are expected to show robust growth in the foreseeable future.²⁶⁷

Currently, India relies almost entirely on imports for its semiconductor needs. The Indian government is concerned about this heavy reliance on external supply, especially given the anticipated increase in domestic demand for semiconductors due to the growing electronics industry. India boasts a strong pool of semiconductor design engineers, and global companies such as Qualcomm (United States), AMD (United States), Samsung Electronics (Korea), and NXP Semiconductors (Netherlands) are expanding their research bases in the country.²⁶⁸ However, India lacks sufficient production capacity. To address this challenge, the Indian government established the 'India Semiconductor Mission' in 2021 to foster the semiconductor ecosystem. In the same year, it announced an incentive package for semiconductor and display manufacturing worth \$10 billion, separate from the PLI, aimed at financing half of the capital costs of selected semiconductor projects.²⁶⁹ Potential manufacturers can also benefit from additional support measures provided by India's regional governments.

As of September 2024, five semiconductor projects have been announced by global and domestic companies attracted to this initiative.²⁷⁰ In June 2023, the Indian government approved a plan by Micron (United States) to set up a semiconductor assembly and test facility. In February 2024, the government approved three more projects: a fab by Tata Electronics (India) and PSMC (Taiwan), a semiconductor assembly, testing, marking, and packaging (ATMP) unit by Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test (India), and another ATMP unit by CG Power (India), Renesas Electronics Corporation (Japan), and Stars

²⁶³ Government of India. 2024. Budget Documents for 2024-2025. Ministry of Finance. <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/>

²⁶⁴ India Brand Equity Foundation. 2024. Exploring the Surge in Mobile Device Production in India: Implications and Opportunities. India Brand Equity Foundation. <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/exploring-the-surge-in-mobile-device-production-in-india-implications-and-opportunities>

²⁶⁵ Ratheem Kiran. 2024. Foxconn, Samsung, 3 others to get Rs 4,400+ cr under PLI. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/foxconn-samsung-3-others-to-get-rs-4400-cr-under-pli/articleshow/108185776.cms?from=mdr>

²⁶⁶ Times of India. 2024. How Government Plans to Boost Manufacturing of Mobile Parts in India. Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/how-government-plans-to-boost-manufacturing-of-mobile-parts-in-india/articleshow/112338155.cms>

²⁶⁷ Srivastava, Sonam & Siddharth Singh Bhaisora. 2024. The Growth of India's Semiconductor Industry to \$110 Billion By 2030. Wright. <https://www.wrightresearch.in/blog/the-growth-of-indias-semiconductor-industry-to-110-billion-dollar-by-2030/>

²⁶⁸ Singal, Nidhi. 2022. Is India a 'Semiconductor Design' Nation? All You Need to Know. Business Today. <https://www.businesstoday.in/technology/story/is-india-a-semiconductor-design-nation-all-you-need-to-know-346508-2022-09-06>

²⁶⁹ Government of India. 2024. Assam's Semiconductor Plant: A Game-Changer for India's Semiconductor Ecosystem. Ministry of Electronics & IT. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=2074074>

²⁷⁰ Government of India. 2024. Cabinet Approves One More Semiconductor Unit under India Semiconductor Mission (ISM). Cabinet. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2050859>

Microelectronics (Thailand). More recently, in September 2024, the government approved another ATMP project by Kaynes Semicon (India). There are also projects currently under review, including a fab by Tower Semiconductor (Israel) and Adani Group (India), as well as an ATMP factory by Foxconn (Taiwan) and HCL (India).²⁷¹ Furthermore, a fab toolmaker, Applied Materials (United States), is set to expand its presence in India.²⁷²

Government-level collaboration in the semiconductor sector is poised to take off. In 2023, the Quad's four members agreed to strengthen their cooperation in critical technologies, including semiconductors.²⁷³ Countries with which the Indian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding or a Memorandum of Cooperation on semiconductor supply chains include the United States, Japan, and the European Union, all in 2023.²⁷⁴ These agreements emphasise the importance of bilateral cooperation to secure resilience in the semiconductor value chain, as well as potential areas for collaboration such as research and skills training. In 2024, India extended its network of cooperative countries in semiconductors to include the United Kingdom and Singapore.²⁷⁵

Korea and the Netherlands are key players in the semiconductor value chain.²⁷⁶ In 2022, Korea accounted for 12% of the overall semiconductor value chain, with particularly large shares in memory chips (60%), materials (18%), and wafer fabrication (17%). The Netherlands plays a pivotal role in other parts of the semiconductor value chain, especially in the equipment segment. Notably, the Netherlands dominates the production of Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV) photolithography machines, which are essential for manufacturing the most advanced semiconductors. Given their significant roles in the semiconductor value chain, Korea and the Netherlands can collaborate to identify industrial opportunities in India and strengthen the global supply chain.

²⁷¹ Suraksha, P. 2024. Five Approved Semiconductor Units across India and Projects in Pipeline. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/five-approved-semiconductor-units-across-india-and-projects-in-pipeline/articleshow/113173492.cms?from=mdr>

²⁷² Suraksha, P. 2024. Applied Materials Expands Collaboration with Indian Semiconductor Firms. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/applied-materials-expands-collaboration-with-semiconductor-organisations/articleshow/107634809.cms?from=mdr>

²⁷³ Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group. 2023. Quad Principles on Critical and Emerging Technology Standards. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/quad-principles-critical-and-emerging-technology-standards>

²⁷⁴ Government of India. 2023. Cabinet Approves Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Japan on Japan-India Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership. Ministry of Electronics & IT. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1970784>; Government of India. 2023. Cabinet Approves Memorandum of Understanding between India and the European Commission on Working Arrangements on Semiconductors Ecosystems under the Framework of EU-India Trade and Technology Council. Cabinet. [https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1905522](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1997198#:~:text=The%20Union%20Cabinet%20chaired%20by,chain%20and%20innovation%20under%20the;Government of India. 2023. MoU on Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership between India and US Signed Following the Commercial Dialogue 2023. Ministry of Commerce & Industry. <a href=)

²⁷⁵ Government of India. 2024. The UK-India Technology Security Initiative. Ministry of External Affairs. [https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Releases/2024/09/Singapore-and-India-sign-Memorandum-of-Understanding-on-India-Singapore-Semiconductor](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/37995/The_UKIndia_Technology_Security_Initiative;Government of Singapore. 2024. Singapore and India Sign Memorandum of Understanding on India-Singapore Semiconductor Ecosystem Partnership. Ministry of Trade & Industry. <a href=)

²⁷⁶ Varas, Antonio, Raj Varadarajan, Jimmy Goodrich, & Falan Yinug. 2021. Strengthening the Global Semiconductor Supply Chain in an Uncertain Era. Boston Consulting Group & Semiconductor Industry Association. https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BCG-x-SIA-Strengthening-the-Global-Semiconductor-Value-Chain-April-2021_1.pdf

Conclusions

India is emerging as a key strategic and economic partner in the Indo-Pacific. It is now a pivotal diplomatic player influencing the direction of multilateral and minilateral organisations aimed at enhancing security and stability in the region. Furthermore, the business environment in India is improving rapidly, and its burgeoning manufacturing sector offers global companies opportunities to diversify their supply chains. This essay has highlighted the maritime and semiconductor industries as areas where India, the Netherlands, and Korea can engage in trilateral cooperation to enhance supply chain resilience in the Indo-Pacific. This conclusion is grounded in the industrial competitiveness of Korea and the Netherlands and the development needs of India.

The three countries can identify specific areas for cooperation by first establishing regular high-level trilateral consultation groups focused on critical technologies in the maritime and semiconductor sectors. In the short term, they could develop capacity-building and skills training programs through development partnerships. Collaborating to optimise India's business environment in these industries—reflecting the interests of potential investors from Korea and the Netherlands—will also be crucial, as investment in India can pave the way for deeper trilateral cooperation.

Maritime Supply Chains: Connecting Trade and Security Through Enhanced Dutch- Korean Cooperation

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Supply Chains: The Link Between South Korea and the Netherlands

The Netherlands and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are like-minded countries sharing similar values and objectives. Both states have strong interests in upholding a rules-based international order in which liberal values and open trade prevail.²⁷⁷ With the largest European port, the Netherlands constitutes the main gateway for international shipping into European markets. The Dutch economy heavily depends on basic material imports and is mostly oriented towards exports, representing over 70% of its GDP in 2023.²⁷⁸ The Netherlands is also known for its expertise in high technology, especially in the semiconductor manufacturing technology.²⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea has one of the biggest economies in Asia and thus represents a prominent regional trade partner.²⁸⁰ Like the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea's economic growth is mainly driven by international trade which contributed to 44% of the GDP in 2023.²⁸¹ The economy is also increasingly specialising in high-tech export-oriented industries, as demonstrated by tech giant Samsung. Furthermore, as a result

²⁷⁷ Benedetta Girardi, Paul van Hooft, and Alisa Hoenig, 'Getting them on board: Partners and avenues for European engagement in Indo-Pacific maritime security' (The Hague, Netherlands: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, January 2024, p. V).

²⁷⁸ 'Netherlands (NLD) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners', The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed 24 September 2024, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/nld>, 'Netherlands Balance of Trade', Trading Economics, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://tradingeconomics.com/netherlands/balance-of-trade>.

²⁷⁹ Philip van Kappen et al., 'High-Tech Industry in 2040: New Challenges for Achieving Long-Term Earning Power and Impact for the Netherlands.' (TNO, 11 June 2024), https://www.tno.nl/publish/pages/11107/tno_whitepaper_high-tech_industry_in_2040.pdf.

²⁸⁰ 'Richest Asian Countries 2024', World Population Review, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/richest-asian-countries>.

²⁸¹ 'Exports of goods and services (% of GDP) – Korea, Rep.', The World Bank, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.ZS?locations=KR>.

of growing global trade, the Republic of Korea encourages the development of port facilities, making Busan Port one of the world's largest container terminals.²⁸²

The Netherlands and the Republic of Korea are also significant trade partners. The Republic of Korea is the Netherlands' 3rd largest trade partner in Asia.²⁸³ The three most exported goods by the Netherlands to the Republic of Korea are machinery, medical and technical apparatus, and pharmaceutical products.²⁸⁴ As for the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands is its 2nd largest European trade partner. Korean exports to the Netherlands comprise mainly mineral fuels and oils, electrical and electronic equipment, machinery, and automobiles.²⁸⁵ Meanwhile, both countries cooperate specifically in the semiconductor industry, for which they formed the 'Chip Alliance'.²⁸⁶ This agreement was announced in December 2023 and was followed by a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between South Korean chipmaker Samsung and Dutch chipmaking equipment supplier ASML. The alliance, complemented by other measures, involves the creation of a R&D centre in South Korea, a 'Semiconductor Academy' at the ASML's headquarters and Dutch university Eindhoven, and information sharing between the two firms.²⁸⁷ Besides the semiconductor industry, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea also cooperate in other sectors such as food supply chains with the creation of a Korean cold chain logistics centre in Rotterdam, agricultural technology, and global commercial shipping through blockchain tests.²⁸⁸

Maritime Security: The Necessary Element to Resilient Supply Chains

The Netherlands and Republic of Korea have thus similar and complementary interest in global supply chains. However, supply chains are also extremely vulnerable to several disruptions, as they rely mostly on maritime transport, with 80% of global trade moving via cargo ships.²⁸⁹ The Republic of Korea and the Netherlands hence not only have common interests

²⁸² 'South Korea (KOR) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners', The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed 24 September 2024, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/kor>; 'The Largest Container Ports Worldwide - Cargo Throughput 2023', Statista, accessed 24 September 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264171/turnover-volume-of-the-largest-container-ports-worldwide/>.

²⁸³ 'Joint Statement on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – Diplomatic Statement', Government of the Netherlands, 23 November 2022, <https://www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2022/11/17/joint-statement-on-the-establishment-of-a-strategic-partnership-between-the-government-of-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-government-of-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands>.

²⁸⁴ 'Netherlands Exports to South Korea', Trading Economics, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://tradingeconomics.com/netherlands/exports/south-korea>,

²⁸⁵ 'South Korea Exports to Netherlands', Trading Economics, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-korea/exports/netherlands>.

²⁸⁶ Lee Jeong-Ho, 'S Korea, Netherlands to form 'chip alliance' for supply chain coordination', *Radio Free Asia*, 12 December 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/skorea-dutch-chipmou-12122023214122.html>.

²⁸⁷ Jeong-Ho Lee, 'S Korea, Netherlands to Form "Chip Alliance" for Supply Chain Coordination', *Radio Free Asia*, 12 December 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/skorea-dutch-chipmou-12122023214122.html>; Hyun-woo Nam, 'Korea, Netherlands Form Chip Alliance for Supply Chain Resilience', *The Korea Times*, 13 December 2023, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/12/120_365081.html.

²⁸⁸ Lee Haye-ah, 'S. Korea aims to construct cold chain logistics center in Netherlands by 2027', *Yonhap News Agency*, 12 December 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20231212003300315>; <https://www.agrobericht-enbuitenland.nl/landeninformatie/zuid-korea/nieuws/2023/12/12/south-koreas-eco-friendly-agriculture-promotion-act>; <https://www.blockchain-council.org/blockchain/successful-launch-of-first-blockchain-shipment-from-south-korea-to-the-netherlands/>.

²⁸⁹ 'UNCTAD's Review of Maritime Transport 2022: Facts and Figures on Asia and the Pacific | UNCTAD', UNCTAD, 29 November 2022, <https://unctad.org/press-material/unctads-review-maritime-transport-2022-facts-and-figures-asia-and-pacific>.

in advancing cooperation on supply chains but also in defending the maritime shipping routes that allow the functioning of supply chains. In fact, the main routes of Dutch-Korean supply chains pass through many maritime chokepoints such as the South and East China Sea, the Malacca and Bab el-Mandeb Straits, and the Suez Canal. Any threat or disruption to these narrow waterways can seriously affect global trade and impact billions of people.²⁹⁰ With threats such as piracy, state rivalries, or blockades, cooperation between states can help ensure the protection of critical supply chains. Supply chains and maritime security are hence deeply connected.²⁹¹

As a middle power and the world's 5th most powerful navy, the Republic of Korea has the capacity to significantly contribute to the protection of commercial shipping within its territorial waters and conduct regional engagements.²⁹² However, two main factors make it difficult for the Korean navy to deploy too far from home. First, the increasing instability in the Indo-Pacific region due to a rise of Chinese assertiveness, maritime disputes, and great power competition mean that Korean capabilities might be needed close by the East and South China Sea. Second, the instability of North Korea provides further reasons to keep assets close by.²⁹³ On the other hand, Dutch naval capabilities remain limited and do not allow for constant deployment and patrolling over long distances.²⁹⁴ Permanent deployments of military naval assets to defend supply chains and escort commercial vessels are hence not feasible for the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands.

Nonetheless, there are other cooperation venues that the two states could explore in order to contribute to maritime security of supply chains. In fact, through specific ways of cooperation, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea can still actively contribute to the maritime security and resilience of supply chains.

Trade and Security: Strengthening ROK-NL Cooperation in Vital Areas for Maritime Supply Chains' Resilience

While international agreements are growing to foster secure and resilient supply chains, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea need to bilaterally establish concrete measures and can specifically explore four areas of cooperation: (1) port-infrastructure, (2) law enforcement and anti-piracy, (3) protection of underwater cables and infrastructure,

²⁹⁰ Benedetta Girardi, Paul van Hooft, and Giovanni Cisco, 'What the Indo-Pacific Means to Europe: Trade Value, Chokepoints, and Security Risks' (The Hague, Netherlands: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, November 2023, p. 6.)

²⁹¹ Girardi, van Hooft, and Cisco, 'What the Indo-Pacific Means to Europe: Trade Value, Chokepoints, and Security Risks'.

²⁹² 'Global Naval Powers Ranking (2024)', World Directory of Modern Military Warships (WDMMW), accessed 23 September 2024, <https://www.wdmmw.org/ranking.php>.

²⁹³ Sungmin Cho, 'South Korea's Offensive Military Strategy and Its Dilemma' (CSIS, 29 February 2024), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-koreas-offensive-military-strategy-and-its-dilemma>.

²⁹⁴ Benedetta Girardi, Paul van Hooft, and Alisa Hoenig, 'Getting Them On Board: Partners and Avenues for European Engagement in Indo-Pacific Maritime Security', HCSS, 30 January 2024, <https://hcss.nl/report/getting-them-on-board-european-engagement-indo-pacific-maritime-security/>; Paul van Hooft, Benedetta Girardi, and Tim Sweijts, 'Guarding the Maritime Commons: What Role for Europe in the Indo-Pacific', *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, February 2022, XIII.

1. Port Infrastructure

A first way to strengthen the resilience of maritime supply chains would be to strengthen the infrastructure connected to such activities. Since 2004, Rotterdam Port has hosted the Republic of Korea's first overseas joint logistics centre and on December 12th 2023 the Republic of Korea's presidential office announced the construction of a cold chain logistics centre in Rotterdam Port. The initiative is led by the Busan Port Authority and will accelerate food exports from Korea to Europe.²⁹⁵ This announcement follows the 2022 SPA, in which the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea agreed to collaborate in the areas of logistics, smart port, and transportation to strengthen their commercial relationships.²⁹⁶ The two countries have also already cooperated in the field of maritime transportation through a blockchain test between the Dutch bank ABN AMRO, Rotterdam Port, and the South Korean company Samsung. The project aimed at ensuring the digitalised traceability of a supply chain and the complete automation of the shipping global platform.²⁹⁷ The Netherlands' unmanned automated terminal is the first in the world to be successfully developed, while Busan Port's fully automated container terminal is one of the largest in the world.²⁹⁸ Both countries have public-private partnerships to develop their smart port strategies. The Dutch smart port strategy is framed within the SmartPort partnership between the Port of Rotterdam Authority, the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Delft University of Technology, the municipality of Rotterdam and the firm Deltalinqs. The project has progressively been joined by other business companies and focuses on data sharing, system research, and the support of living labs to explore solutions.²⁹⁹ Meanwhile, Busan's smart port strategy, developed by the Korean Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, combines the foundational preparation of smart maritime logistics by 2025, and the realisation of smart maritime logistics by 2030.³⁰⁰

Cooperation between the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea could take place through MoUs between private companies, following the example of Samsung and ASML, to share knowledge and expertise in shipbuilding and high-technology developments. Governments could help companies finance public-private partnerships and facilitate dialogue between all stakeholders, including private firms, governmental institutions, and research centres. The two countries could also help each other with their smart port strategies and together enhance their leading position in port automation, digitalisation, and blockchain development. Lastly, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea could help each other boost their shipbuilding market shares and start competing with large industries. Taking inspiration from the EU LeaderSHIP 2020 strategy, this can be done notably through public-private maritime research and innovation, and smart specialisations.

²⁹⁵ Sarah Kim, 'Yoon Calls for Logistics Cooperation between Busan, Rotterdam Ports', *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 14 December 2023, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2023-12-14/national/diplomacy/Yoon-calls-for-logistics-cooperation-between-Busan-Rotterdam-ports-/1936029>.

²⁹⁶ 'Joint Statement on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands - Diplomatic statement'.

²⁹⁷ Miranda Wood, 'Samsung, Rotterdam Port, ABN AMRO Complete Blockchain Trade Test', *Ledger Insights - blockchain for enterprise*, 1 July 2019, <https://www.ledgerinsights.com/samsung-rotterdam-port-abn-amro-blockchain-trade-deliver/>.

²⁹⁸ 'Busan New Port Unveils South Korea's First Fully Automated Terminal', *Marine Insight*, 8 April 2024, <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/busan-new-port-unveils-south-koreas-first-fully-automated-terminal/>; 'Smart Ports Development Policies in Asia and the Pacific', UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), February 2021, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SmartPortDevelopment_Feb2021.pdf

²⁹⁹ '10 SmartPort Trends 2030-2050', *Smartport*, 2021, pp. 5, 24, https://smartport.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ENG-10-SmartPort-Trends-2030-2050_final.pdf.

³⁰⁰ 'Smart Ports Development Policies in Asia and the Pacific', UNESCAP, February 2021, pp. 24-25, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SmartPortDevelopment_Feb2021.pdf

2. Law Enforcement and Anti-Piracy

A second way to enhance resilience of maritime supply chains is to ensure abidance to international laws of the sea and tackle challenges to the security of maritime transport, such as piracy. The Netherlands and South Korea are already familiar with cooperation in the field of law enforcement and anti-piracy operations. Both states took part in multilateral maritime security initiatives. Through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)'s Operation Ocean Shield (2009-2016), the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea contributed to the reduction of the number of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden.³⁰¹ This international naval deployment has guaranteed the integrity of critical communication channels and successfully decreased the risk of pirate acts in the Gulf of Aden and on the Somali coast.³⁰² This naval operation is also coordinated with the EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission, to which the Netherlands is a member of and allocates troops to. The Republic of Korea also happens to contribute to EUNAVFOR with direct military support.³⁰³

Future cooperation between the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea is likely to grow through a furthering of other initiatives in the field of law enforcement and anti-piracy. Bilateral naval cooperation can be initiated through patrolling rotation or shared regional protection of shipping routes. For instance, the Dutch Navy could ensure the protection of shipping lanes on the first half of the route where it has the most expertise while the Korean Navy could take over for the second half of the trip, having strong naval capabilities in Asia. Another way to cooperate could be to facilitate the use of vessel protection detachments (VPDs) by defining a legal framework and sharing them or their costs. VPDs are military or state security personnel that are individually deployed on board merchant ships to protect them from piracy.³⁰⁴ The Netherlands already allocates VPDs to protect its vessels but the jurisdiction of these units under international law and other countries' domestic laws is not always precisely delimited. Establishing a bilateral legal framework for their use could facilitate deployments and the use of flags of convenience with onboard VPDs. This would also solve the issue of competing jurisdictions between the flag State and the state detaching the unit.³⁰⁵ Additionally, this initiative could be deepened through a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in a counterpiracy strategy framework, enabling troops to easily station in the host country.³⁰⁶

Alternatively, as VPDs can remain very costly, governments could encourage the use of third-party security providers by shipping companies. For example, in 2021 the Netherlands enacted the Merchant Shipping (Protection) Act authorising business companies to hire private security companies to protect their ships in the Gulf of Aden. If no VPD is available on time and if all conditions are met, ships are allowed to benefit from these private protection

³⁰¹ 'Operation Ocean Shield', NATO SHAPE, <https://shape.nato.int/missionarchive/operation-ocean-shield>.

³⁰² 'CTF-151 Leads Multinational Counter-Piracy Operation', Combined Maritime Forces, 17 March 2021, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/2021/03/17/ctf-151-leads-multinational-counter-piracy-operation/>.

³⁰³ 'Facts and Figures: EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta', EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA, <https://eunavfor.eu/sites/default/files/2024-04/FACTS%20AND%20FIGURES%20APR24%20copy.pdf>

³⁰⁴ Rüdiger Wolfrum, 'Military Vessel Protection Detachments under National and International Law', in *Contemporary Developments in International Law* (Brill, 2016), 360–68, doi:10.1163/9789004245624_022.

³⁰⁵ Rüdiger Wolfrum, 'Military Vessel Protection Detachments under National and International Law', in *Contemporary Developments in International Law* (Brill, 2016), 360–68, doi:10.1163/9789004245624_022.

³⁰⁶ Desiree Dillehay, 'Status of Forces Agreement: What Is It and Who Is Eligible', US Army, 18 September 2019, https://www.army.mil/article/227245/status_of_forces_agreement_what_is_it_and_who_is_eligible; Paul van Hooft, Benedetta Girardi, and Tim Sweijjs, 'Guarding the Maritime Commons: What Role for Europe in the Indo-Pacific', *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, February 2022, XIII.

units.³⁰⁷ Such an agreement could be reproduced on the Dutch-Korean maritime routes, allowing Korean ships to be eligible for a similar system in the Republic of Korea. Providing bilateral legislation and sharing the costs of private armed guards could also be considered between the two countries to ensure the safe navigation of vessels all along the way to the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea.

3. Underwater Cables and Critical Infrastructure

Underwater cables and infrastructure are critical to communication between authorities, ports, and ships. They enable the connectivity of the supply chain and ensure a traced and safe transportation of goods. At the same time, they are also extremely vulnerable and the responsibility to protect undersea cables and infrastructure is most of the time ambiguous as underwater structures are owned and/or operated by private firms.³⁰⁸ Various Dutch stakeholders are involved in the protection of these structures in the Netherlands, ranging from private businesses to ministries and coastguards.³⁰⁹ The Netherlands is also involved in international initiatives such as NORDIC WARDEN, launched in 2024 by the Joint Expeditionary Force, a military operation aimed at protecting critical underwater infrastructure in Northern Europe.³¹⁰ The protection of underwater cables and infrastructure in the Republic of Korea is one of the country's priorities. The South Korea's LS Cable & System company has already invested massively in undersea cables and infrastructure and also signed multiple contracts with foreign companies, notably the Dutch state-run TenneT operator.³¹¹ Both the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands endorsed the Joint Statement on the Security and Resilience of Undersea Cables in a Globally Digitalised World together with other countries.³¹²

In general, the protection of undersea cables and infrastructures is expanding through international organisations such as the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC). The ICPC was founded in 1998 and now has 220 members ranging from governmental institutions to private business companies operating or having interests in submarine telecommunications. Among them are the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Dutch (SMITCO, GEANT Association, KPN Telecom International, Van Oord Offshore BV) and Korean (PSDataNet Inc., LS Marine Solution) companies. The Committee organises forums in which stakeholders promote submarine cable protection and resilience and exchange information.³¹³

³⁰⁷ Government of the Netherlands, 'Merchant Shipping (Protection) Act - Maritime Transport and Seaports', (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2 September 2021), <https://www.government.nl/topics/maritime-transport-and-seaports/bill-to-protect-merchant-shipping>.

³⁰⁸ Eoin Micheál McNamara, 'NATO Review - Reinforcing Resilience: NATO's Role in Enhanced Security for Critical Undersea Infrastructure', NATO Review, 28 August 2024, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2024/08/28/reinforcing-resilience-natos-role-in-enhanced-security-for-critical-undersea-infrastructure/index.html>.

³⁰⁹ 'Diving into Seabed Security | TNO', TNO, accessed 27 September 2024, <https://www.tno.nl/en/diving-sea-bed-security/>.

³¹⁰ 'The North Seas Energy Cooperation', European Commission, accessed 27 September 2024, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/north-seas-energy-cooperation_en.

³¹¹ Sarah Chea, 'LS Cable Wins 2-Trillion-Won Supply Deal from the Netherlands', *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8 May 2023, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2023/05/08/business/industry/korea-ls-ls-cable/20230508170100806.html>; Amy Paik, 'South Korea: A Catalyst for Fixing Laws on Undersea Cables', Korea Economic Institute of America, 8 March 2024, <https://keia.org/the-peninsula/south-korea-a-catalyst-for-fixing-laws-on-undersea-cables/>.

³¹² 'Joint Statement on the Security and Resilience of Undersea Cables in a Globally Digitalized World', United States Department of State, accessed 27 September 2024, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-security-and-resilience-of-undersea-cables-in-a-globally-digitalized-world/>.

³¹³ 'About the ICPC', International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC), 8 July 2024, <https://www.iscpc.org/about-the-icpc/>.

Bilateral cooperation in the domain of underwater infrastructure between South Korea and the Netherlands can be deepened within international initiatives such as the Joint Statement, International Telecommunication Union, and NATO's Undersea Infrastructure Coordination Cell with the Republic of Korea being a NATO Partner. The two countries could foster dialogue and share their expertise to better secure infrastructures. The Republic of Korea and the Netherlands could establish and closely monitor cable corridors, which are considered the most efficient way to protect cables and have already been delimited in Australia.³¹⁴ The monitoring of cables and cable corridors could be facilitated by an international information system (such as the US Maritime Safety and Security Information System) gathering data on underwater structures. This system would also promote international trust, cable security, and global information access.³¹⁵ Digital surveillance could be complemented by military protection exercises (with or without neighbouring armies) and public investments in companies' protection strategies. Additionally, governments could become more involved in the protection of CUI through investments and dialogue facilitation. Lastly, the creation of a joint ROK-NL crisis administrative or institutional organ responsible in case of imminent threat or attack on the underwater cables and infrastructure would facilitate the protection of CUI.³¹⁶

Conclusion

In conclusion, the cooperation between the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea on maritime supply chains and security is vital for strengthening trade and ensuring stability in global markets. Both countries share similar values and economic goals, with international trade being a key driver of their economies. The partnership between them spans various sectors, including technology, port infrastructure, and law enforcement.

As maritime routes are crucial for the flow of goods, ensuring their security is paramount. The vulnerabilities in global trade routes, such as piracy and geopolitical tensions, require collaborative efforts to safeguard these critical pathways. By exploring avenues like enhanced port infrastructure, anti-piracy measures, and underwater cable protection both nations can further strengthen their maritime supply chain resilience.

Moreover, by leveraging their respective strengths, both countries can play a significant role in promoting global supply chain security. The continued focus on public-private partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and joint innovation will further enhance the resilience and security of their maritime supply chains, benefiting both countries and the global economy at large.

³¹⁴ Christian Bueger, Tobias Liebetrau, and Jonas Franken, 'Security Threats to Undersea Communications Cables and Infrastructure – Consequences for the EU', June 2022; Sean O'Malley, 'Vulnerability of South Korea's Undersea Cable Communications Infrastructure: A Geopolitical Perspective', *Korea Observer - Institute of Korean Studies* 50, no. 3 (September 2019): 309–30, <https://doi.org/10.29152/KOIKS.2019.50.3.309>.

³¹⁵ Michael Matis, 'Strategy Research Project - The Protection of Undersea Cables: A Global Security Threat' (United States Army War College, 7 March 2012).

³¹⁶ Sean O'Malley, 'Assessing Threats to South Korea's Undersea Communications Cable Infrastructure', *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 17, no. 3 (31 December 2019): 385–414, <https://doi.org/10.14731/kjis.2019.12.17.3.385>.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

So far, we have explored maritime security and supply chain resilience in the Indo-Pacific region, a critical area for global trade characterized by complex geopolitical dynamics. Maritime routes are recognised as both essential and vulnerable, with increasingly interconnected trade networks easily affected by disruptions from various threats including geopolitical tensions, natural disasters, piracy, and technological challenges. The Indo-Pacific's strategic importance means the potential for far-reaching consequences when maritime stability and connectivity are compromised.

This is why the authors contributing to this edited volume emphasise the importance of collaborative approaches such as naval diplomacy, risk mitigation through interstate partnerships, and creating adaptive supply chain systems capable of enduring current geopolitical challenges. Enhancing maritime security for supply chain resilience requires multifaceted international cooperation, particularly among small and middle powers like the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands, and among supranational bodies like the EU and ASEAN. The authors also discuss how the maritime supply chains become more resilient along with maritime security, where the key strategies include strengthening port infrastructure, investing in advanced technologies like semiconductors, improving law enforcement, and developing robust multilateral frameworks. Potential avenues for cooperation range from boosting overseas investments, enhancing cybersecurity, and improving inland transport networks to establishing high-level consultations to identify and develop cooperative technological and security initiatives.

In the concluding section, we reiterate the key policy recommendations suggested by the authors. We categorised the recommendations into four: (1) Aligning Indo-Pacific strategies among stakeholders in Europe and Asia, capacity building through (2) expansion of joint naval operations and (3) strengthening supply chains of key industries, and (4) more research in a collaborative manner.

First, we recommend **the alignment of existing Indo-Pacific strategies** among like-minded partners. As pointed out by Yeon-jung Ji in her article, increasingly many states and international bodies began to adopt independent Indo-Pacific strategies, and European actors are no exception. However, these strategies have different strategic priorities and lack coordination processes with international partners. As we likely see more intense political, economic and military engagement of key states in the Indo-Pacific region, it is necessary to coordinate positions among them. The chapters of Jihoon Yu and Niels van Willigen and Nicolas Blarel both suggest the need to align differing regional security focuses and balance immediate security concerns with a broader Indo-Pacific framework. The core priorities of the framework need to encompass reinforcing rules-based international order, promoting strategic autonomy for regional partners, and addressing non-traditional security challenges. Van Willigen and Blarel

also argue that platforms like CRIMARIO and ESIWA should be used as leverage. This alignment would also include ASEAN countries which are currently reluctant to decisively take a side with the US or China, as Friso Dubbelboer suggests. Each of the members of ASEAN has its own political systems and economic interests, as well as complex geopolitical hedging strategies. As ASEAN's participation is necessary for stable and sustainable prosperity of the Indo-Pacific, it is crucial to include those by emphasising soft diplomacy and regional trust- and capacity-building.

Second, more specifically, we recommend capacity building through **the expansion of naval diplomacy, including joint operations**. Henk Warner argues, from his historical analysis, that the employment of effective communication and diplomacy can maximise the impact of limited naval forces, where a single warship can still be a powerful tool for naval diplomacy even in a competitive environment. However, small powers like the Netherlands and South Korea should exercise caution when selecting and designing objectives for naval diplomacy. Warner's recommendations are summarised as (1) prioritizing purposeful operations to project stability and definitive operations of limited scale, (2) implementing measures to prevent escalation, (3) ensuring a balance between diplomatic goals and operational capabilities, and (4) fostering effective communication and coordination between the MoD, Foreign Office, and commanders in theatre, and (5) adapting to the evolving security landscape, including information warfare. This naval diplomacy can be realized in the areas of counter-piracy, anti-submarine warfare, maritime terrorism, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief as Yu pointed out. Yu also suggests the defence industry can be a potential avenue for maritime capacity building, such as joint maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) projects, leveraging South Korea's shipbuilding expertise and utilizing European maritime technology capabilities. van Willigen and Blarel, along with Yu, emphasise maritime domain awareness (MDA) initiatives, where the cooperation agenda ranges from sharing intelligence and surveillance data, monitoring maritime activities jointly, and addressing illicit activities and environmental risks.

Third, capacity building can be promoted in the area of **maritime supply chain for key industries and infrastructure**, as the authors in Part 2 consistently suggest. Nayoung Lee derives from her analysis four countermeasures to mitigate risks related to maritime transport and supply chain: (1) expanding port terminals and logistics warehouses in key regions (North America, Europe, India, ASEAN), (2) enhancing inland transportation networks (railways, roads, waterways) to secure connectivity with intermodal transportation, (3) implementing digital technologies (digital twins, AI, big data) to improve efficiency and responsiveness, (4) strengthening cybersecurity measures to protect against cyberattacks. The first point to port modernisation and more investment in infrastructure are also emphasised in the chapters written by Kyunghoon Kim and Benedetta Girardi & Julie Ebrard. Kim further suggests cooperation with third parties in the Indo-Pacific such as India in the semiconductor industry. His recommendations include (1) providing incentives and support to attract global semiconductor companies to set up manufacturing facilities in India, (2) developing a skilled workforce by investing in education and training programs, (3) strengthening supply chain resilience by diversifying supply chains and reducing dependence on a single source, and (4) promoting Public-Private Partnership projects. Benedetta Girardi & Julie Ebrard add collaboration between Korea and the Netherlands in the areas of law enforcement and anti-piracy, establishing a bilateral legal framework for the use of vessel protection detachments (VPDs) on ships traveling between the two countries. They also suggest both countries deepen cooperation within existing international initiatives for protecting underwater cables, establish and monitor cable corridors for better protection, develop an international information system for

tracking undersea infrastructure, and explore joint military protection exercises and public investments in security strategies.

Last but not least, **collaborative research and development** between the Netherlands and South Korea is worth attention. Lee emphasises that efforts to promote joint research can enhance maritime security and supply chain resilience at the same time. She, along with Girardi and Ebrard, suggests that both countries would benefit from collaborating to share port operation know-how and technical capabilities, develop joint response strategies to supply chain risks, establish international port research centres or cooperative frameworks, and develop performance indicators to assess port resilience. This is echoed by the chapter of Kim, where he suggests joint research and development for technological innovation in the semiconductor industry. Further efforts will be necessary to enhance maritime security for resilient supply chains in the wider Indo-Pacific, which is an area of increasingly bigger strategic importance.

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Annex 1. Case studies.

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
1900	1900	South Africa	1 Protected Cruiser	Evacuation of Paul Kruger in front of British opposition	E	National	M	
1900	1900	China, Shanghai	3 Protected Cruisers	Boxer rebellion. Protection of Dutch citizens and properties. Danger of mission creep to restoring order when deployment of KNIL army division was considered, an offer that had to be withdrawn as it was beyond Dutch capabilities. Swaying diplomacy damaged Dutch prestige.	P	Coalition	C	X
1902	1904	Venezuela and Dominion Republic	2 Wooden Screw Steamers and 2 Protected Cruisers	Safeguarding Dutch colonial interests in a position of neutrality in the face of Venezuelan aggression, responded by a Blockade by European powers and the US expanding its power in the Western Hemisphere. Included an evacuation of Dutch Citizens from Venezuela in 1902 and the protection of Dutch diplomatic posts in Santo Domingo in 1903.	P	National	T	
1905	1905	East Indies, Riouw	1 Small Battleship and 1 Protected Cruiser	Watch passing Russian fleet enroute Japan to signal and maintain neutrality	E	National	S	
1905	1905	East Indies, Tandjong Priok	1 Small Battleship	Shadow Russian aux Cruiser to signal and maintain neutrality	E	National	S	
1906	1906	East Indies, Sabang	1 Protected Cruiser	Watch 3 Russian cruisers to signal and maintain neutrality	E	National	S	
1908	1908	Venezuela	2 Small Battleships and 2 Protected Cruisers.	Blockade of Venezuelan ports as a response to a conflict on trade, in the face of American's Monroe doctrine. A result other European powers didn't wish to participate. Venezuelan government fell. The US intervened after which the situation normalised and favourable trading agreements were obtained.	P	National	T	
1911	1913	China, Shanghai	1 Protected Cruiser	As a reaction to Chinese unrest, Dutch navy protected Dutch diplomatic posts and supported the restauration of order at a limited scale by the ship's landed crew, e.g. protection of a railway and sealing off a town quarter.	P	Coalition	C	

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
1912	1913	Constantinople, Sea of Marmara	1 Small Battleship and 1 Protected Cruiser	Intervention by European powers in a war between Balkan states and the Ottoman empire in which the Dutch intended to participate for reasons of prestige but by landing troops near the frontline it got more involved than required for its interests creating unnecessary risks, harming neutrality.	E	Coalition	C	X
1914	1914	Mexico Tampico	1 Small Battleship	Protection and evacuation of Dutch citizens	D	National	C	
1914	1916	East Indies	All Forces in East Indies	Maintaining neutrality by shadowing and boarding passing European warships.	E	National	S	
1922	1923	Turkey, Smyrna	1 Small Battleship	In Greek-Turkey war, Dutch warship Tromp accompanied by British and American warships at anchor after and being unable to stop violence. Stood by to protect Dutch civilians and Church. 8 years later, CO Tromp describes poor coordination with the Foreign Office resulting in a dangerous situation during British-Turkish escalation.	E	National	C	X
1927	1927	China, Shanghai	1 Light Cruiser	Dutch naval presence to protect commercial institutions and Dutch citizens amidst the seizure of Shanghai by the KMT. Dutch intervention remained limited to these protection activities.	C	Coalition	C	
1929	1929	Venezuela - Curacao	1 Small Battleship and 1 Destroyer	Venezuelan rebel Rafael Simón Urbina conducted an attack on Fort Amsterdam in Curaçao, stole weapons and fled to Venezuela. As a response a Dutch destroyer landed 90 soldiers of the colonial army and 119 marines and an obsolete small battleship was stationed on Curacao as guardship. Latter commitment continued until WWII	C	National	P	
1932	1932	China, Shanghai	1 Destroyer	In the context of the Japanese intervention at 28 January in response to an economic boycott by China, Dutch trading institutions feel threatened and request protection by a warship which is provided by a small destroyer. Threat largely consists of Chinese citizen fleeing for the Japanese. Dutch hesitant to intervene and intend that not more than 2 patrols, each 20 sailors/marines, will deploy but this will not occur as from early march a ceasefire and negotiations start. As from the 22 April the Japanese start to embark and return to Japan and economic life is starting up, Van Galen at 27 April returns to Surabaya.	C	Coalition	C	
1937	1937	China, Shanghai	1 Destroyer	The trigger and Dutch intent was similar as in 1932 but the endgame was entirely different. Japanese occupation was a much more fierce and destructive battle, now just the first phase of further occupations. In public reporting actions ashore was avoided. A newspaper called the departure of the Dutch and all other allies shameful and noted that hundreds of Japanese ships were disembarking troops and unloading stores and ammunition.	E	National	C	?

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
1937	1938	Gibraltar strait	1 Small Battleship, 1 Light Cruiser, 1 Gunboat, squadron of minesweepers and 4 submarines.	During the Spanish civil war, from march 1937 until September 1938 convoy protection was provided. More than 1000 ships had been protected, most of them by gunboat Johan Maurits van Nassau.	D	Coalition	T	
1948	1962	Dutch Antilles	1 Warship	Occasional visits (1948, 1954, 1959) by a Dutch warship as a deterrent to Venezuela.	E	National	S	
1950	1950	Dutch Antilles	1 Carrier and 2 Escorts	Deployment of Carrier squadron to signal to the US to be committed to the defence of The Antilles	C	National	T	
1950	1950	Indonesia, Makassar	1 Small Battleship	Dutch gunboat reacting to a Netherlands army camp under fire by Indonesian artillery that was silenced after appearance of the warship.	P	National	S	
1956	1956	Russia, Leningrad	1 Cruiser and 2 Destroyers	Informal port visit on Russian request.	E	National	M	
1957	1957	Indonesia	1 Destroyer	Dutch warship boarded and liberated KPM-merchant vessel that was seized by Indonesian militia? followed by other smaller encounters with Indonesia over New Guinea.	D	National	S	
1960	1960	New Guinea	1 Carrier and 2 Destroyers	Deployment of a Carrier Squadron to demonstrate authority over New Guinea that backfired by a lack of international support. Dutch government' estimation was that some diplomatic goodwill had been created but this turned out to be erroneous wishful thinking.	C	National	S	X
1962	1962	Netherlands New Guinea	2 Frigates, 3 Destroyers, 2 Submarines and supporting ships	Defence to Indonesian invasion of Netherlands New Guinea, under support of Russian joint forces. Final attack was cancelled as a diplomatic agreement to transfer sovereignty was reached.	D	National	S	X
1962	Present	Dutch Antilles	1 Warship	Reestablishment of a permanent West Indies Guardship in reaction to the Cuba crisis.	C	National	S	
1964	1964	Suriname	Hydrographic survey vessel	Combining survey operations with guarding Corantijn river entrance at the border with British Guyana from which Marxist infiltration was feared.	C	National	S	
1967	1967	Poland, Gdynia and Russia, Leningrad	Survey Vessel (Leningrad) and 1 Cruiser (Gdynia)	Informal port visits	E	National	M	
1969	1969	Dutch Antilles, St Maarten and Anguilla.	1 Cruiser and a platoon marines.	Deterring presence as a response to the British intervention in Anquilla after which it feared that armed rebels would flee to St Maarten.	C	National	P	

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
1977	1977	Russia, Leningrad	1 Frigate, 2 Destroyers and 1 Tanker	Informal port visit	E	National	M	
1984	1984	Red Sea	2 Minehunters	Mine countermeasures operations on request by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It aimed to express its commitment to the rule-based order and security and it hoped to support industry and generate export by demonstrating modern minehunters.	E/C	Coalition	T	
1987	1989	Arabic Gulf	3 Minehunters	Mine countermeasures operations to protect sealines of communications under threat by the Iran-Iraq war.	P	Coalition	T	
1992	1992	Adriatic Sea	2 Frigates and 2 patrol Aircraft	WEU shipping monitoring mission to reassure and maintain situational awareness.	C	Coalition	P	
1993	1996	Adriatic Sea	24 Frigates, 1 Tanker and 5 submarines	NATO embargo operation Grapple and SHARP GUARD to enforce economic sanctions and a arms embargo in order to stop violence in the former republic of Yugoslavia.	P	Coalition	P	
1993	1994	Haiti	3 Frigates	Support Democracy Haiti, enforcement of an oil and arms embargo to influence the military regime	P	Coalition	P	
1995	1995	Far East	Task group	Fairwind deployment including passage of Taiwan strait, Trade promotion	E	National	T	
1996	2001	Adriatic sea	15 Frigates	Naval monitoring mission in support of NATO operation IFOR/SFOR	C	Coalition	P	
1996	2000	Arabian Gulf	6 Frigates	US led Maritime Interdiction Force (MIF) to enforce sanctions and arms embargo to Iraq.	P	Coalition	P	
1998	1998	Eritrea	1 Frigates	Evacuation of 135 persons from 13 countries during the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia	D	National?	P	
1998	1998	Adriatic Sea, Kosovo	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock	Participation in Extraction Force Kosovo in order to evacuate civilians.	D	Coalition	p	
1999	1999	Adriatic Sea, Kosovo	2 Frigates, 1 Submarine and 1 Minehunter	Naval embargo operations in support of coercive operation Allied Force.	P	Coalition	P	
1999	1999	Adriatic Sea	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock	Landing marines as part of NATO Operation Allied Harbour in order to guide Kosovar citizens to refugees to a refugee camp.	C	Coalition	P	
2000	2003	Ethiopia and Eritrea	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock	Support marines conducting monitoring mission UNMEE aiming to maintain a cease fire agreement	C	Coalition	P	

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
2001	2003	Mediterranean	1 Frigate and 1 tanker	NATO operation Active Endeavor to prevent (often state sponsored) terrorists from using the sea.	P	Coalition	P	
2001	2003	Arabic Gulf	5 Frigates	NATO operation Enduring Freedom to prevent (often state sponsored) terrorists from using the sea including seizing Bin Laden.	P	Coalition	P	
2003	2004	Liberia	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock	Naval support to UN Stabilisation force, consisting of medical support and transport	C	Coalition	P	
2006	2006	Dutch Antilles	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock and 1 Frigate	Dutch exercise Joint Carib Lion in order to demonstrate the capability to conduct joint amphibious operations in cooperation with American forces.	E	National	S	
2006	2006	Around Arab peninsula	1 Frigate and 1 Submarine	Participation in the US taskforce 150 to express support to the war on terrorism. A Dutch Rear Admiral commanded the taskforce which raised Dutch prestige, improved interoperability and experience in international operations.	E	Coalition	P	
2008	2015	Horn of Africa	12 Frigates, 2 Amphibious ships, 1 Tanker, 1 Oceangoing Patrol Vessel and 2 Submarines	Participation in anti piracy operations in NATO and EU structures, protecting merchant shipping and conducting capacity building.	D	Coalition	T	
2010	2010	Horn of Africa	1 Frigate	Liberation of the German merchant Vessel Taipan.	D	National	T	
2011	2011	Mediterranean, Libya	1 Minehunter	Contribution to NATO operation Unified Protector by mine clearing operations to enforce an arms embargo in order to protect the Libyan population and support reconstruction and assistance.	P	Coalition	T	
2011	2011	Mediterranean, Libya	1 Frigate	Evacuation of a Dutch national from Libya during a civil war. The operation failed and the ship's helicopter and its crew was seized by Libyan forces.	D	National	C	X
2016	2016	Mediterranean	1 Amphibious Landing Platform Dock	Contribution to EU operation EUNAVFOR Sophia by capacity building, training activities for the Libyan Coastguard on board a Dutch Warship	C	Coalition	P	
2020	2020	Arabian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz	1 Frigate	Contribution to the EU Mission EMASOH by naval presence operations in order to monitor safe passage of merchant shipping as part of two path military and diplomatic strategy towards Iran.	C	Coalition	T	

Year start	Year End	Location	Ships involved	Description	Cable Classification	Coalition or national ops	Interest at stake	Unbalanced design or ineffective execution
2021	2021	Global voyage passing the Black Sea and Indo-Pacific	1 Frigate	Participation in the maiden voyage of the British Queen Elisabeth Carrier Strike Group in order to integrate and improve interoperability in the British Task group and to express Support to a rule based international order and economic interests	E	Coalition	M	
2024	2024	Global voyage passing the Red Sea, Indo Pacific and Caribbean	1 Frigate	Global circumventing voyage to express Dutch commitment to the rules based international order and maritime security in the Gulf region and the Indo Pacific, the latter a region of geopolitical and economic importance to the Netherlands.	E	National	M	
2024	2024	Red Sea	1 Frigate and 1 Joint Support Ship	Contribution to international coalitions to protect shipping attacked by Houthis by providing air defence, logistic and medical support and command facilities.	P	Coalition	T	



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